

Foundation of Fear: 25 years of villagers' voices from southeast Myanmar

Appendix: Raw Data Testimony (November 1992 to March 2017)

This appendix includes the full texts of 177 pieces of KHRG field documentation (raw data), which serve as the previously unpublished¹ dataset for **Foundation of Fear: 25 years of villagers' voices from southeast Myanmar**. KHRG received this information during the reporting period for this report from November 1992 to March 2017.

KHRG trains villagers in southeast Myanmar to document individual human rights abuses using a standardised reporting format, conduct interviews with other villagers and write general updates on the situation in areas with which they are familiar. When conducting interviews, villagers are trained to use loose question guidelines, but also to encourage interviewees to speak freely about recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important and share their opinions or perspectives on abuse and other local dynamics. KHRG translates all documents for publication and undertakes minor edits only for security and clarity.

Throughout KHRG's 25 years of reporting, as information was received, KHRG staff assessed each piece of documentation and translated those conveying human right concerns into English. This thematic report analyses 25 years of human rights documentation gathered by KHRG. This analysis included a selection of reports published between November 1992 and December 2012, and all reports both published and unpublished between January 2013 and March 2017. The analysis for this report was conducted by a team of Karen information-processing officers, who were supported by native English speaking capacity builders. The information taken from these reports was then assessed further and grouped into categories based on topic, such as 'forced labour', 'landmines' and 'village agency', from which themes were identified and chapter topics were formed and written.

The report directly references 489 KHRG reports, of which 177 pieces are previously unpublished and 312 are previously published on www.khrq.org. These 489 KHRG reports have been selected for their detailed, reliable and representative perspectives on the human rights situation over the past 25 years in southeast Myanmar. Reports have intentionally been included from all seven KHRG research areas across southeast Myanmar. The 177 pieces of previously unpublished documentation that have been directly referenced in the final printed version of this report are included in full in this appendix. The 312 published KHRG reports which are directly referenced in the final version of **Foundation of Fear** are footnoted in the full report, with the publication title, publication date and hyperlink accessible in the PDF version.

¹ KHRG categorises any report or raw data as 'unpublished' if it has not been published as a stand-alone report on www.khrq.org. Whilst all the following raw data reports remain unpublished, some have been included in previous KHRG thematic reports and therefore in previous thematic appendices. Additionally, several previously unpublished reports were published throughout the duration of the analysis period. Where this is the case, it is noted in the 'Publishing Information' section under each source document.

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Source #1

Log #	12-109-A5-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in May 2014 ² Thematic Appendix: http://khrq.org/2014/05/truce-or-transition-trends-human-rights-abuse-and-local-response
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	<p>How many children do you have?</p> <p>I have five children.</p> <p>How old is the eldest one [child]?</p> <p>The eldest one [child] is 12 years old.</p> <p>How about the youngest one [child]?</p> <p>The youngest one [child] is three years old.</p> <p>Can you work properly or are there any disturbances?</p> <p>Yes. Every year, we cannot properly do hill farming because the SPDC³ [Tatmadaw] military comes [causes disturbances]. Therefore, we sometimes have to flee into the jungle. Moreover, rats and birds also eat [the paddy] and damage our [paddy].</p> <p>Is the Tatmadaw active in your village?</p> <p>Because our leaders have arranged it, there has not been any activity since the beginning of 2012.</p> <p>What is your opinion about the ceasefire from the perspective of your village?⁴</p>

² This report has been re-edited for clarity for this Appendix and therefore some phrasing will differ from the previously published Appendix version.

³ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burma government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "[Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'](#)," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011.

⁴ On January 12th 2012, a preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and Burma government in Hpa-an, Karen State. Negotiators from the two parties met for a 2nd round of talks on April 4th, where they signed a more detailed preliminary ceasefire plan, and held a 3rd round of negotiations on September 3rd and 4th 2012; see "[Preliminary Ceasefire Talks](#)," *Karen National Union*, April 4th 2012; "[KNU Delegations Departs for the Third Round Negotiation of Ceasefire with the Burmese Government](#)," *Karen National Union*, September 1st 2012. In 2013, the ceasefire process became a nationwide effort. On November 2nd, 17 ethnic armed groups signed a joint proposal for a nationwide ceasefire in Laiza, Kachin State; see "[Burma's armed ethnic groups sign nation-wide ceasefire pledge in Laiza](#)," *Kachin News*, November 5th 2013. Two days later in Myitkyina, Kachin State, the EAGs presented their proposal to a Burma government delegation, which then presented its own plan. The Government rejected the EAG's proposal for a multi-ethnic federal army, the EAGs requested more time to review, and both

In my opinion, the ceasefire allows me to work and live properly. I don't understand politics but I do know that I can properly work on my hill farm to secure my livelihood and that I can also travel freely [because of the ceasefire]. We are now able to work properly, in 2012, because our leaders arranged it [the ceasefire]. In the future, we hope that the fighting does not happen. We want to live and work in our country properly, and we want to travel freely. For work, we also want to work by ourselves [freely] and not have our rights abused; we just want these things.

Have there been any people [who] have come to implement some projects in your area?

We are just civilians. We don't know if projects will come [to our village]. We will just know when they arrive. We don't know when they will come.

Have there been any projects that foreign countries, the Myanmar government or the KNU have implemented in your area?

Regarding work in our country, there are some projects that our leaders [from the] KNU have planned for us in order to live peacefully and properly. They are trying [to implement these projects] for us. Regarding the military [Myanmar] government [will implement these projects], we [are] just worried that they will not be loyal to us or to our leaders; this is the greatest concern that we have.

Are there any projects that foreign countries implemented [in your area]?

The only foreign country that I have seen [in my area] is the Norwegian one.⁵

What have you heard? What [did] they come to implement?

The Norwegian people came to help our government with the ceasefire. For our civilians, they will arrange [things] like food and clothes, and our living areas.

How will they arrange [them]? What will they do? Did they tell you anything specifically?

sides agreed to meet again; see "[Myanmar Peace Talks Fail to Nail Down Cease-Fire Agreement](#)," *Radio Free Asia*, November 5th 2013. On January 25th 2014, in Law Khee Lar, Karen State, 17 ethnic armed groups agreed to an updated proposal to be presented to the Burma government in Hpa-an in February 2014; see "[Ethnic armed groups sign 11-point nationwide ceasefire draft](#)," *Myanmar Freedom Daily*, January 26th 2014. For more information on the ceasefire and how it has affected local villagers, see "[Safeguarding human rights in a post-ceasefire eastern Burma](#)," KHRG, January 2012 and "[Steps towards peace: Local participation in the Karen ceasefire process](#)," KHRG, November 2012.

⁵ The Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI) was formed in March 2012 at the request of the Burma government. It is a Norwegian-led humanitarian aid programme with the goal of providing temporary support in ethnic conflict areas during the peacebuilding process. See, "[Relevance of Norway-Supported Peace Project in Myanmar Under Review](#)," *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, January 15th 2014; and the Peace Donor Support Group website www.peacedonorsupportgroup.com/projects.html, accessed February 11th 2014. For more information on the MPSI and other pilot programs in Nyaunglebin, see these KHRG reports: "Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Ler Doh Township, November 2012 to January 2013," KHRG, April 2013; "[Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Moo, Ler Doh and Hsaw Htee townships, January to June 2012](#)," KHRG, October 2012; and "[Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Kyauk Kyi Township, July 2012](#)," KHRG, September 2012.

They did not come and tell us anything specifically. Our leaders arranged it on our behalf because we have been suffering for many years. Now, the foreign countries know about the fighting and, as our leader mentioned, they [KNU] came and helped with the ceasefire. Their plan for civilians is to supply us with food, clothes and the main food [items].

Did you see foreigners, Karen people and Myanmar people coming to observe [your area]?

For the Myanmar people, we just run if they come into our area. For the foreigners, we saw them sometimes in the past, but because we don't understand their language, we did not talk to them. They also did not talk to us, so we didn't ask them about the issues [reasons they came] and they also didn't ask us. They just talked to the person in charge.

As you said, when the Norwegians came, were the Karen people or the Myanmar people also included [in the discussions]? Did the foreigners, the Karen people and the Myanmar government people accompany [each other]?

When they came, our leaders [KNU] were included and the Norwegians were also included. But we do not know whether the military government officials came or not. However, we heard that the Norwegian interpreter is *moe htee*.⁶

Did they arrive in your area?

Yes, they arrived.

How many times did they come and observe [your area]?

For the Norwegian people, we just know that this is the first time that they came [to our area].

They only came once?

Yes.

Did Myanmar government officials also accompany them [the Norwegians] when they came?

No, the Myanmar government officials did not accompany them when they [the Norwegians] came. They just came with their own people.

How many people came? Do you know any of their names?

I don't know their names; I just know Mr. Charles.⁷

⁶ In S'gaw Karen, *mo htee*, means the "mother side" and is used to refer to Pwo Karen people. There are two main groups of Pwo Karen. East Pwo Karen live in western Thailand and Kayin State, Burma, while West Pwo Karen live in Irrawaddy Division, Burma.

⁷ Charles Petrie is a Norwegian representative who heads Norway's Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI), which is intended to fund development in Burma. See "Clarification With Regard to Chiang Mai Meeting," The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok (September 2012).

You said that they only came once?

Yes. They arrived in our village only one time.

Did they tell you anything special?

When they spoke to us civilians, they asked us about education, health, and food, in particular the main food [such as rice, oil, salt and fish paste]. They did not talk about other things; they just talked about health, education and food.

What is your opinion, or how do you feel about their arrival?

There is nothing special that we feel related to their arrival. We just feel happy that they are helping our leaders [KNU] with the ceasefire so that we civilians can work properly and travel freely in the future.

Did you ask for any opportunities?

We asked for peace and for there not to be any more fighting.

When they came and discussed [everything], were you also involved?

Yes, when they came and discussed [everything], I was also there.

Did they give you any opportunity to express your opinion related to this project?

They only asked us about our opinions regarding development. They asked us one by one about development. We couldn't reply to them. We could only reply that if we have peace, we will be able to breed animals. For the other things, we can't say anything [to them] yet.

What did they ask you and what answer did you give?

They just asked us what we would be pleased with. [They asked] us since we have fled for many months and years, what would we be pleased with? We responded that because we have fled for many months and years, we just want peace, to not have fighting, and in the future [we want] our work to go well and for there to not be any harm to our work. We said that [we also want] other ethnicities to not come and loot our area.

How did you feel when the people came and asked you like that?

As we are not educated because we were forced to flee we were not able to answer them thoroughly; we attended school but only completed one or two standards. We also were not able to thoroughly explain how we have suffered because we didn't keep [historical] records.

How do you want this project to happen?

As we are Karen, and as we have fled for many months and years, we just want to not be displaced and forced to flee; [we want to be able] to live in our country, to travel and to have peace and unity in the future.

Is there any place where they are gather [people], including the villagers from other villages, when they start the project?

They haven't said anything about a plan gathering us in one place, but previously they just called a meeting with only the village leaders and they asked what they would be pleased with. However, the village leader responded that they [villagers] need food, health, education and a place to settle down. We just replied that there should not be anything [in the project] that will destroy the villagers' homes or ability to work.

What do you believe would be the benefits [of the project]?

If there is a ceasefire, and if our [KNU] leaders arrange it for us step by step, we believe that there would be peace. If it is peaceful in the future, it would be easier and [there will be] more freedom for us to work and to travel, and our work will go well.

Now, have they already started doing anything?

Yes.

What they have done?

They have not started doing anything special for us; when they came to [talk to] us they only worked on the ceasefire. As we do not hear the sounds of gunfire in our surrounding [area], we are satisfied.

Have they already started [to implement] their project to help you [villagers]?

Yes, we heard our leader say [that they started their] project which relates to food. The project is just in the first stage. In the future, they will continue step by step.

Do you know where they will implement the project?

I don't know the exact place where the project [will be implemented]. We are just civilians, so we don't know; we only know when our leaders inform us. We don't yet know.

You said that there is no place where they will force you to gather?

Yes. Currently there is no place where they will force us to gather. We think that we will go back and live in our own village if there is peace and no more fighting.

The place that you live now is not your village, right?

Yes. The place that we live now is the place where we live temporarily. Our real village is next to Muh Theh.

Do you want to live in your own area, which is next to Muh Theh?

Yes. We want to live in our own area, which is next to Mu Theh. However, in Mu Theh, the government military came, fought and looted our things, so we couldn't work. In our area, we have farms, but now, as we fled, we have to do hill farming. When we lived in Mu Theh, some of our parents had their own farms and some of us did hill farming, but none of us can

work properly now. Therefore, we also face [problems] with food.

If the other people force you to go and live in one place, what will you do?

Even if they forced us to go and live in one place, if they have an exact plan for us, we will go. If there is no plan for us, and if we stay like a raft [straddling] this side and that side; we will not go anywhere. We will just live here. We will flee and escape every time.

What actions have the Myanmar military taken and how are they building their relationships with you?

We are just civilians. If we have to deal with them, we communicate as civilians. We do not feel safe making relationships with their military leaders. If they asked us [anything] when we travelled, we responded to them.

Do they still question and check you?

As we are civilians and we are not the in charge, they do not question us.

Do you want to express any opinions about this project?

My opinion that I want to present about this project is as I have said: the basic thing that we need is the ceasefire, to live peacefully and to travel back and forth [freely] when there is no fighting. We just need peace and unity.

In your opinion, would there be any benefit for the villagers because of this project?

If the plan goes properly, and if it is going well in the future, there would be peace for our civilians and our Karen people.

If the project doesn't happen according to your desires, what kinds of difficulties will you face, and how will it negatively impact you?

If our leaders and the military government do not implement the ceasefire properly, and if there is fighting, as we are Karen, we will run to the KNU. We will live together and ask [for] suggestions from the KNU.

Has the Myanmar government planned anything for you?

For the Myanmar government, they want us to go back to them [under their control]. If we go back to them, they will arrange for us [to move]. However, they [Myanmar government officials] are not from the same ethnic group as us. Since the KNU [officials] are our ethnicity [Karen], whether it [the situation] is good, hard or poor, we will just trust them.

Has the Myanmar government done anything for you? Have they provided you with anything?

They haven't done anything for us. Once, they asked us to go to a meeting in Ler Doh. However, they just gave us an ID card. For the things that have benefits like food, lands or clothes, they haven't helped us yet.

What type of ID card did they make for you?

For the ID cards they took our photos, and affixed it with the citizenship law.

Did they make them like the ID cards that they normally make for citizens?

It is like a recommendation letter. If we go to their place, and if we show them our ID card, we become their people [citizens]. That is how it works.

Did they make them like the ID cards that they normally make for citizens, or is it different?

If we look at [it], they made them slightly different for us. For their people, it is red, but for us, the colour is white. At first, it was small but now it is very large.

White or green?

White, I didn't look at it. It is white and they attached the photo onto it.

They did not make [it] like the [red] ID card?

No, it is not the same. The first one is only three inches; now, it is very large. It is like this one. You have to fold it three times.

It is like a recommendation letter?

Yes, it is like a recommendation letter.

Did they say that they were going to take the photo [for the ID cards]?

Only the police officer came. The police officer came and introduced himself; then we went back. He followed us for a short distance. When we went there this time, he said, "*Thank you very much,*" for going to visit him. He didn't say anything. He just greeted us and started to ask us about our situation, displacement, travelling, our work, education and health. He didn't ask about the other issues. However, after he asked us, he went back. The person who took the photos came separately, later.

Later, [he] came and said that they will make the ID cards for you?

Later, four people came and these four people said that they will take the photos to make ID cards for us. We don't know whether we have to take [photos] or not, because our leaders were also not free at that time. They were beside us but we were unable to ask them. Then they [the people who will make the ID cards] came in and took photos of all of us.

How did the villagers feel when they received the recommendation letters?

We villagers do not go to any towns [travel]. After they gave [the cards to] us, we came back and put them into our bags; it remains inside the bags. We don't show [the cards to] anybody. It is just in the bag. We haven't shown them yet because we don't go to the towns [travel].

Why did they give you this ID card? How many villagers have already received the recommendation letters?

Out of two village tracts,⁸ 30 villagers got one. For our recommendation letter, even though the civilians travel, they don't show it. They just travel without one. They [authorities] also do not ask for anything, so we just travel and we don't show them.

Why did they only provide this number of [ID cards]?

Because only thirty of us went when our leader said that we had to go and meet [them], so they did it for only thirty people.

Not all villagers received the recommendation letter, so is there any plan to provide more?

There is no plan to provide more, but when we received the recommendation letters, only Kheh Der village tract received them. There are 27 people from Kheh Der village tract. For Muh Theh [village], Hkeh Hta Hkoh village tract, three people received [the letter].

Do the villagers who received the recommendation letters feel safe carrying the letters? Is there anybody who has been checked or given difficulties [by the authorities]?

The villagers who received the recommendation letter do not carry it or show it [to anybody]. No one asks us [to show the letters] or checks us. Sometimes, we don't carry it. We just keep it in the bag and leave it at the house. We do not carry it [with us].

Is there any other work that the Myanmar government comes and does?

In the present time, we haven't seen anything yet. But would there be any incidents? However, since we are civilians, we don't know all the exact information.

How many places can the villagers carry this card to? In how many townships?

After they gave [it to] us, they said that we can travel throughout Burma. They said [we can travel] only in Burma.

For this recommendation letter, after how many years do you have to go and exchange [it]? Do the villagers know? Did they tell the villagers anything?

They do not tell us anything. They didn't decide for us. They said that we can always carry [it].

What is the villagers' opinion?

The villagers' opinion is that we are just the people of the KNU. If there is peace, we have to carry the KNU's recommendation letter. We don't have to carry the Myanmar government's recommendation letter. As we are Karen people and the KNU's people, we have to carry the

⁸ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village

GNU's recommendation letter.

Related to this recommendation letter, is there anything that the villagers want to express?

There is no suffering that the villagers want to express related to the recommendation letter. We don't have [any opinion] because we civilians do not understand it. When people provide them for free, we [villagers] take it. Therefore, we can't think about the back and forth. People gave [it to] us and we took it. If we had to buy it, we would not take it or buy it. Because they gave it out, we took it. We just took it to [have our bag] be full [because we were required to]. It is not the case that we carry it and show it or use it in the town. We do not carry it, because we do not go [and live] among their people.

They said that they will make ID cards for you, but why don't they make the ID cards that the people normally carry? What is your opinion [about this]?

In my opinion, I think they just did [it] for a temporary recommendation letter. It is not a stable [situation] yet, so to make us their people [under their control], they made this recommendation letter first. They just came in and made [them] for us, and our leaders didn't tell us anything. As we are civilians and didn't understand, we took the [photo] and when they gave [it to] us, we took it.

Do you have any other things that you would like to share?

There is nothing that I would like to share. There is nothing special. There is nothing special except that we are now traditional animists, but when we go to the military government, they said that we are Buddhist. They labelled us as Buddhists even though we are not Buddhist. We are just traditional animists. We have lived for a long time, so our religion has been passed on to us from ancient times. They want to eradicate our religion and they put us in the Buddhist [religion]. Therefore, they just write "Buddhist" on the ID cards, not traditional [animist]. It affects our religious and ethnic rights. As Karen people, we don't want other people to harm our rights and we don't want them to harm the Karen people's rights. We hope that somebody will help us and put our religion as animist [on our ID cards], and not to harm our religious rights.

Is there anything else you want to say?

I just wanted to present these things.

If you don't have anything else, thank you.

Thank you.

Source #2

Log #	12-143-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township and Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District

Full Text
<p>Date Received: November 12th 2012</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on September 14th 2012 at Kyaikdon's boat check point, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District, where a boat has to give 15,000 kyat separately to the Border Guard Forced (BGF), Myanmar Police and the Karen Peace Force (KPF). It is a photo taken together with the Border Guard Force check point commander Hpoh Htaung. 2. This photo was taken in Myauk Kya In village, Haung Tha Yaw river bank, Kyonedoe Township. the DKBA Company Commander Sein Myint asks for 5,000 kyat from each motorboat [in tax]. This photo is taken at the check point with Commander Sein Myint.

Source #3

Log #	13-72-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: July 17th 2013</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The photo was taken on April 7, 2013. It describes the extensive mining of natural resources in Meh Kleh Klo village in Hpapun District. The photo shows the large scale of land that has been damaged due to the company's mining project in the village. 	

Source #4

Log #	13-74-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: July 17th 2013</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on May 5th 2013, when I [KHRG researcher] was in A--- village, Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District and I took this photo at the time that DKBA was recruiting in A--- village and four [other] villages; A-- - village's upper part and four villages of B--- pagoda's upper part of the river have to go for recruitment. Those recruited for the DKBA had to serve for three years, yet during this period a former DKBA battalion was transformed into the BGF and those serving in the DKBA had to continue serving in the BGF. After almost three years since recruiting the soldiers from these villages. BGF commander Maung Chit ordered that the soldiers should be replaced [they can't be discharged]. If there is no one to replace the soldiers, they [the people who are discharged] have to pay 	

2,000,000 kyat. So he collects the money from the villagers, [who are fearful of him]. The day that he [Maung Chit] collected the money is the day the photo was taken.

Source #5

Log #	13-120-I2
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: November 12th 2013</p> <p>On October 18th 2013, the security guard at the Lin Lon Myaing fined a boat driver because the driver took drunken men on his boat. One of the drunken men, Saw A--- was violently abused and he had to pay 40,000 kyat as a fine. Saw B--- also had to pay 40,000 kyat as a fine. He was not tortured but he was frightened when he saw his friend being violently abused in front of him. Saw C---, the boat driver also had to pay a 10,000 kyat fine. The people who committed the act of torture [violent abuse] are the unknown section's security guards at Lin Lon Myaing. They [the security guards] said that it is not allowed to take alcohol [on the boat]. The security guards searched the boat and found one bottle of alcohol and took it and drank all the alcohol and tortured [abused] the owner of the alcohol and beat him with an iron pump that was 6 feet long. Saw A--- has had to be given injections and had to take medicine [after the violent abuse] but he received no [financial] support [from the perpetrators]. They were arrested before noon [and held] until 5pm. They were released because influential people of the area, Saw D--- and Maung E---, vouched for them. The two drunken men were working at the nearby town of Kaw Taw [Myaing Gyi Ngu] and slept there. On that day [of the incident] they went to Ka Ma Maw and drank alcohol together but they did not seem drunk. They did not smell of alcohol but the people at the gate [accused them of being drunk and] fined them and tortured [abused] them.</p> <p>The victims allowed us to use this information not only to decrease human rights abuse but also to eliminate it.</p>	

Source #6

Log #	16-5-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: January 25th 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on November 29th 2015 in Tha Main Dwut village, Tha Main Dwut Village Tract, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. It shows a clinic constructed by the Myanmar government health department. However, since the clinic was constructed there have not been any health workers or medicine available. For these reasons, villagers couldn't use the clinic. 	

Source #7

Log #	15-7-D1
Title / type of report	Short Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	<p>Ko A--- has been living in Thandaung Town⁹ for approximately fifteen years. [Recently], he was summoned by Immigration Officer U Myo Tint and a lawyer named Yan Naing Aung who threatened him, [saying] that he is not allowed to stay in the downtown [section of Thandaung Town].¹⁰ He was summoned to the lawyer Yan Naing Aung's house on February 26th [2015], but did not officially meet him at his office.</p> <p>According to his account he is a Muslim and there is currently only one Muslim family with six family members living in Thandaung Town. Ko A--- said that he was summoned because his family is Muslim. The Immigration Officer U Myo Tint and lawyer Yan Naing Aung told him that only Christians and Buddhists are allowed to stay in Thandaung Town and that Muslims are not allowed. Moreover, they rudely threatened that if he keeps living [in Thandaung Town] they will sue him and put him in jail.</p> <p>Ko A--- was not informed about which date [he must] move on and also was not told how much time he had left before he must depart. He has no idea where to go and does not know who to ask for help; therefore he is anxious and in trouble. Ko A--- keeps saying that Immigration Officer U Myo Tint transferred from Rakhine State¹¹ last year and that it is known that he is a member of 969.¹²</p> <p>As for his business, Ko A--- opened a motorcycle spare part shop in Thandaung Town. It is known that there has not been religious discrimination among the local community [with the former immigration officer]. Ko A--- is speaking out about his worries that he may face many problems [in the future] and that he will eventually be eradicated [killed because he is Muslim].</p>

⁹ Thandaung Town is not to be confused with Thandaunggyi Town, the latter of which is located north of Thandaung Town. Both towns are located in Toungoo District.

¹⁰ According to the KHRG researcher who submitted this report, Ko A--- must relocate out of the centre of Thandaung Town, although he is allowed to reside in peripheral areas of the town.

¹¹ Rakhine State is located in western Burma/Myanmar along the border with Bangladesh. In the last few years, tension between Rakhine Buddhist and Rohingya Muslim communities have escalated, erupting into violence as of June 2012. See "[All You Can Do is Pray](#)," *Human Rights Watch*, April 22nd 2013. Later in 2012 and in 2013, further waves of unrest and violent clashes between Buddhists and Muslims have occurred across other areas in Burma/Myanmar, including notably in Meiktila, see "[State of emergency imposed in Meiktila](#)" *BBC News*, March 22nd 2013 and in Okkan, see "[Anti-Muslim Violence Tears Apart Communities Near Rangoon](#)," *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, May 2nd 2013. In 2012 and 2013, KHRG received several reports of discrimination against Muslims occurring in Karen State districts, see "[Incident Report: Religious discrimination and restrictions in Papun District, September 2012](#)," KHRG, March 2013, "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, September to December 2012](#)," KHRG, March 2013.

¹² 969 is a nationalist Buddhist movement led by monk U Wirathu, which promotes and encourages discrimination against minorities, particularly Muslims in Myanmar, a predominantly Buddhist nation. See "[Buddhism turns violent in Myanmar](#)," *Asia Times*, April 2013.

Source #8

Log #	14-7-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously published in June 2015: http://khrq.org/2015/06/with-only-our-voices-what-can-we-do-land-confiscation-and-local-response
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	<p><i>[These photo notes are drawn from a longer document providing details for photographs taken in Dooplaya District in February 2013. The other notes were not relevant to land confiscation in Myanmar since December 2012 and have been omitted for brevity.]</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Photo #0236 This photo was taken on November 25th 2013 in Kaw Khaw village, Lay T'Ler village tract, Kyonedoe Township and shows the trucks from the city carrying stone. They mine the stone and crush it into pieces and then put it in the truck and bring it with them. The person who is shown in the photo with the white shirt is U Tin Moe Aung. 2. Photo #0232 This photo was taken on November 25th 2013 in Kaw Khaw village, Kyonedoe Township. The photo shows U Tin Moe Aung crushing the stone. The people shown in the picture are not the workers, but KNU [Karen National Union] soldiers who travelled together with us. They brought the stone to the city. The roads and fences of the villagers are damaged but the villagers did not receive any support. They have to buy materials by themselves to repair the road. 3. Photo #0233 This photo was taken on November 25th 2013 in Kaw Khaw village, Kyonedoe Township. This is a video and the machines that are shown are the machines that crush the stones. They said in the past, in our parents' generation, we worked on flat fields and relied on it. We also paid the taxes for the flat fields. But now our flat fields are damaged and the paddy grains have also died; we don't know what to do. They showed us the flat fields that were damaged. 4. Photo #0243 This photo was taken on November 25th 2013 in Kaw Khaw village Lay T'Ler base and Kyonedoe Township. This is the photo of the villagers' flat fields that are damaged because of U Tin Moe Aung mining stone. The villagers' drains are exactly where the truck travels but the drains are covered with stone so the water that we can see here is from the villagers attempting to build a new drain in order to protect the paddy. The stone miners mined in this place again covering up the drain again. The woman in the picture is the owner of the flat field. 5. Photo #0246 This photo was taken on November 25th 2013 at the bottom of Lay Ta Ler cliff in Kaw Khaw village, Kruh Tuh [Kyonedoe] Township. This photo shows the paddy fields and the stones. As people are causing explosions on the cliffs, many of the stones are falling into the paddy fields; all of the paddy plants have been destroyed. The smaller of the stones are collected on the border of the paddy field. The owner of the paddy

field cannot collect and move the big stones. As for the channel that is seen in the picture, they try to make a new one. Only half of the paddy field is good and undamaged; the rest is all destroyed.

6. Photo #0248

This photo was taken on November 25th 2013 at the bottom of Lay Ta Ler cliff in Kaw Khaw village, Kruh Tuh [Kyonedoe] Township. This photo shows that the people who are cracking the piles of stone are all workers of U Tein Moe Aung. The photo also shows the paddy that has turned yellow in colour [destroyed by insects and bugs] and died.

7. Photo #0659

This photo was taken on January 1st 2014 in Seikgyi City, Kyainseikgyi Township. This photo is of the Tatmadaw confiscating the people's land. However, I have not got the exact news and the information yet.

Source #9

Log #	14-12-11
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Attack on villager
Date of Incident(s)	November 28 th 2013
Incident Location	B--- village, Ma Lay Ler village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District.

Victim Information	
Name	Saw A---
Age	35
Sex	Male
Nationality	Karen
Family	Married
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Christian
Position	Villager
Village	C--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Wunna	Company Commander	[Tatmadaw] Infantry Battalion #96	B--- Army camp	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

On November 27, 2013, Saw A--- went to D--- to look for wood to build his house with. On November 28, 2013, after he had looked for the wood he returned back to his village [by boat]. When he was on his way home he arrived at a place close to B--- Tatmadaw army camp, which is situated nearby to the river bank. Wunna and his soldiers were at the river bank. When they saw A---, they called him and shot at him once. Saw A--- took his boat to where Wunna was and Wunna brought him to the army camp. Wunna questioned Saw A--- who was afraid and after giving Wunna 100,000 kyat he was free to go.

2. Explain how the source verified this information:

This information is true because Saw A---faced this problem himself and after that he came to meet me and reported the incident to me in detail. Therefore the information is true.

3. Complete description of the incident:

Saw A--- faced this incident himself and afterwards he came to meet with me, a KHRG community member, and reported the incident. Saw A--- is 35 years old, married and lives in C--- village, Meh Kyoh village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. On November 27th 2013, he left C--- village by boat and went to D--- village to check on the wood which he wants to build his house with. When he was on his way back, he arrived in Ma Lay Ler village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The B--- Tatmadaw army camp is not very far from the river bank [where Saw A--- was]. The IB #96 army camp commander ordered his soldier to wait [at a check point] on the river bank and told them to stop every boat that passed by. If they couldn't stop the boat, he [the camp commander] told them to shoot at the boat. The soldiers followed the orders of their camp commander, Wunna. On November 28th 2013 at 12 o'clock, Saw A--- was returning back to his village by boat along with three other villagers, two women and one man. When they arrived at the river bank near B--- area, commander Wunna's soldiers called out to Saw A--- but he could not hear because of the noise from the boat as he was driving it. Suddenly, Wunna's soldiers shot at Saw A---'s boat.

Once Saw A--- heard the sound of the shooting, he looked at the river bank and saw the Tatmadaw soldiers. He then took his boat to the river bank. Once Saw A--- arrived at the river bank, the soldiers took him to the B--- army camp where their commander Wunna was. When Saw A--- arrived in front of commander Wunna, he [Wunna] questioned Saw A--- and threatened that if he didn't listen and respect what they said they would not let him go. Saw A--- was really afraid and was thinking of how to escape from the scene and get back to his village. Then, Saw A--- took out 100,000 kyat from his bag and gave it to commander Wunna. Once the commander received the 100,000 kyat, he let Saw A--- go. After that Saw A--- went back to his village and since then Saw A--- has been able to travel without any disturbance.

4. Permission for using the details:

The person who provided this information to me is the victim himself, Saw A--- and he gave me permission to use this information as he doesn't want his other friends to suffer like he did. He also wants us to release the information regarding this incident.

Source #10

Log #	14-13-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update

Publishing Information	Previously published in June 2015: http://khrhg.org/2015/06/with-only-our-voices-what-can-we-do-land-confiscation-and-local-response
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>The villagers from Day Lo Bu village and Wa Tho Lo village are the villagers who suffered human right abuses the most in Dwe Lo Township between November 12th 2013 and February 21st 2014. The villagers are doing cultivation, plantation, planting vegetables, peanuts, long beans, watermelon and eggplant for their livelihoods. Gold mining companies, Myint Mo Taung company and Hla Min Ta Htaung company, came and started gold mining in S--- [village], Meh Way Hta village tract. The villagers did not even have time to eat all of their vegetables that they grew and many things were destroyed.</p> <p>The gold mining started on November 15th 2013 [and carried on] until 2014 and the Company Operation Commander of Brigade #5 [Hpapun] Commander Kyaw They has been put in charge of it. He banned the villagers from travelling and only allowed the people that he likes to travel. It is difficult for the villagers to travel because of the restriction of movement.</p> <p>Regarding the gold mining in Meh Way Hta village by Myint Tar Yeik – Hla Min Ta Htaung companies, the leaders said that the companies and the headquarters of the KNU are working together and sharing the profit. They did not consult the villagers about the gold mining and ignored the will of the villagers and did it anyway</p> <p>Some villagers said that no one dares to complain to Commander Kyaw [They] because they are afraid that he will scold them. Some villagers said that they would be ruled by the army and the KNLA has the power like the Burmese soldiers ruled them in the past.</p> <p>Gold mining</p> <p>People are facing difficulties because of the gold mining in S--- village between November 12th 2013 and February 21st 2014. Some of the villagers from Meh Way Hta village, Meh Way village and Wa Tho Lo village lost their land and some lost some of their plantations.</p> <p>Some villagers said that in the past, when there was no gold mining in Meh Way Hta River, the villagers who live near Meh Way Hta River went and panned for gold in Meh Way Hta River. The villagers bought salt, fish paste, and clothes and used that money to send their children to school and they worked for their livelihoods like this. They [villagers] cannot go to the river and pan for gold this year because the Myint Tar Yeik company and Hla Min Ta Htaung company came in and mined for gold with big cars and with many workers.</p> <p>Saw B--- reported that the Karen leaders and rich people did not consult with the villagers. Now I [KHRG Researcher] am presenting you the report of Saw B---.</p> <p>I went to Meh Baw Htah village in Meh Way village tract on November 12th 2013 and met with a villager from Meh Baw Htah and asked him how he will ban the gold mining or will he [the villagers] ban the gold mining and he told me that the people [rich people] who are doing gold mining are dropped from the sky [they do not know where the perpetrators come from]. I know that Saw N--- [a villager] is feeling very upset according to his talk. I took the photos of the place and the places are very beautiful with trees. But now the place is not like before</p>	

and everything was destroyed because of the gold mining.

Restrictions

The gold mining started in Meh Way Hta village, Bu Lo River; Meh Toh village, Meh Kleh village since November 12th 2013 and the Company Operation Commander of Brigade #5 [Hpapun] Commander Kyaw They came and took security and restricted the villagers in many different ways.

Some civilians bought the land to do gold mining but Commander Kyaw They did not allow them and took back the land. If we look at this we can see that he did it by his own will and was like U Ne Win.¹³

Water

The gold mining happens every year in the summer time in Meh Way stream, Bu Tho stream, Meh Kleh stream from 2011 to 2014. The water is polluted because of so much gold mining. Villagers from Meh Baw Hta, Hpa Weh Hta, Hku Thu Hta, Mae Lay Ler, Kwee Ta Mer, Hpo HKeh Hta, Nyah Hsa Ghaw Hta and Ghaw Mu encounter water issues because water is scarce for bathing and drinking. Some villagers get the water from rubber pipes but it is not enough water for drinking and bathing. More than that, because the people who work in the gold mining business used so many chemicals the villagers do not dare to use the water for drinking and bathing because they are afraid that it would cause diseases. The polluted water not only causes problems for the villagers, but also causes problems for the fish, shrimp, buffalo and cattle. It causes diseases and causes the animals to die when they drink it.

Threats

M---, a Chinese man and wood trader, went to Meh Way village, the place where people are doing gold mining on November 17th 2013. He had to pass through the area that was controlled by Commander Kyaw They, the operation commander of Brigade #5 [Hpapun], and M--- thought that he would pay Commander Kyaw They a visit. Kyaw They did not say anything when he saw M--- and grabbed a gun off his soldier and shot three times to threaten M---. M--- was very frightened then went back to the boat and went back right away.

In my opinion M--- did not make any mistake. The only thing is he did not fulfill the will of Commander Kyaw They. The case that Kyaw They shot at M--- with a gun will just be like this [no action will be taken].

Wa Na, a company commander of the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] from IB #76, which is based in Kay Klaw K' Ler, Ma Lay Ler village tract, came to the riverside of Bu Lo River and Saw L---, a villager of P---, who was coming back from Meh Way by boat. Wa Na saw him and called to him. But Saw L--- did not hear it because of the noise of the engine boat. So Wa Na shot the gun three times. Then Saw L--- heard the sound of the gun and saw the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] so he drove the engine boat close to them. Then Wa Na said that Saw L--- did not respect him when he called him so that he must give him 1,000,000 kyat (US \$914.91). Saw L--- was frightened and gave Wa Na 1,000,000 kyat and Wa Na released him very quickly.

The movement of Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw]

LIB #555 is based in Meh Pre Hkee camp and Hku Thu Hta camp from 2013 to 2014 and IB

¹³ U Ne Win was the dictator who seized power in Burma in 1962.

#96 is based in Waw Mu camp, Kay Kaw camp and Meh Way camp. Forced labour, arbitrary taxation and asking for porters by the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers has reduced a lot. The Burmese soldiers who live in Wah Mu camp, Kay Kaw camp, Meh Way camp and Hku Thu Hta asked the village heads to arrange boats for them to transport their rations which they will eat for a year. The villagers who have a boat did it. The Burmese soldiers provided fuel and boat propellers for the villagers and the villagers were very happy. Some boat owners said that the Burmese soldiers are becoming nicer little by little. In the past [before the ceasefire], the Burmese army forced the villagers to do the labour for them, demanded and threatened the villagers so the villagers were afraid whenever they were asked to do something. Forced labour and arbitrary taxation is reducing a lot after the ceasefire and it is very good for us.

Healthcare

There is a hospital in our Dwe Lo Township and it is located in Ler Htoh Hpoh [village], Meh Thu village tract. Some villagers go to the township hospital when they are not feeling well. The Back Pack Health Workers (BPHWT) come and distribute medicine twice per year. The people who live very far from the hospital and people from the villages where Back Pack Health Workers cannot reach go to the hospital in the city because it is too expensive. There is no hospital in other villages and village tracts. Most of the diseases that villagers suffer from are flu, malaria, headaches and joint pain.

Education

There are a few high schools in Dwe Lo Township. Most of the schools are middle schools and primary schools. The villages that have many households set up middle schools and villages which have fewer households set up primary schools. All school age children have the chance to go to school in Dwe Lo Township. Some children who finished middle school go to refugee camps and some go to the city to continue their study. Some schools are supported by the Burmese government, some schools are supported by the KNU, while some schools are supported by Tharamu [teacher] Eh Thway and some schools are set up by the villagers on their own.

Livelihood of the villagers

In Dwe Lo Township, the villagers are working on cultivation and farming, while some people are working on agriculture like sesame, peanuts and beans for their livelihood. Some people who do not have cultivation fields and farming fields are working in gold mining, selling goods and pottery. Particularly, the land of the villagers who are living in Wa Tho Lo village, Meh Baw Hta village, Meh Way village in Meh Way village tract lost their land and their agriculture was destroyed in 2014 because Myint Tar Yeik [company], Hlah Min Ta Htaung [company] came and did gold mining in Meh Way Hta area.

The villagers who planted peanuts had to take out the peanuts before the time to take them out and villagers who planted watermelons had to pick their watermelons before they were ripe. The agriculture places of villagers in Meh Way Hta village were destroyed and they do not have the land to do agriculture in the coming year. They therefore encountered hardship.

Conclusion

All the information that is included in this report is true and I saw it with my own eyes. In my opinion, from 2013 to 2014, I think that the leaders from the Myanmar government side cannot govern anymore and the villagers will have to suffer more in the future if the military continues to rule. I think it would be great if they [KNU] modified the governing system.

Source #11

Log #	14-14-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Interview Date: January 31th 2014

What is your name?
Saw A---.

How old are you?
26 years old.

What was your previous village?
B--- village.

Where do you live now?
C--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

Why did you come to live in C--- village?
Enemies came and put pressure on us therefore we could no longer live there anymore and we had to come and take shelter here [C--- village].

What is your ethnicity?
Karen Animist.

What is your occupation?
I am working as a farmer.

Is there any other work that you are involved in?
I am also working as part of the home guard.

Have you gotten married?
Not yet.

How many siblings do you have?
7 siblings.

How many houses are there in B--- village?
18 houses.

What about the number of people?

189 people including both male and female.

Is there any challenge that you have to face when you are working as a home guard?

Yes, there is a challenge that I have to face. It is that I do not have the ability to protect our places of work [for farming].

Since you do not have the ability to do so, do you have to take up weapons and resist yourself?

Yes, I have to work for the resistance myself. I have to work at the front [line] and I have to be afraid of everything.

Has anyone died or has anything happened for you to suffer from an injury?

Yes, someone died on the 24th of this month [January].

Where did it happen?

In D--- village.

What time was it?

It was at 10:40.

Who was that?

Saw Shwe Thein.

How old was he?

He was 52 years old.

Did he live with his family?

He lived with his wife.

Did he have any children?

He did not have children.

So could you please tell us about how it happened?

The incident is that, when we went back to work on the plains and to pick up the chili in E--- village, we went back to trap [animals] and then we walked on the side [of the mountain] and it [Saw Shwe Thein was hit by a landmine] happened like that and we could not do anything.

Could you tell us more about the incident? Was that area near to the Tatmadaw army base?

The location where he was hit by landmine?

Yes

Yeah, it is not very far.

Where is the Tatmadaw army camp located?

Fa--- village.

How many hours does it take [to walk] between the place where the landmine location was and the Tatmadaw army camp?

It will be at most 10 minutes.

He was hit by a landmine, does the home guard use landmines?

Yes, they use [landmines] to protect themselves.

Was he hit by their landmine or the Tatmadaw landmine?

He was hit by the Tatmadaw's landmine that they had set up in the past.

So can you tell us about how he physically got hit by the mine and what injuries did he suffer from?

His ankle and neck were hit and injured and [the skin on] his palms was also broken. If only his ankle was hit, it [the damage] would not be that much but his neck was also hit.

From his neck [injury], did he die immediately? How long did he last?

He lasted [survived] for over 2 hours because I carried and took him back for a very long time.

Oh, did you two go together?

Only two of us went together.

You two went together and you carried him back. How long did it take for you to carry him back?

It took about one and half hours to carry him back by walking quickly.

Then what did you do?

Then I left him there with people and I ran back to the other people here.

When he was hit by the landmine, did he die immediately, or did he survive for a while?

He probably lasted for over 2 hours.

When he was hit by the landmine, did you carry him back directly or you stay together with him there until he died?

No, I carried him back directly [to the village]. We had been carrying muskets and we also threw all of them [the muskets] away there.

You carried muskets?

Yes, both of us had carried muskets but his musket was destroyed and moved [rolled] away.

You both carry guns for hunting?

Yes, we both carry muskets.

It is not the machine gun that shoots the Tatmadaw?

No, it is not.

So it took you about one and a half hours [to return] and you left him there and you came back here to call people to go and help you?

I left him there and I ask G---'s mother to wait for him.

Did she also go together with you?

No, she already went and stayed in the tent in her paddy field.

Did she have to wait for him alone?

Yeah, she had to wait alone; she is an old married woman.

Was not she afraid?

Yes, she said she was afraid but she cannot do anything. She said she has tied his ankle [to prevent blood loss] but he was almost dead at that time.

He had not died yet, by the time you came back and left him?

No, he had not died yet. He could still make a joke and said that he still had some medicine at his home but he could not know things clearly at that time.

So did he have the time to be treated with medicine?

Yes he had.

Did the health worker go to treat him?

When the health worker arrived there, he had already died. And as there are a lot of houses [surrounding when his friend kept him], the surrounding neighbours treated him with non-prescribed medicine [traditional medicine] and with their own knowledge.

How did you contact the health worker?

Since there is no phone to call they came by themselves and went back to the village.

He still had time to be injected with medicine?

Yes, he still had time to be injected.

And what did the health worker tell you about his condition?

He said there was no hope and that he is not free to look after him and [then] he passed

away.

Based on this person who was injured and later died, he has no children?

He has no children.

And he has a wife?

Yes he has. His wife is very old and it will not be very easy for her to work for her livelihood.

How old is she?

His wife will probably be 52 years old.

So they lived with only two people in their home?

Yes they lived with only two people.

Related to his wife, is there anyone like the KNU [Karen National Union] or the village head that has any plan to take care of her?

I do not know anything about that.

How long had he been working in the home guard?

It would probably have been for 7 or 8 years. I have never counted that.

He started to work the same time as you did?

Yes

It has been 7 or 8 years?

7 years.

Related to the home guard, is there anything that they plan to do to look after him [his surviving wife] like providing food or [provisions] for their home?

I do not know anything right now; I think they have no plan.

So they [home guard] live and work on the farm and look after themselves and take the responsibility for the security and have to be careful about things like that? They have very strong desire and are organised by themselves?

Yes, things like that. They have to work and protect our [civilians] lives. If we depend on the energy of our leaders who are the soldiers, we also have to work together. [common Karen phrase; reaffirming commitment to the Karen leaders]

So regarding the home guard, are there any incidents where they have to go to attack and where the commander of the soldiers are situated like soldiers in the past [engaged in active fighting]?

No, that does not happen.

So they have to be careful and have to take the responsibility for the security. And if

they meet with the Tatmadaw, they will shoot and run away like that?

Even if we have a musket, we will shoot at them like that.

Based on the one person that was hit by the landmine and died, was it by the Tatmadaw's landmine, is it sure?

Yes, it is certain because we went back to the gun [musket] to go look at it.

Related to these landmines, do you think that there are landmines that the Tatmadaw are planting?

They told [warned] local people before they got hit by the landmine and said if you are going around, watch out for your surroundings. They do not exactly tell us where they planted the landmine and they just point out the direction such as that the landmines are planted from the east or the west of the village only [don't give more detailed further information].

If so, how do they know about this issue?

They know from the other side.

You mean from the KNU side?

Yes.

Regarding the Tatmadaw, do you know if they have any plans related to their present activity?

I do not know. As for their army camps, it is certain that they are trying to build them better.

Can you tell me how do they physically strengthen their army camps?

They are cutting down big trees to build their camp which is very big. The trees measure about 2 arm spans and they cannot be carried with only one person.

Do you know how they build it?

I do not know. I think they will build with it [the trees]. They will probably not use it for fire-wood.

Are there any development projects taking places in this area?

There is no development [projects carried out in this area].

For example, like building pagodas, is there anything being constructed?

They¹⁴ build the pagodas.

Have you seen them?

Yes, I see them.

Are there any other things that they have set up, for example setting up the

¹⁴ KHRG is in the process of clarifying who 'they' refers to in this context.

telecommunication tower for their communication?

In Fa--- village, I do not know whether they have set up it or not but there are some pagodas.

In your personal opinion how do you think the Tatmadaw is doing regarding the [Nationwide] ceasefire? Will they still continue to conduct military activities in the future or not?

I have no idea about that. I think they will hold the ceasefire permanently and we will have a chance to go back to our former village. When we came to live here, we did not dare to go back and we were afraid of everything.

Do you know if they are sending rations?

They have not sent any rations at present.

What about their soldiers, are the number of their soldiers increasing or decreasing?

The numbers of the soldiers are not increasing right now.

What have you heard about the movement of military activity? Have their activities increased or decreased?

They [Tatmadaw] are cutting down the trees, singing and coming down to carry and collect water. We can hear [them] very closely.

Is there any time that they have met with the villagers?

No, that has not happened since we have lived here.

Do you dare to show yourself to the soldiers?

It has been a long time and I have not dared to show myself [be seen by them].

What about the other people in other villages? Is there anyone that you know who has dared to show themselves to the soldiers?

I do not know about the other villages and other districts.

Do you think that the current ceasefire from the Tatmadaw is a true ceasefire or a fake ceasefire?

I think it will presently be a fake ceasefire. If it is a true [ceasefire], they should give us the opportunity to go back to our villages and we will go back to live in our villages.

Is there any villager out of any of your friends that you know, who has gone back to work on paddy fields which are near to the location of the Tatmadaw army camp?

There has been no one yet. However, this year we hope that we are going back to work there. When we were displaced here, there were no trees left. If the time comes, we surely will go back and work there.

If you had a chance to go back and work there, is there anyone who will protect your security, like the KNU?

No, we have to work with our friends who are the home guards.

In your village, are all villagers working on farms? Are there any other different types of occupation that they are working on?

All of them are working as farmers. No one is working on the paddy fields on the plain [flat land]. They are all working on the hill fields.

Do they have enough rice?

No, no one has enough rice.

Out of the 18 houses in your former village, how many will have enough rice?

There will probably be 3 or 4 houses that have enough rice, but only for themselves. As for the others, they have to find it by themselves and they have to buy the rice. Now they are working with their bulls [using traditional methods to farm].

Why do they not have enough rice?

It is because we cannot live in our own places and work on the paddy fields on the plains [area], we can only work in the hills field.

Do they have to leave their paddy fields because the insects come and eat the crops growing on the paddy fields? Is the abnormal weather also destroyed the paddy fields?

Yes, all of these problems are there. There is the abnormal weather, the insects and the mice which come and eat the rice.

Regarding the insufficient rice, what have the village head or the regional leaders suggested they do to help you?

No one can do anything, even the village head.

You have to find the ways yourself and work together?

Yes, the village head also has to work very hard.

And then they have work for day labour?

Yes they have to.

Related to the landmine, how many groups use the landmine in the region where you live?

There are only 2 groups who use the landmine. They are the KNU [KNLA] and the Tatmadaw.

As for the KNU [KNLA], what kind of landmine do they use?

They use ones that they make from gun powder and pieces of bamboo.

Where do they get the gunpowder from?

I have no idea about that. Maybe they make it themselves.

What about the Tatmadaw?

I do not know. They are very strong and they could make it with steel or rubber.

The landmines they use are original [new] and are probably from another country. So why are the Tatmadaw using landmines?

I do not know about that. They may use them for their self-protection. It also may be to hurt our [Karen] people.

Are they set up only for the soldiers [to step on] or are the villagers also hit by the landmine?

The villagers and animals are hit as well as soldiers. They [the Tatmadaw] were planting them on the ground, which I saw in the past.

As for the KNU, what is their intention in using landmines?

I think they use them for their self-protection.

It is for their self-protection and for the security of the villagers to work on [their land] safely?

And if the Tatmadaw come, they will have difficulty.

If the villagers hear the sound of the landmines explosion will they run away?

They will run and we will clear the way for them.

The use of landmines has become a great concern for the villagers. Therefore is there any way to let the villagers know the location of landmines?

If KNU use landmines, they inform us [of their location] and tell us where we can go and where not to go. As for the Tatmadaw, I don't know anything. [About their location or whether they informed villagers of their location].

In your region, can you estimate how many total landmines were used [planted] by you [home guard] and the KNU?

It will be over 70 or 80 landmines.

Are villagers and soldiers frequently hit and die by the landmine? Which group are more vulnerable, soldier or villagers?

As for that, more than one or two people die every year. Both the villagers and soldiers are hit by landmines. The animals are also hit by landmines.

Who takes the responsibility to treat the villagers if they are hit by the landmine or if they die as a result of the landmine?

Only the health worker takes responsibility and if we do not have enough of them, we cannot do anything.

What about the villagers; is there any health worker available to treat them?

Yes, there are some health workers to help them.

You mean the villagers themselves take the responsibility?

Yeah, they themselves. For example we, the home guard, we also go and have some [first aid] training.

Have you received training?

Yes, they give us training.

Going back to the villager who died from the landmine, how do you feel about what happened to him?

It happened suddenly and I could not do anything. As he got very seriously injured, I had to take care of him and tie up [the wound] on his ankle. There was no piece of cloth and I had to tear my shirt and tie up the wound as best as I could.

That is right. But if it happens to you like this, you will have difficulty in your family regarding livelihoods.

It has not only happened to her [Saw Shwe Thein's wife]. As she has to live alone, she will have trouble in working on the farm, cutting down the bamboo and the trees and other activities.

And she is a woman.

Yes, she is a woman and she is old.

So life will be difficult for her. She has to work on the farm as well as taking on the responsibilities of her husband.

There are a lot of difficulties for her. She has to cut down the bamboo and the trees. She also has no children [to help her].

Because of the landmine, have people had to leave their working places such as the paddy fields?

We have had to leave a lot of the paddy fields which we cannot work on.

Is it because of the KNU's landmines or the Tatmadaw's landmines?

Because of the Tatmadaw's landmines.

Due to the Tatmadaw's landmines people had to leave their hill fields, paddy fields, and their rice?

Yes, they had to leave them.

Are there obstacles and delays for villagers with regard to going to work, and traveling and trading, because of the landmines?

Yes there are.

So what obstacles do you have?

If it is the Tatmadaw's landmine, we cannot go safely so we do not dare to travel. As for the KNU's landmine, they tell us [the landmine's location], and they clear the way for us so we can travel.

Is there anything else that you would like to add on the issues relating to the Tatmadaw being located in your region?

I would like to say that if they move away, we will be able to go back and live in our places and we will also be able to work on our home land. We have stayed away from it for a long time and we miss our home land. Since they have come to stay we do not dare to go back.

Are there any other important things you would like to mention?

The important thing is that if we go back, we will be able to live in our home land.

Thank you.

Source #12

Log #	14-14-I3
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District

Full Text

On December 22nd 2013, I met with A--- village head Saw B---, 57 years old, and vice village head Saw C---, 39 years old, who are both from Hplah Hkoh village tract. They [have been] displaced since 1975 and suffered from Tatmadaw attacks and until now they cannot go back to their own village. The village and vice village head reported the information as detailed below.

“My village has 10 households and 85 people living in the village. Even though villagers are hill farmers, they don’t have enough paddies or food. This year, KORD [Karen Office of Relief and Development] members who helped us, told us that this [the aid] is not emergency [aid], but for insufficient food. As they provided food for three months to each person, it is a great help for us. If we look at villagers from nearby villages, they also face the same problem as us. If we look at the Tatmadaw situation, even though the leaders signed a [preliminary] ceasefire, the Tatmadaw has not withdrawn any of their military [groups] but they send more rations and repair their road and army bases. Because they fired a mortar, we civilians have to live in fear and we have to always be careful. We thought that these things would have changed, but only [one change is that] they do not come and attack us. We hoped that we would be able to go back and stay in our own places and it is [still] our main goal.”

The victims gave us permission to use this information so that the leaders will know their situation and that foreign countries will also know what the civilians are suffering from and how the Tatmadaw abuse them. Moreover, they [the victims] also want to go back and live peacefully in their own villages.

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Source #13

Log #	14-14-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Introduction

In Northern Lu Thaw Township [Hpapun District], there are five village tracts and they are (1) Ler Muh Plaw village tract, (2) Saw Muh Plaw village tract, (3) Hkay Poo village tract, (4) Noh Yoh Hta village tract and (5) Kaw Loo Der village tract. There are 21 places where the Tatmadaw army is based and they are Htee Htaw Per, Khaw Daw Hkoh, Hkay Poo, Ler Muh Plaw, Saw Muh Plaw, Hpah Gaw Loh, Der Kyoo Hkoh, Paw Khay Hkoh, Pga Gaw, Maw Law, Kuh Hkwah Hkoh, Hpla Hkoh, Kaw Thway Kyoh, Maw Hpoo, Kyuh Loo, Ler Klay Kyoh, Kaw Way Kyoh, Paw Hee Kyoh, T'Khaw Hta, Saw Hta and Thee Muh Hta.

Tatmadaw army bases and their activities

The Tatmadaw armies which are based in Northern Lu Thaw Township are MOC [Military Operation Command] #8, MOC #9 and Ta Pa Ka [Southern Command Headquarters, Toungoo]. Htee Htaw Per and Khaw Daw Hkoh are under LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #376 and Hkay Poo is under LIB #379 and both LIB #376 and #379 are under MOC #9 control. Ler Muh Plaw, Saw Muh Plaw and Hpah Gaw Loh are under LIB# 410, Maw Law is under LIB #406, Der Kyoo Hkoh, Paw Khay Hkoh and Pga Gaw is under LIB #404, Kuh Hkwa Hkoh, Pla Hkoh and Kaw Thway Kyoh are under LIB #405, Maw Hpoo, Kyuh Loo and Ler Klay Kyoh are under LIB #401 and Kaw Way Kyoh and Paw Hee Kyoh are under LIB #402. The LIB #410, 406, 404, 405, 401 and 402 are under MOC #8. The battalions which are under MOC #8 will be replaced with MOC #10 soon. I received this information from a Brigade #5 [Hpapun] Military Intelligence. Htee Htaw (T'Khaw Hta), Saw Hta and Thee Muh Hta are under LIB #603 and it is under MOC control.

Tatmadaw Activity

On December 7th 2013, the Tatmadaw army which is based in Paw Khay Hkoh fired a mortar six times into the Kuh Day region, then again on December 8th where they fired four times and on December 9th they fired 18 times into the Kuh Day and the Tee Thoo Der regions. However none of the villagers were injured. On December 21st 2013, the Tatmadaw based in Kuh Hkwah Hkoh fired mortars three times but again villagers were not injured. The Tatmadaw Army repaired their vehicular road and they also made vehicle tracks which were over 1 foot deep [in order to see landmines], as they were worried that the KNLA might plant landmines. If they [KNLA] had planted landmines, they [Tatmadaw] would be able to see them [as they made the track deeper]. They also repaired their army trenches and fences. Thus, the villagers are afraid and worried that there would be fighting even though there is a ceasefire.

Civilians' situation

Civilians, from Northern Lu Thaw Township are mostly engaged in hill cultivation and farming. However many of them, especially people from Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Hkay Poo village tract and Kaw Loo Der village tract, are not yet able to go back and stay in their village. They also do not want to face [be under control of] the

Tatmadaw. The hill farming area is becoming narrower and the working space is also getting less each year as they [villagers] have been living together [in one place] for a long time already [this has damaged the quality of the soil available for farming]. Ler Muh Plaw, Saw Muh Plaw and Hkay Poo village tracts are divided into two parts because of the Tatmadaw vehicular road. In Lu Thaw Township, there are two vehicular roads and to date, when civilians are travelling, the KNLA or the home guards have to guide them. In the year 2014, because of the insects and rats [destroying crops and produce], there is not enough [produce from the] paddies for many of the households and in the case of some places like Yay Goh Loh Der village, they had to abandon their hill fields. As the hill farms are close to the Tatmadaw camp, they dare not do farming. In Ler Muh Plaw village tract, there are about one hundred farmers' lands which are about a thousand acres of land [in total] that villagers dare not go back and work on as they are afraid that the Tatmadaw might shoot and kill them. As the hill farms are close to the Tatmadaw camp, they [villagers from Goh Loh Der] dare not engage in farming activity [in these areas]. In Ler Muh Plaw village tract, there are about one hundred pieces of farm land, about a thousand acres of land [in total], which villagers dare not go back to and work on as they are afraid that the Tatmadaw would shoot and kill them.

Education

Regarding education, the schools can teach without difficulties and operate smoothly and well. Each teacher is provided 5000 THB¹⁵ [147.10 USD] for each person [per year]. Teachers with family members [married teachers] must also farm in order to feed their children.

Conclusion

Northern Lu Thaw Township has five village tracts and I see that villagers do not have a desire to leave the place and to claim refugee status in Thailand. Some villagers do not have enough food but they said that even if they have to find food by working in the morning and eating in the evening [a Karen saying which refers to living a hand to mouth existence], they will still only live in their own place. Whether they live or die, they said “*ta hkay ler a kaw ta khaw ler a maw*” [the lion has its own territory and so does the deer. Meaning; we all must have our own territory]. Thus, if the leaders solve the food problem, nothing would make them retreat. This is the situation based on the villagers' perspectives.

Source #14

Log #	15-17-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	<p>1. This photo was taken on December 25th 2014 in Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The photo show mechanical backhoes digging and searching for gold. On January 10th 2015, an unnamed gold mining company entered Hpapun District and started mining from Wa Muh to the mouth of Meh Way Kloh river. The district and brigade administrators prohibited the company from mining in the area, but they could not</p>

¹⁵ All conversion estimates for the baht in this Situation Update are based on the June 22 2017 official market rate of 33.98 baht to US \$1.

stop them. Even though the gold mining negatively impacted the villager's lands, the KNU's district and brigade administrators held discussions and the KNU decided that they would give the company permission to do gold mining only from February to May 2015. The company's activity brought problems for villagers since it destroyed their lands and caused problems for people native to the area. The photos describe these people who are the owners of the land when they come and look at their land which people working on their land.

2. These photos show a backhoe dig out the ground, searching for the gold.
3. These photos show villagers who own the land went to the place where their land is located and marked their land and ask people to ensure [protect] their land.
4. These photos show backhoes digging out the soil or ground.
5. These photos show villagers whose lands were destroyed by the gold project as they went to see their land situation.
6. These photos show the process when they dig the gold.
7. The photos show the place where villagers from Meh Way Klo grow vegetables, which was destroyed by a gold mining project.

Source #15

Log #	14-21-A3-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	<p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is A---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I am 16 years old.</p> <p>What is your village?</p> <p>A--- Village.</p> <p>What is your occupation?</p> <p>I study.</p> <p>So you are a student?</p>

Yes.

In which Grade are you in?

I am in Grade 9.

What is your village tract?

Meh K'law village tract

What about your Township?

Bu Tho Township.

And District?

Mutraw (Hpapun) District.

How many households in your village?

Maybe around [number censored for security].

Do you also know the population number [of the village]?

No.

As a student, where do you attend school at the moment?

I attend school at Hpapun School.

Is Hpapun School a [Myanmar] government funded school?

Yes.

How many teachers do you have at your school?

I don't know how many teachers are left because I do not go to school anymore.

How about students?

There are over a hundred students in each class.

Do you mean only in your class?

No, the whole school. I don't know for the whole school.¹⁶

So is Hpapun School a primary school or middle school or high school?

High school.

¹⁶ A KHRG researcher is following up to clarify whether this number refers to the class or the school.

What is the name of the [Myanmar government] Minister of Education?

Daw Aye Myint Than.

Can you study freely?

Yes.

How long has it been since you left school?

Since I got injured.

Why did you leave school?

Because I got injured.

How did you get injured?

In a car accident.

How did the car hit you?

It hit my shoulder and then grazed my bicycle grip.

Do you remember the date when you had a car accident? It happened on what day?

On Thursday.

What was the date?

January 16th [2014].

Was the car that hit you a military vehicle or a civilian vehicle?

Military vehicle.

From what battalion is that?

Sorry?

From which battalion does that military vehicle belong to?

It is [from] a tactical battalion.

Was it when you were going to school or when you were on your way back from school when you were hit by a car?

On my way back from school.

What time was that?

It was around 4pm.

You fell down after the car hit you and then it grazed your hand. Did it happen like that?

It did not graze my hand. I fell down because of the uneven ground as there were stones on the road and I put out my arms to break the fall.

Were your arms broken?

Yes.

Did he [the car driver] look after you after the car accident?

Just two or three days after the accident.

So he did not look after you straightaway after the accident happened?

No.

So who helped you get up?

I couldn't get up by myself. Somebody just helped me to get up.

And then you were taken to the hospital? [First Naw A--- was taken to Hpapun Hospital and then she was taken to Hpa-an Hospital]

Yes.

Did he [the car driver] take care [of the medical fees] when you went to hospital?

He just came [to the hospital] after the police called him. He did not come to the hospital before the police phoned him.

So he came to you when the police went and called him?

Yes but not the driver.

So the person who came to you was just his commander?

Yes.

Is that the tactical commander?

He is a military commander.

Is he in a three stars [company commander] position?

I don't know about that.

So you don't know his name?

No, I just know the name of driver.

Is he the commander of that driver?

No, that guy cannot drive a car, his name is Kyaw Htay.

Don't you know his age?

No, he only came [to hospital] once.

Did the car driver come to see you after the car accident happened and when you were in hospital?

No and his commander only came for two days.

What did he tell to you when he [the driver's commander] came to see you?

He said that he would take care [of the medical fees] until I am well recovered.

When the police called them, did the commander or the driver come?

The driver did not come.

So only his commander came?

Yes.

Did he actually take care of [your hospital fees] as he had promised?

No, when I was referred to Hpa-an [hospital] he only gave me 95,000 kyats.

He gave you 95,000 kyats when you were referred to Hpa-an hospital?

Yes.

What about when you were in hospital in Hpapun? [First Naw A--- was taken to Hpapun Hospital and then she was taken to Hpa-an Hospital]

I don't know about that. Maybe the medic asked him for the fees directly.

How long were you at Hpa-an hospital?

Eight days.

Did you have to pay the medical fees for the eight days?

Yes.

How much did it cost you?

For the operation fee, it cost over 40,000 kyats.

For one operation is cost over 40,000 kyats?

Yes, it cost 45,000 kyats and 65,000 kyats for the X-ray.

How much for the X-ray?

65,000 kyats.

Were there any other medical fees that you had to pay?

The X-ray fee for two days cost 30,000 kyats.¹⁷

How about for food? Did you have to buy food?

Yes, my father bought food and sometimes people brought food for me.

The hospital is a [Myanmar] government hospital, right?

We were in hospital in Hpa-an so I think it is a [Myanmar] government hospital.

How many days were you in Hpa-an [hospital]?

Eight days.

How much did the fees cost in total, do you think?

The transportation fee was 7,000 kyats for one person. It was just from Hpapun to K---village. According to the agreement we were only allowed two people to go to hospital.

Was that agreement between you and the medic at [Hpapun] hospital or between you and the Tatmadaw commander?

That agreement was with the Tatmadaw commander.

He said that only two people could go [to Hpa-an hospital]?

Yes.

And he paid 95,000 kyats for two people [for the hospital fees]?

Yes, but the actual cost in total was more than 95,000 kyats.

Was that 95,000 kyats enough for you while you were in hospital for eight days at Hpa-an hospital?

No.

¹⁷ KHRG is in the process of following up to clarify this cost.

So you had to pay it by yourself?

Yes.

Were you discharged from the hospital before you had recovered well or because you had recovered?

I had not recovered well.

Was that because you didn't like to be in hospital?

No.

You just asked to be discharged from the hospital?

Yes.

Did you come back to Hpapun hospital for [more] treatment?

Yes, but it [the injury] did not recover [heal] easily so I went to section 4 [of the Town] and got treatment over there.

So when you went back to Hpapun hospital for treatment, what did they tell you?

They just told me to come and take medicine everyday but, even though I did that, it [the injury] did not recover [heal] easily.

Did he [the Tatmadaw commander] come and see you when you went back to Hpapun hospital?

No.

How much did it cost you when you were in hospital in Hpapun hospital?

The medics handled it.

I mean the medication fee?

The medics at hospital did not tell me about that.

Do you mean they didn't even tell you that you need to pay or did they say you do not need to pay?

They did not tell me anything when I was discharged from the hospital.

You didn't go and ask them about that either?

No, I did not. When I went to Hpa-an hospital, people asked them [medics] about that [medication fees] but they did not say anything about it apart from saying that they will talk about it when I come back from Hpa-an hospital. But they [the Hpapun medics] did not tell

me anything when I came back from Hpa-an hospital.¹⁸

**So who will talk about the medication fee when you come back from Hpa-an hospital?
Is that the person in charge of Hpapun hospital?**

I do not know.

So just the medics from the Hpapun hospital?

Yes, they [Hpapun medics] said, “we will deal with the medication fee later”.

That means that they [the Hpapun medics] will offer you free service?

What do most villagers do for their livelihood in the village?

Farming.

Most Karen people do farming for the livelihood, don't they?

Right.

**Are villagers able to survive [support themselves] sufficiently for the whole year by
what they have earned?**

Not everyone.

So are there more people who can survive sufficiently or people are insufficient?

More people can survive sufficiently.

How do people who cannot survive sufficiently solve their problems?

They just have to depend on their relatives' support.

**Does that mean that people who cannot earn sufficiently for the livelihood can deal
with their hardship?**

Yes.

Have you ever seen Tatmadaw enter your village?

I haven't see Tatmadaw come to our village last year and they have not been to our village
for three years.

Do they [Tatmadaw] still come [to the village] after the ceasefire?

No.

¹⁸ KHRG is in the process of following up to clarify the meaning of this point.

What about the KNU [Karen National Union]?

No.

Can villagers work freely for the livelihood?

I think so.

How about freedom of movement?

Yes.

What is your view on Tatmadaw?

I have no opinion.

Do you think they are good or bad?

They are bad.

How?

I don't know.

You said that they are not good. So do you mean that [because] when the car accident happened with you because of them and you got injured and had to go to hospital, and they did not take complete responsibility for that?

[Person #2:] They [Tatmadaw] did not support me [her] sufficiently. It is because [I am] Karen, that is why they do not care. If [the case affected] other ethnic people, they [Tatmadaw] would be sued seriously [because the police would take action].

Do you mean that they do not value the Karen people?

Yes.

Is that because they do not regard Karen people as capable people who are not good at communication for solving problems and they think they can do whatever they want to?

I think so.

How about their leaders? Did they come and see you when you were in hospital?

They came twice.

In those two days did their [Myanmar] government offer you any support?

No, they only came once on the day when we went to Hpa-an hospital.

The people of the Myanmar government military [Tatmadaw] had already hit Karen people by a car [accident]; did they try to handle the case in order to solve the problem?

No.

Did they come and see you?

No, only the driver came and he only saw me once when I was in Hpapun [hospital].

You said that police went and called him and when he came, what did the police say to him?

The police just told him that this [the person he hit with his car] is a student so he had to take responsibility to take care of her until she had recovered well.

Did he [the car driver] say yes?

Yes.

Does that mean that if you had not been a student, they would not have taken responsibility to take care of you?

Yes.

Do you think they want to discriminate against Karen people? What is your opinion?

I think so. They might want to discriminate against Karen people.

How can you compare [the situation] before the ceasefire with after ceasefire? Do you see it is getting better or worse?

Maybe it is getting worse.

How?

Maybe it is getting better; however, in my opinion, Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers are always bad.

What do you think about KNU and Tatmadaw? Do you think that they are good or bad? Which one is good and which one is bad?

What is KNU?

[Person #2:] KNU is a Karen soldier [army].

How much does a viss¹⁹ of chicken cost in the village?

¹⁹ A viss is a unit of weight equivalent to 1.6 kg or 3.52 lb.

5,000 kyats per viss.

How about pork?

3,000 kyats per viss if we buy from other people but if we buy from a relative [it costs] 2,500 kyats per viss.

What about the price of rice?

It is 5,000 kyats for a bag of rice.

Is there a school in the village?

Yes.

How many teachers are there?

One male teacher and four female teachers.

How many students are there?

I have no idea.

Can students study freely?

I think so.

Is there a clinic in the village?

Yes.

Is that a clinic or just a medic that offers [medical] services?

The medic that gives an injection service.

What is the common disease affecting [people] in the village?

Just fever.

And do the medics who offer the service give treatment for that disease?

Yes.

Where do they refer the patients to when the disease is not treatable [in the village]?

They refer them to the Hpapun.

To Hpapun hospital?

Yes.

Do they [patients] have to pay [for the fee]?

Yes.

Is that a public [Myanmar government] hospital or a private hospital?

Public [Myanmar government] hospital.

Do you still have to pay in the public [Myanmar government] hospital?

Yes.

Have you ever heard of the hospital providing a free service?

No.

What is your opinion on what you have suffered from the car accident with Tatmadaw [soldiers]?

I think it is not good.

Is there anything else that you would like to say that I have not asked?

No.

Well then, thank you.

Source #16

Log #	14-21-11
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	A Tatmadaw soldier stabbed a villager with a knife
Date of Incident(s)	November 10 th 2013
Incident Location	B--- Section # (2), Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Victim Information	
Name	Unknown
Age	Unknown
Sex	Male
Nationality	Kaw La Thoo [Muslim]
Family	No
Occupation	Odd Job
Religion	Muslim

Position	Villager
Village	B---Section #(2)

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Unknown	Follower	IB [Infantry Battalion] # 341	Whay Naung old village area	Unknown

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

This case [incident] happened in B--- Section #(2); the villager is a taxi driver. Three deserting soldiers from [Tatmadaw] IB [Infantry Battalion] # 341 asked him [taxi driver] to take them to Ka Ma Moh. While he was on the way, by the time he arrived at A--- village, he had realised that they were in fact deserters from the Burmese [Tatmadaw] army and he stopped taking them [to Ka Ma Moh]. The three deserters were worried that he [taxi driver] was going to report them to their leaders and he [one of the deserters] stabbed the villager [taxi driver] twice with a knife.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The person who gave me this information is called Maung B--- and they [Maung B--- and the victim] are relatives. He visited the victim when he was in the hospital and he [the victim] explained the case step by step and he [victim's relative] knew about the case [incident].

3. Complete description of the incident

The incident happened on November 10th 2013, in A--- village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, on the road in B--- Section #(2). An unknown [to the deserters] *Kaw La Thoo* [Muslim] taxi driver was requested by the three Burmese [Tatmadaw] deserters from IB# 341 to drive them to Ka Ma Moh. By the time he [taxi driver] had reached A--- village, he realised that they were Tatmadaw deserters and he dared not continue to take them [to Ka Ma Moh]. He [taxi driver] was worried that if he took them [to Ka Ma Moh] and if their [deserters] leader knew, he [Tatmadaw leader] would blame him. Whereas for the three Burmese [Tatmadaw] deserters, they were worried that if he [taxi driver] did not continue taking them, he [taxi driver] would report them to their leader and if their leader knew about them [and their escape] they could not successfully escape. [Therefore] he [one of the deserters] took out a knife and stabbed [the taxi driver] two times. He [taxi driver] then tried to escape and ran away into A--- village. He [taxi driver] told the villagers what had happened to him and then he was taken to the hospital. The victim dared not report it [the incident] to me because he was worried that if the Burmese [Tatmadaw] superiors knew, they would make more problems for him. He dared not report it because he lives in the town. The Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers and the Government do not like *Kaw La Thoo* [Muslim]. I knew about this incident because one of his friends [relatives] told me about this incident when he [victim] was in the hospital. He [the victim friend] told me about the case [incident] step by step.

4. Permission for using the details

For this incident, the victim was afraid and worried that if the information is shown [on the

internet] the Burmese Government leaders would do something [against him]. Therefore, he did not allow a photo to be taken of him and he did not accept to be interviewed.

Source #17

Log #	14-21-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I [KHRG researcher] took these photos on January 7th 2014, in Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun district, in Baw Hta village at village head Saw AAH---'s house. The Burmese government health department distributed mosquito nets to the villagers. They asked Baw Hta villager Saw Poh to help them when they were distributing the mosquito nets. Some villagers feel an itch when they use the mosquito nets. 2. I [KHRG researcher] took these photos on January 22nd 2014, in Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun district, in the lower part of Meh Th'Roh Kloh village and the photos show the [Tatmadaw] Battalion #642's military weapons and supervisory troop's camp and the camps fence which is being strengthened so that if the villagers go around [they] cannot see inside the camp. 	

Source #18

Log #	14-23-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos were taken on March 21st 2014 in T'Ree Ta Hkoh village in Brigade (6) [Dooplaya District]. For health care, the [Myanmar] government set up a clinic in the village. It is good for the villagers. Yet, if the villagers are sick they do not get the medicine [for] free, they have to pay for it all. Although it [the clinic] is for the poor, for those who cannot afford their health care, everything [paying for the medicine] becomes problematic for them. 	

Source #19

Log #	14-24-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: April 21st 2014</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Photo #3254</i> 	

It shows some burnt houses and new houses that are built. They lost their rice store; therefore, they face very big problems. There is no donor; they [IDPs] only have some people helping them build houses and collect bamboo. The helpers are Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] and Karen soldiers [KNLA]. I think this is the first time the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] and Karen soldiers [KNLA] are rebuilding the burnt houses [of villagers] together.

Source #20

Log #	14-28-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: April 21st 2014</p> <p>1. <i>Photos #1048 to #1050</i> These photos were taken on March 24th 2014, in HHk--- village, Htee Lon village tract, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. It shows Tatmadaw Battalion #203 gathered all Muslim villagers to relocate in Htee Lon village which you see in the photo. They confiscated the site of a mosque and Muslim residential area before they relocated them in that village. The confiscated land affected around 38 Muslim householders. The Tatmadaw confiscated their lands and built up a water storage facility which additionally destroyed their paddy fields.</p>	

Source #21

Log #	14-28-S6
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrgh.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Nabu Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
<p>I want to report about the K--- village, Kyeh Paw village tract, Ta Nay Hsah Township, Hpa-an District. The BGF [Border Guard Force] went to Ka Lah Koh and drove out the Kaw La Thu²⁰ from the village and set up their camp in K--- village. That is BGF Battalion #1016 and the Battalion Commander's name is Saw Myah Khaing. They drove out the Kaw La Thu from the whole village and took over all [their] yards, fields and cultivation fields. The names of the people whose lands were taken over by the BGF are:</p> <p>1. Ph--- 2. Ma L---</p>	

²⁰ *Kaw La Thu*, "thu" meaning black, is a S'gaw Karen term which is sometimes used to refer to individuals in Burma/Myanmar who are perceived to have a darker skin colour. In Kayin state, it is often associated specifically with followers of Islam (Muslims), although this association is sometimes erroneous, and Muslim individuals do not typically self-identify with this term.

3. Be S---
4. She K---
5. S---
6. Ma---
7. Ah N---
8. Noh R---
9. Ah D---
10. Dor L---
11. Maw P---
12. Na T---
13. Hka S---
14. Lay P---
15. Mu S---
16. Ah D---
17. Zaw L---
18. Oh P----
19. Meh T--- and a Mosque.

These *Kaw La Thu* were displaced after their lands were confiscated and some of them went to live in Ka---, some of them moved to Ba---, some of them moved to Ht--- and some of them fled to refugee camps. I requested for them to go and take photos and they were afraid and no one dared to go. So I have not got any photos about this. I got this information when I went to K--- village and met with them on March 5th 2014 and they told me about this. This information is true even though there is no evidence [photo].

Situation update

I want to report that in P--- village, Paw Yay Bu village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District Monk, Meh Ta Mer and the BGF confiscated the land of *Kaw La Thu*. The government troops used to [have a] base in this village and the government soldiers did not stay anymore after the emergence of the DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] and the DKBA lived in the Government soldiers' camp. The camp commander of DKBA is De Hter Ler and [is] also called Commander Kyaw Hein. Now Commander Kyaw Hein has become a member of the Supervisory Group of the BGF. Commander Kyaw Hein, Senior monk Meh Ta Mer and the administrator gathered together and confiscated the land of *Kaw La Thu* in the village and also confiscated some houses of *Kaw La Thu*. There are two ethnicities in P-- village and they are *Taw Thoo* [Pa Oh] and *Kaw La Thu*. The name of *Kaw La Thu* whose land were confiscated are:

1. A---
2. O---
3. Ya---
4. Hk---
5. A S---
6. Maw N---
7. Pa S---
8. Se D---
9. Ka---
10. Soe M---
11. A B---
12. Ao---
13. A B---

14. A D---
15. A D---
16. Se D---
17. Maw S---
18. Hay K---
19. Way M---; and the rubber plantation of Naw S---, and the rubber plantation of E---

The lands that they confiscated are home yards and rubber plantations. If we look at photos #4137 to #4172 we can see in the photos that I met with them and the places [lands] that were confiscated. I took these photos in P--- village, Paw Yay Bu village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District on March 3rd 2014.

Situation update

I want to report about the land confiscation that happened in K--- village that [is] down from M---, Ywa Thit village tract, Lu Pleh Township. The person who confiscated the land was a former DKBA and BGF commander and he sold it to Major Kyaw Than. Major Kyaw Than divided [the land into] plots and sold it to the other people. The villagers whose land was confiscated are:

	Names	Amount of land Acres
1	Naw H---	50
2	Saw P---	20
3	U M---	20
4	Saw M---	20
5	Tee H---	30
6	Kyah H---	20
7	Ki H---	30
8	Saw T---	20
9	Saw T---	20
10	Tee H---	30
11	Pee K---	10
12	Pee M---	
13	Kyaw M---	
14	Paw L---	

If we look at the photos #4124 to #4141 you can see that DKBA Commander Kyaw Than planted rubber trees and divided plots. I took these photos in K--- village down from M---, Ywa Thit village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District. The GPS code of K--- village down from M--- is [censored for security].

Source #22

Log #	14-31-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo shows the houses in Cp--- village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District, to which villagers have not been able to return [despite the preliminary ceasefire]. They have not returned because they worry that they will have to displace

themselves again. They live in the jungle. A male villager of Cp--- village mentioned that if there are army bases in Cp--- village he will not come back. He does not dare to live nearby Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] because he has seen that the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] are transporting more heavy weapons [to their army camp].

Source #23

Log #	14-34-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

[These photo notes are drawn from a longer document providing details for photographs taken in Dooplaya April 2014. The other notes were not relevant to land confiscation in Myanmar since December 2012 and have been omitted for brevity.]

1. **Photo #: 0072**
 The photo shows the [land] area that the [Myanmar] company has measured. The land [plot] ends at the coconut tree. There are six people in U A---'s family. Currently, he [U A---] lives at the granary.
2. **Photo #: 0074 - 0076**
 This photo shows a villager's temporary home in the Ma Yan Gon area of B--- village, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. He stays there as he does not have money to rebuild his house. He is not sure if they are going to compensate [him] or not [for his lost property] so he does not want to provide information about it.
3. **Photo #: 0079**
 This photo shows a widow, Ma C---. She is 52 years old and she lives in D--- village, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. She has four children. The [KHRG] field researcher went to [her] to greet and talk [to her], and offered to help [her] as much as he can. She said the road construction cuts across her rubber plantation. She also said it crosses over 200 trees. Her husband could not enjoy [the benefits] of planting these trees because he passed away. She [also] said that a forest fire consumed [some of] her remaining [rubber trees].
4. **Photo #: 0085**
 This photo shows the rubber trees that belong to Ma C--- from D---village. D--- village chairperson said she [Naw C---] repaired the fence with her children as much as she could.
5. **Photo #: 0083**
 This photo shows a house in D--- village. This house has been cut in half [due to road construction]. The D--- village chairperson said they [road constructors] said it is not enough and they have a plan to destroy more [of the houses if necessary].
6. **Photo #: 0084**
 This photo shows a house in the A'Pa Lon village relocation area [for people

displaced by the] Than Phyu Za Ya Town to Ba Ya Thon Hsu Town road construction.

7. Photo #: 0086

This photo shows Thit K'Tet village. The villagers are moving back, far from the road. This is a new village and there is no information [about abuses]. The local people said that they [government] provided new land area [for the villagers in compensation for the land that was taken].

8. Photo #: 0088

This photo shows the road constructors moving soil for road repairing to the front side of Thit K'Tet village. The village head said the village is new and the villagers do not say anything and understand nothing [about the abuses they are facing]. They just live according [to their conditions]

9. Photo #: 0094

This photo shows Saw E---. He said he used to live in Kyainseikgyi Township but moved to Win Yay [Township] four years ago. He said he bought new land [in Win Yay Township]. For this road construction [project], the regional leaders have already taken photos [of the places that the road will cross]. [When regional leaders came to Saw E---'s house to discuss the project], they [Saw E--- and his wife] were out. There was only their 19 year old daughter at home. The village chairperson and some other leaders came to the house and said that the house needs to move and asked her to sign [a contract]. They said to his daughter, Naw F---, that they would send it [the contract] to Naypyidaw.

10. Photo #: 0095

This photo shows the road that they [the company] constructed in Than Phyu Za Ya, Ba Ya Thon Hsu and Me Th'Li towns.

11. Photo #: 0099, 0100

The first photo shows the relocated house area. The other photo shows the rebuilt houses [after moving]. The views in these pictures are from Thit K'te [village], Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District, between Than Phyu Za Yet [Town] and Bu Ya Thon Hsu [Town].

12. Photo #: 0141, 0105

These two photos show the list of rubber plantations that suffered [damage] from the [construction of the road] in G--- village. The villagers collected the [damaged rubber plantation information] from [road construction] and the local people reported it to their superiors [village leaders]. The villagers said that there has been no reply or decision [on the issue]. The villagers from G--- village said that they also have not heard anything from the regional KNU group.

13. Photo #: 0106

This photo shows Saw H---'s house that is located in G--- village beside the road from Bu Ya Thon Hsu [Town] to Than Phyu Za Ya [Town], Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. This photo shows the house that had to be relocated due to the road construction development [project]. They [the company] said not to request anything regarding thatch shingles or sand [for rebuilding houses]. [The villagers said] the problems have, "*Accumulated like a mountain*" [compounded upon each

other]. He [Saw H---] told the researcher not to mention his name [in the report].

14. Photo #: 0107

This photo shows a villager's rubber plantation in G--- village. He fenced in the [rubber plantation] with barbed wire. He [villager] said the [road constructors] told him to remove the barbed wire. [Other villagers stated that] they could [remove the barbed wire but the road constructor had not specifically asked them to do so]. [The villager] told them [road constructors] not to flatten the land in his plantation. [In the end] the [project] leader from Man Pyi T'Khwun [village] flattened the land [of this particular land owner]. [Since then], the [land owner] omitted as much of the barbed wire as he could and re-fenced the area [in a more resilient way]. They [road constructors] then moved the soil onto [his] rubber plantation.

15. Photo #: 0108

This photo shows [the] Man Pyi Tan Khwun [company's] sign board that is situated beside I--- villager's rubber plantation. The school committee [member named] Maung J--- said that the road will pass through where the marks [sign boards] are. They also asked [villagers] to sign [an agreement for the road project]. The [Myanmar] company said they will send them [the contracts] to Naypyidaw. K--- villager wants to know [who] the donors from four countries [are] that support the [Asia] highway road construction from Bu Ya Thon Hsu [town] to Than Phyu Za Yet [town]. [The villager is from] Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District.

16. Photo #: 0115, 0116

These two photos show N--- villager Saw O---'s [land] grant document and his picture. He received the [land] grant document from his parents as inheritance. Now, it has changed to a new [document]. The Dagon company [workers] then [began to] excavate the soil on his land. When he went [to the company] to ask for compensation they stopped [excavating the soil]. [He is] 65 years old. The area is his land by birth. He lives with [his] five children.

17. Photo #: 0120, 0121

This photo shows P--- village/village tract in Win Yay Township, Dooplaya [District]. It shows the place where the SPDC used to live. Now, they did not say that they have returned the land to the owner but the owner has taken it back [anyway].

Source #24

Log #	14-35-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Date Received: June 24th 2014

1. These photos were taken in Meh Ta Raw Hta village, Kawkareik Township, Brigade #6 [Dooplaya District]. This is the way to Meh Ka Tha. People from the government are constructing roads and bridges and we can say that they are trying hard for development.

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Source #25

Log #	14-35-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>1. These photos were taken on May 20th 2014, between Law Pa Hkee and Meh Kuh Hkee in Noh T'Kaw Township [Kyainseikgyi Township] Brigade (6) [Dooplaya District]. In the past when we used this road we travelled by foot because the road had not been constructed. Now the road has been constructed, and cars and motorbikes are able to travel on this road and it makes it easier for travellers. Development has been taking place after the ceasefire period and the villagers have gained some opportunities because the roads [make] travelling easier. The [distance] between Law Pa Hkee and Meh Kuh Hkee village is four hours but now it takes only one hour to travel by car and motorbike. Therefore, it is much better for the villagers who travel on the road, and it is very useful for them.</p>	

Source #26

Log #	14-40-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>1. These photos were taken on April 17th 2014 in Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Toungoo District. It shows that people were asked to pay a tax on motorbikes [and other vehicles] during the water festival [Thingyan]. There is a stream in Pa Thit Chaung, Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Thandaung Township, Toungoo District. The water from this stream comes from the mountain so it is very cold and clear. Most of the people use the water from this stream as drinking water. The township development committee made a pipe and they distributed the water to the villagers. Then, they collected a water tax from the people [of the village]. Since 1990, the people who came to take water from the stream during the water festival [Thingyan] were asked to pay tax every year. The people who collected the tax are from the fire brigade, police force, Union Solidarity and Development Party [USDP] and a group of former military soldiers [veterans]. The administration group organised all of these things. They also asked for [the payment of] tax from people at the entrance of Thandaung Myo Thit Town. When the people entered into Thandaung Myo Thit Town, different authorities collected tax from people. The people had to pay 200 kyat per person, 1000 kyat for one small car, 1500 kyat for one big car and 500 kyat for one motorbike. The people did not understand why they are collecting tax because there was no explanation [for the need to impose the tax] to the people. Moreover, they did not rebuild or improve the road nor did they take care of anything in the town despite being authorities. Also, the water from the stream became dirty. As a result, it was a problem when local people used the water from the stream [due to it being polluted].</p>	

Source #27

Log #	14-40-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	<p>1. This is the photo of the plantation sign board that Kaung Myanmar Aung Company²¹ [KMAC] erected after confiscating the villagers land from Bt--- village, Htantabin Township, Toungoo District, taken on May 20th 2014. The civilians lost a lot of land because of the hydropower project of Toh Boh dam by Shwe Swan In Company [Asia World²²] in Htantabin Township, Toungoo District. The government gave permission to Kaung Myanmar Aung Company who wants to cultivate the long term plantations, exactly 2,400 acres of lands. These lands belong to the civilians and they [Shwe Swan In/Asia World and KMAC] confiscated the lands without paying any compensation. So, the civilians have to face many hardships.</p>

Source #28

Log #	14-40-P3
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	<p>1. These photos were taken on April 1st 2014 in Sa Pin Gyi village, Thandaung Town, Toungoo District. It shows that the children are learning Karen languages. I [KHRG researcher] shot these photos myself. Many Karen children in Sa Pin Gyi village cannot read and write Karen. There are some Bible studies teachers who are experts in Karen language in Sa Pin Gyi village. The villagers requested for the Bible studies teachers to teach Karen language to the children during the summer holidays. [If</p>

²¹ Kaung Myanmar Aung Company (KMAC) or Kaung Myanmar Aung Group of Companies is a Myanmar-owned business group with investments in teak plantations in Toungoo District, and mining, agriculture, shipping, construction and real estate development within Myanmar. Their chairman is Mr Khin Maung Aye. KMAC have been implicated in land confiscation cases in southeast Myanmar which have included threats to villagers who were customary owners of the lands, see [“Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi and Htantabin townships, November 2014 to February 2015,”](#) July 2015. Affected villagers held protests against the company in 2015 and early 2016 in order to demand the return of their lands, see [“Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi and Htantabin townships, November 2015 to January 2016,”](#) July 2016. For information on a similar case with KMAC in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Division, see [“Presidential adviser sues 13 farmers for trespassing,”](#) Myanmar Times, September 2nd, 2013.

²² Asia World is a Burma/Myanmar company with significant investments in the shipping industry, infrastructure, and plantations in Myanmar. Asia World and its additional companies owned by Myanmar national Stephen Law were added to the US Sanctions list in July 2016 due to their historic and continued links to the Burma/Myanmar military regime, see [“US extends sanctions, further targets Asia World,”](#) Myanmar Times, May 17th 2016. In KHRG’s operation area of Toungoo District, Asia World constructed a hydroelectric dam resulting in damage to villagers’ land and the relocation of villagers, see [“Toungoo Interview: Saw H---, April 2011,”](#) KHRG, September 2012. Additionally, in Mergui-Tavoy District, Asia World confiscated villagers’ land for plantations, see [“Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Ler Muh Lah and Ta Naw Tree Townships, January to June 2015,”](#) KHRG, October 2015.

these lessons are not provided] the children will not be able to write and read Karen. The Burma/Myanmar government does not provide books which are written in Karen language to the school. Furthermore the children do not have a chance to learn Karen language at the school. As a result, Karen children will not be aware of Karen language and culture. If so, Karen language is likely to disappear in the future.

Source #29

Log #	14-41-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>1. Photos #0398 - #0431 These pictures show the garden of a grandma in Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District. The grandma fled and left her garden when IB [Tatmadaw Infantry Battalion] #77 came to her land. After she left her land the people [IB #77] sold her land after the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire [to a company]. When she returned to her land with her family [in 2014] she [and her family] were allowed to stay in her garden but the new owners did not grant her access to the land.</p>	

Source #30

Log #	14-42-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>Civilians' situations and occupations There are farming, trading, pond fishing [avenues for income generation] and some people have migrated to other countries for work. They [people who work within their village] work in farming and if the amount of rainfall is above or below normal levels, they have to face problems due to flooding particularly in the case of paddies, which can get flooded, killing the crops. The farmers are facing problems growing their crops, such as peanuts; if the level of rainfall is not normal then the farmers won't gain any benefit [income from their crops]. If the rain does come at the right time then the situation will be ok, with crops growing on the field and [income from harvesting] the peanuts. In this case, the villages will not have to face big problems. Regarding trading, the current market price is not stable. Sometimes it [the price for crops] is acceptable and sometimes it is not. If we look at pond fishing, if the rain does not come on time, there will be no fish and therefore no benefit for the fishermen. Regarding fishing, people who live near the water want to fish but they do not have the same opportunities as rich people. Some people have to go and work in other countries. Some people are doing well and [working abroad] can bring benefits to their family. Some people are not doing well in [their] work so there is less benefit for their family.</p> <p>Healthcare The most common diseases and ailments are dengue hemorrhagic fever, TB, cancer, apoplexy, stomach aches, bloated stomachs and boils. There are many kind of sickness in</p>	

the area.

Access to medical treatment, in both remote areas and towns is limited and health workers with only a few suitable skills are available. There is one thing; naturally, some medics only look for their self-profit and they do not fully sacrifice or show their benevolence to the patients [by treating poorer patients]. For the rich people, as they have money, they do not have to face big problems [to access medical treatment]. Because of having a shortage of medicine, [villagers] have to face problems in many ways and some people have lost their lives for nothing [because they could not afford treatment or access medicine].

Regarding the government support [of healthcare], in each section there is one clinic. In almost all villages there are midwives from the government. We have to pay for the medicines [that we take]. The government supports only vaccines for children and pregnant women and elephantiasis prevention pills. As the midwives from remote areas are not fulfilling their duty properly, the [Myanmar] government has given jobs by hiring them [locally trained people] as local midwives along with giving them a short term training. As the [Myanmar] government [financial] support is not enough, some wealthy individuals donated a car [van] for patient transportation so that they could save patients [in emergencies] through quick transportation [to a hospital].

Education

The situation of mothers and children is dependent upon their elders. We have seen that all children are able to go to school as the government leaders [from KNU side] in the area have been ordered [by superiors] to make arrangements for children who are unable to go to school.

The [education] department leaders, companies and management leaders come down and check on the students and the [condition of the] school buildings. And if the [students] do not have enough space, they [education department leaders] arrange [more space] for them [by building more buildings] as appropriate. In certain schools, things are not going well as [this arrangement] has yet to reach the area.

Some teachers come to the local areas to work [from elsewhere in Myanmar]; they are not happy in the local areas but they stay until the end of their contract date. Some of teachers are lucky and able to move while some [school teachers] are not that lucky and they have to spend their [contracted] time in the same place until the end of their contract date. According to a community member, *“For the schools that the leaders [from the education department] can reach, we have seen that [the education situation] has been improved for villagers who are actively [striving] for [better] education. We are so worried that there is poor support for the education of villagers in the rural areas, because the things that should be happening [to support education] are not happening.”*

Looking at the support available for this year, the Education Department and the Administration Department announced that if school teachers requested materials for the school they will receive their requested support. In some places, this opportunity [for more resources] is appreciated we have seen that these schools are getting better and are in a good condition. In some schools because they did not use the opportunity [to get more resources], the opportunity has passed [without them benefiting]. From the primary school to middle school level, all students are exempt from having to pay the school registration fee and moreover they get 1,000 kyat [from the school] for each individual student per year.

Regarding orphaned children, the Education Department and the Administration Department were asked to select five [orphaned children] in each school and they will provide 5000 kyat monthly [to each child]. They can receive the support money only after they have submitted formal letters to show that the children are really orphans. For children who receive the support money, the elders have to sign as proof.

A challenge that the community faces is ethnic literacy and culture. The leaders allow us to initiate the lessons related to each ethnicity in the [Myanmar] government school in the spare time [before and after official school hours]. We have seen that a few schools started [the lessons] but they are not going well because there are still disagreements between the parents, teachers and the leaders [about what to teach].

Source #31

Log #	14-44-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 10th 2014	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on April 20th 2014 in Kyoh Kah Loh village, Htee Th'Daw Htah village tract, Buh Tho Township, Hpapun District. This photo shows a clinic constructed by an unknown NGO, with some involvement from the Myanmar government. The clinic was completed in 2012. This clinic aims to help villagers to get access to healthcare close to their area but until now villagers have not seen any medicine, only clinic construction. Villagers at the time this photo was taken did not have any information about whether they will get medicine in this clinic or not 	

Source #32

Log #	14-50-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 10th 2014	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on June 6th 2014 at Way Naung village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. A villager had tied his cow in the field, which was located in front of a plantation claimed by Tatmadaw. An unnamed Tatmadaw soldier captured the cow and demanded 10,000 kyat (US\$10.00) from the villager in return for the cow. 2. These photos were taken on March 2nd 2014 in Kyaw Pah village, Meh Kaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The photo shows villagers are setting up a water pipe at the river's mouth to transfer water to the village so that villagers can access water more effortlessly. The project is funded by the Myanmar government. 	

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Source #33

Log #	14-56-I3
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Stabbing or [attempted] murder
Date of Incident(s)	November 10 th 2013
Incident Location	A--- village, Mel Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Victim Information	
Name	Maung C---
Age	26
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Muslim ²³
Family	Single
Occupation	Taxi driver
Religion	Muslim
Position	Villager
Village	Section 2 Hpapun

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Maung Kyaw Kyaw Htun	Solider	Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #341	Hpapun Township	Deputy Commander Thet Nel Win

Part 2 - Information quality

²³ The classification 'Muslim' in Southeast Myanmar is referred to and often self-identified as both a religion and an ethnicity. Muslims in Myanmar can be of different or mixed ethnicity. In Rakhine State there are two main groups, the self-identified Rohingya Muslims (not recognised by the Myanmar government and referred to as Bengali) and the Kaman/Kamein Muslims (officially recognised as one of Myanmar's 135 ethnic races). Outside Rakhine State, Muslims can also be Indian Muslims, Pakistani Muslims, Malay Muslims, Chinese Muslims (Panthays), Burmese converts, and Muslims from mixed marriages. Throughout KHRG's 25-year reporting history Muslims in southeast Myanmar have not identified themselves as Rohingya and mostly self-identify as 'Muslim'. For more information regarding Muslims in Myanmar see: YEGAR, M. (1972) *The Muslims of Burma: A study of a minority Group*, Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz; YEGAR, M. (2002) *Between Integration and Secession: The Muslim Communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, and Western Burma/Myanmar*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books; PRIESTLEY, H. (2006) '[The Outsiders](#)', *The Irrawaddy*, [Online] January; MATTHEWS, B. (2001) '[Ethnic and Religious Diversity: Myanmar's Unfolding Nemesis](#)', *Institute of South East Asian Studies*, [Online] Visiting Researchers Series 3.

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

I was on the way back to Hpapun Town. It was when I had just arrived there I heard about four people who had stabbed a Muslim man with a knife. After I heard about this I went directly to A--- village, and interviewed several villagers named U B---, U E---, Daw Fd--- and U D--- for detailed information about this incident.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

Firstly I met with U B--- who saw the incident involving Maung C---, who fell down to the ground, and [U B---] said, *“Just stay outside of the house as he was stabbed by a knife. Don’t go inside the house, the police will take care of it and it is the responsibility of the police.”* Also, Daw Fd--- said [Maung C---] was *“beside the road and he was screaming and asking for help, I thought he was joking but later I knew that he had been stabbed by a knife”*. U D--- also mentioned that he explained in detail about the cases for their [police] investigation, and that he would still report this case to the Karen Human Rights Group.

3. Complete description of the incident

I [KHRG Field Researcher] heard about the case of the young Muslim man who was stabbed by four LIB # 341 deserters on the way back to home in Hpapun Town. As soon as I heard about this case I went directly to the place where the incident occurred in A--- village and interviewed an A--- villager, U B---, about what he had seen and heard regarding the details of Maung C---’s case. Based on U B---’s answer [I, KHRG field researcher] was still not in possession of the full details following the interview, so [I] continued to search for more people who could explain to him about the case.

The stabbing case happened near A--- village in Hpapun-Ka Ma Maung on the highway about seven miles and four furlongs²⁴ distance [from] on the way to Hpapun Town on October 11th 2013. Soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion #341 Kyaw Kyaw Htun, Myat Soe, Ye Lin Oo and another unknown soldier stabbed Maung C--- and then fled. Maung C--- suffered an injury to the left part of his stomach and his wound was very serious as his intestines were spilling out.

After Maung C--- was stabbed by the knife he ran into the village where a villager called the police and [Maung C---] was swiftly sent to the hospital. He had to have six stitches for his wound in Hpapun Hospital, after that he went back to live in his home village. The soldiers from LIB #431 who committed the crime were taken back to the army camp but no action was taken against them. As the soldiers haven’t had any punishment taken against them, Maung C--- and other villagers were not satisfied [that no action was taken against the soldiers].

4. Permission for using the details

We got permission from U B---, U D---, and U E--- but I haven’t asked permission from Daw Fd--- yet because when I met her, as she lives near the Ku Hseik army camp there where too many soldiers around. Therefore I didn’t have a chance to ask her permission.

Source #34

Log #	14-56-S2
Title / type of report	Situation Update

²⁴ A furlong is a unit of distance equivalent to 0.2 km or 0.125 miles.

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	<p>I am going to report on the social activity that happened amongst indigenous civilians between January 19th 2014 and May 6th 2014. These examples both of social activity and human rights abuses mostly happened alongside the Aung Theindi main road between Hpapun Town and Ka Ma Maung Town and Pu Zun Taung Myaung village tract, Bu Tho Township [Hpapun District].</p> <p>The different types of social activities or human rights abuses that happened were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Forced labour2) Violent abuse3) Illegal threats4) Looting of owners' possessions by force5) Promotion of traditional culture through social activities6) The activity of Help Age International7) The activity of Mya Sein Yaung project <p>The actors who have undertaken these human rights abuses are the Government of Their Sein or the Naypyidaw [central Myanmar] Government who is governing the country. The purpose of conducting these activities is [perceptibly] to pressure and weaken the Karen National Union (KNU). There are also some organisations which were conducting development projects in the region</p> <p>Forced Labour</p> <p>Forced labour is one of the human rights abuses that was committed by 2nd Lieutenant Saw [Tha] Beh also known as Saw Tha Su who under the command of Saw Maung Chit from BGF (Border Guard Force) Light Infantry Battalion # 1014.²⁵ Saw Tha Beh committed many different kinds of human rights abuses on January 15, 2014. The forced labour abuses that Saw Tha Beh committed was [him] asking local people to cut down trees, carry logs and saw them into planks [lumber] for his own logging business. In addition, he also asked one or two of the local people to be daily messengers, sentries, and porters at his [BGF] temporary camp and asked them [to work] every day. The reason why I call [the local people] sentries or porters is that the villagers who had to go and stay at the BGF's camp had to cook rice, carry water, and find fire-wood and vegetables for the BGF's soldiers. If the BGF soldiers travelled, they [villagers] had to carry the baskets that the rice pots, curry pots and extra bullets were kept in. For this reason, I use the terms as "porters" in this report.</p> <p>Torture</p> <p>Regarding torture, Saw Tha Beh had committed many different kinds of arbitrary torture [abuse] against villagers such as beating [them] with sticks, punching, kicking, hitting [them] with his gun and shooting. He punched and beat U H---, a B--- villager with a stick. He also punched and beat Saw A---, another villager from B--- village with a stick. He also beat Saw</p>

²⁵ KHRG has received numerous reports of human rights violations committed by soldiers from Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, including killing, torture, violent abuse, explicit threats, arbitrary taxation and demands and land confiscation. For more information, see "[BGF Battalion #1014 demands forced labour, asserts heavily militarised presence in villages in Hpapun District, June 2015](#)," KHRG, December 2015; "[Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014](#)," KHRG, July 2015.

C---with a cane stick many times. He also beat a villager Saw D---, also known as Saw E---'s father, from Fa--- village with a cane stick.

The villagers who are mentioned above did not make any mistakes [committed no crimes] but 2nd Lieutenant Saw Tha Beh beat them all. The villagers were beaten with sticks many times by Saw Tha Beh [only] because when [they were] working for his [Saw Tha Beh's] logging business they came late for meetings.

Violent threats

BGF LIB # 1014 2nd Lieutenant Saw Tha Beh was working [for] his logging business in the region of Ta La Aw Kho village, Ta Khay Kho village, and We Gyi village. He did not do anything regarding community development or undertake business which benefited the civilians. He was only engaged in logging for himself [and the financial benefits involved]. When he was working [for] his logging business, he forcibly asked the local people to work for his business. Regarding asking the civilians for labour, he always brought a cane stick together with him plus he also gave a cane stick to each of his soldiers to beat the villagers [workers] when he was in the forest [at his logging business]. He [BGF 2nd Lieutenant] went from village to village, as he was worried that the villagers would complain about him and his business would not run smoothly. He showed his cane stick to the villagers and threatened the villagers.

Illegal looting

The person responsible for illegal looting, another illegal activity, is also BGF LIB #1014 Saw Tha Beh. He is logging in the forests around the region where he lives, such as Ta La Aw Kho village, We Gyi village, and Ta Khay Kho village. It is not only Saw Tha Beh [involved in logging] but also some local people cut down the trees and are engaged in the logging business as [much as] they can [in this region]. Therefore, *Bo* [officer] Tha Beh viewed the local villagers who were logging in the same forest as his competitors. He bullied and oppressed the local villagers in many different ways. Amongst his many ways of bullying and oppression [of] the local people, he forcibly took the local villagers' logs (timbers) which were already prepared for sale. I know from the villagers that *Bo* Tha Beh took logs from Saw G---, a villager from Fa--- village, which had a value of about 20,000,000 kyats.

Promoting traditional culture through social activities

It was not just human rights abuses that occurred in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District; there were also community development projects held. The Shan Literature and Culture Group is one of these social and development groups [operating in the area]. U Saing Win Aung started, founded and led the Shan Literature and Culture Group with 20 members in Nga Ein Su village (Na Ku Na) on May 13th 2013. This year, I saw that Shan literature is taught not only in Nga Ein Su village but also in Way San Way Hmon village, T'khon Taing village, Meh Tha Lwut village and the villages in eastern and western [parts] of Hpapun city. The monks who can read and write Shan literature in Moe Kok city and Moe Kaing city, came and taught [Shan literature].

Help Age International

The group which [objectives relate to] taking care of elderly people was founded in June 2013. I have not found out the exact number of the members who belong to this group. This

group goes around places where the revolutionary forces [ethnic armed groups] are active inside Myanmar. This group conducts their social development activities not only in Karen State but also in northern Myanmar in Wa region, and Kachin State. This group receives support from Norway and adopts the programme style from Sri Lanka and used by Sri Lanka's development groups. This group is called Help Age International (H.A.I). Golden Plain (G.P) is one of its sub groups and they [G.P] help and share funds with local villagers. The main activity of H.A.I is that they teach agricultural training to the farmers and they have opened a school called "Farmer Field School" (F.F.S). The project director is Daw Aye Aye Nyein and the trainers are teacher U Soe Win, teacher U Soe Zin and teacher U Tun Tun.

Mya Sein Yaung project

Whilst I have heard that the Mya Sein Yaung project will start in June 2014, although I do not know the exact date that the project will start. Although I watched carefully for the people who will come and conduct the project, [to date] I have not seen anyone yet. The places that the project will be conducted in are Toungoo city, Ka Ma Maung city and Hpapun city. It was announced that 300,000,000 kyats of funding will be lent with cheap rates of interest to each village. The person who leads the Mya Sein Yaung project is the president of Myanmar U Thein Sein.²⁶

As there has been increased awareness of social issues [development projects], there has been increasing [awareness] of the activities [impacting on] human rights. Therefore, there will also be many different kinds of human rights abuses in the future. As every activity is related to human rights, there will be human rights abuses as long as there is activity [development project].

Source #35

Log #	14-54-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 10th 2014	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos were taken on April 5th 2014 in D--- village, Waw Muh village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. It shows a gold mining operation run by an unnamed Chinese company that has been extracting gold from the land on the Buh Loh River. The project has polluted the water and destroyed land belonging to local villagers. 	

²⁶ Mya Sein Yaung Project was initiated in 2014-2015 fiscal year, in Myanmar / in Karen State, by U Ohn Myit, just ahead of the 2015 elections. The project aims to reduce poverty in the country by 16 percent, by giving loans to the villagers and charging low interest on a yearly basis. The projects were planned to allocate 30 million kyat for each village; the amount is considered as capital for the village and the yearly interest will be added to the funds. However, according to KHRG reports received from community members in some Karen Districts, participating in the project is difficult for poor villagers who have no money. Village representatives, chosen by the project workers, prioritised their relatives when deciding to whom they would give money. Villagers there must pawn belongings in order receive a loan. See: "[Toungoo Situation Update: Thangaunggyi Township, April to June 2014](#)," December 2014, and "[Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, February to June 2014](#)," December 2014. The funding for the project comes from the national budget. See "[Union Minister U Ohn Myint Needs to answer](#)", May 11th, 2015.

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Source #36

Log #	14-69-I3
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Theft and looting
Date of Incident(s)	June 30 th 2014
Incident Location	A--- village, B--- village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District

Victim Information	
Name	Naw C---
Age	40
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Yes
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Christian
Position	Villager
Village	A--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Saw Hpah Ghaw	Sergeant	Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014	B--- BGF army camp	Battalion Commander Saw Hla Kyaing

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

When I [KHRG field researcher] arrived in A--- village, I met with the A--- village [position censored for security] Saw E--- and interviewed him regarding the current situation in the village. It was during the interview that we learned that about the theft and looting that is still happening in their village.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The information regarding the incident I reported above was given by the A--- village [position censored for security] Saw E---. Saw E--- also said that, *“our village and the BGF’s army camp are located next to each other so they always come into our village. Every time they come, the villagers always lose their chickens and ducks.”* By listening to what he said, we can know that this is true.

3. Complete description of the incident

The government of the Union of Myanmar/Burma provides the salary for their government workers [soldiers] in order for them to develop their livelihood. Thus, the government workers [soldiers] receive a salary and therefore we thought that they would no longer abuse our rights. However what we thought would happen and what actually happened is very different. On June 30th 2014, there was a human rights abuse which happened in A--- village, B--- village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The abuse was that when the villagers were not around, the BGF stole their livestock. The BGF soldiers stole livestock including chickens and ducks from Naw C--- who is 40 years old and who lives in A--- village. The name of the soldier who stole the chickens and ducks is Sergeant Saw Hpah Gaw, who is serving in BGF Battalion # 1013²⁷ under the leadership of commander Saw Hla Kyaing. According to an A--- villager [position censored for security], Saw E---, *“[Sergeant] Saw Hpah Gaw always steals the villagers’ chickens and ducks when the villagers are not paying attention. They steal the livestock by trapping it and if any chicken or duck is [caught in their] trap, they bring it to their camp.”* By listening to Saw A--- we can know that the BGF soldiers are still disturbing the villagers who are living near the [BGF] army camp. The villagers are traumatised whenever they see the armed group holding their guns so they do not dare to do anything in return, even though their livestock have been stolen.

4. Permission for using the details

The village [position censored for security] Saw E--- allowed us to use the information.

Source #37

Log #	14-84-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District

Full Text

Date Received: November 12th 2014.

Now in Tha Waw Thaw village, Thu Lay Company and [KNLA] Battalion #103 were holding a discussion and heard that civilians were [having] difficulty finding a location [to build houses], therefore they [KNLA] are planning to build 200 houses for civilians. But until now [they are] yet to do anything [and have] just noted down the number of people who submitted [request documents] to them. The houses that they will build for [the] civilians will cost 50 million kyat per building. The civilians don’t need to purchase it [the buildings] as they will get it for free. The building [work] has not started yet.

²⁷ It is unclear if the Sergeant is from Battalion #1013 or #1014, both of which are based in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. KHRG continues to receive reports discussing abuses involving BGF Battalion #1013 and #1014, including: [“BGF Battalion #1014 demands forced labour, asserts heavily militarised presence in villages in Hpapun District, June 2015,”](#) KHRG, December 2015; [Hpapun Incident Report: Villager killed by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1013 in Bu Tho Township, March 2015,”](#) KHRG, September 2015; [“Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014,”](#) KHRG, July 2015. Further reports detailing abuses involving these battalions are also available on the KHRG website.

Meh K'La Hkee village reports that [they] need a school for children; when we went there they told us about their needs. As we have no way of helping them we told them to wait patiently. This village is a very small village. It has 13 houses and over 20 children. This village has been located here for quite a long time but as it is located near to a Tatmadaw army camp, the numbers of village residents is not increasing because they are afraid [of the army camp].

Shoo K'Lee Village is a famous village. Why is this village famous? This village is famous because the Tatmadaw military came to build a town. There are 50 buildings [houses] that have been completed however we have not yet seen anyone using and living [inside the buildings], except for the school buildings and clinic buildings. Some villagers from the place near the area have reported their problems related to Tatmadaw military oppression and taxation. Apart from Burmese [Tatmadaw] military oppression [another problem] is that, the army camp is very close to their village and they cannot keep their animals such as cows [and] buffalos [in their village]. Previously in the rainy season of 2013 Tatmadaw soldiers hid and shot 3 buffalo [that belonged to villagers]. This year they are still worried that the Tatmadaw will steal their buffalos, therefore villagers are gathering together and kept their buffalos in the Maw Law Ay jungle. During the rainy season of September 2014 the tigers chased away 20 buffalos from the Maw Law Ay jungle. That is real suffering by villagers. If the army camps move [away from their village] the villagers will not suffer [in the same way]. On October 30th 2014 Dooplaya District, Kawkareik Township in E---village, villagers had been forced to work by [members of the] Tatmadaw. They asked them [villagers] to send resources [ammunition] such as bullets, and food such as rice and beans to an officer. The villagers told them that as the water [level] was still [causing] flooding they couldn't drive a tractor [to their camp to transport the requested resources]. But the [Tatmadaw] soldiers replied, *"If KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] asks you [to do something] you do not complain [yet you are complaining when the Tatmadaw are asking you to do something]"*. The villagers apologised to them [Tatmadaw] but it [the apology] did not work so the villagers had to send the tractor [with the requested resources]. When a villager was driving the tractor [to the Tatmadaw army camp], it could not cross the river [because of flooding]. A [Tatmadaw officer] replied that [the tractor could] cross over it and that they will help you to drag it. [A villager drove] the tractor and it sunk [into the river]. The Tatmadaw soldier helped [the villager] drag [the tractor] until it reached the [other side of the] river bank. After it had reached the river bank [the villager] could not start the tractor because water had gone inside it. At that time the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] put the loads [resources] on their backs and went out to Tha Aw Thaw [village]. The villager was left alone and as he could not start the tractor [he] left the tractor and returned [to the village]. The next day the villagers gathered together and went to take the tractor back. They repaired it, which cost 3000 baht, yet the Tatmadaw gave only 500 baht back [to cover the cost of the repair]. The tractor belongs to Paw Baw Hta village, and is the villagers' tractor [and] it is used collectively for the needs of the village. It is not a personal tractor [so every villager contributed to the] repairs, therefore it did not cause any problems, but the villagers were not pleased [with the situation].

The villagers could not confirm the name of the officer or the name of the battalion therefore we can know only that military activity occurs in C--- village and D--- [village]. The villagers who live close to that [C---] village tract always have to encounter [demands for] forced labour and taxation. [In the case of] the villages that are located in Shoo K'Lee village tract, most of the people are working on farms, planting beans, corns and wild yams. When [the time comes] to send [harvest and transport] food, they have to encounter taxation especially from the DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army]. There have been no other problems in

2014. The only problem is when the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] asks for forced labour and taxation.

Regarding healthcare we still need many things because the road is not good [to transport patients to hospital] and the cars cannot travel in the rainy season. If people are suffering from a serious sickness [we] have problems because there are not enough medics.

As part of their [commitment to] education, the [Myanmar] government, Karen Education Department and religious groups such as missionary organisations are working together as well as they can and everything is favorable. More teaching of Karen languages is needed. In Taw Naw Mu Taw areas in Dooplaya District, Kaw K'Rey Township in Gaw Lay [village], Shoo K'Lee [village], Thay Baw Boh [village], and Taw Oo Hta [village] the situation update is only that [we] have to wait and see what will come in the future.

Land confiscation

After the ceasefire I have not seen any major incidents of land confiscation, only road construction [which] had destroyed the land.

Regarding land destruction, some of the villagers felt unhappy as the plantations which they planted for their livelihood had been destroyed and the land owners were disappointed [with the destruction]. Some villagers said that the development [negatively] impacted upon their betel nut trees, coconut trees, mango [trees], palm trees and pepper plants and that they did not receive any compensation for their lost crops.

[After] this destruction the villagers could not do anything [to regain the land] and told the Karen Human Rights Group to find a way of helping them. Our KHRG [members] counseled them to go and submit it [claims and complaints] to the village head, village tract administrator, district and township administrators who will help you. [Regarding] the land destruction that I have seen, I have no particular counsel [for the villagers]. Only in the future if they [people involved in road construction] cause more destruction, the rich people [and companies who] construct the roads should have to look after and help the people whose lands they have damaged with suitable levels of compensation. If we do not prevent this, in the future [they] will still destroy our plants [and] our land. The situation will get worst and it [the situation] will increasingly occur in the future.

8th November 2014 village tract's report

Dooplaya District, Noh T'Kaw Township: A--- [village], Kya Aye [village], K'Ra Nee [village], B--- [village], Pee T'Hka [village], T'Hka Hkee [village], T'Hka Kloh [village], Noh Ta Shuh [village], Ther Ter [village], Kyaw Kay Hkoh [village] and Htee Moo Hkee [village]. These places are located in Kya Aye village tract. Since October 10th 2014 opposition activity has been increasing. The villagers have had some problems traveling because [some] Tatmadaw soldiers have been waiting halfway up and on the side of the road to check people. The villagers were very scared because they have seen that the soldiers have been waiting beside the roads and increasing their checks on people. Moreover, some parents in the village tract have to encounter with issues as [the presence of] drugs is increasing. Some young people are using drugs therefore [some parents] worry that it [drug use] will increase in the future and more young people will ruin their lives.

It was reported by a head villager in B--- village. She said, *'how should we act in the future?'* They thought and discussed about what they would do. As a part of development we have now seen Burmese community development workers helping the villages by [constructing]

water [supply infrastructure], schools, libraries, and [medical] clinics for villagers. In that area especially in A--- village they [villagers] are suffering as the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] destroyed places close to the village's *Pay Kwee* [reserved forest]. In June 2014 they plucked out the small plants from betel nut trees and stole durians. The villagers could not take this anymore and submitted the case to the village tract leader [administrator] and a village tract administrator went to meet with Burmese officers [IB Infantry Battalion] #32, [LIB Light Infantry Battalion] #283, and [LIB Light Infantry Battalion] #284 who are in that Battalion. A [village tract administrator] told them the cases [that have been committed by soldiers] including the destruction of the plants of villagers. Amongst the officers one officer [officer's name unknown] asked if anyone knew who those people [soldiers] were. A village tract administrator said there were many soldiers [that destroyed the plants] whose identity they did not know. They questioned the village tract administrator, saying, '*why could you not recognise them [the soldiers]?*', and '*why you did you come to submit the case [without knowing their identity] and criticise our soldiers?*' They then said that they needed the life that they had back in the past. A village tract administrator thought that it was not a good talking point and did not continue that conversation topic anymore and discussed about other cases instead. Later that month soldiers came back to chase the people who reported that case. One person who reported that case was very scared and was not willing to go back to the plantations, [so the person] went to sleep in the jungle and it was a week before [the person] was willing to come back to the a village. Not so long [after], on lands that were close to the village, the Tatmadaw went to cut down the bamboo trees and the villagers did not have the confidence to complain. They wrote down words [asking the Tatmadaw not to cut down the trees] and laid it [the sign board] over a tree. The Tatmadaw soldiers came again to cut down the bamboo trees and saw the people's signboard. They took it [the sign board] and threw it away and continued to cut down the trees and bamboo. In last September [2014], they were still cutting [trees] any time that they needed them. A village tract administrator said if they continue to come and cut down the bamboos and trees from the prohibited place, in the future there will be no trees and bamboos left and we [villagers] can no longer them find when we need them. They discussed submitting that case to the township and district.

Now because DKBA military and Tatmadaw military are in an awkward situation [we] encounter a bit of difficulty when traveling.

Source #38

Log #	14-85-11
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
<u>Part 1 – Incident Details</u>	
Type of Incident	Taxation on work [cow trading]
Date of Incident(s)	May 13 th 2013
Incident Location	B--- village, Bilin Township, Thaton District
Victim Information	
Name	Uncle A---

Age	47
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Five children
Occupation	Trading
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager
Village	B--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Hkyay Yoh Hpaw	Battalion Commander	Column (1), Battalion (1), Division (99)	Lay Kay military base	Unknown

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

I collected information about the experiences that Uncle A--- had faced first hand through an interview. He is a cow trader and detailed the issues that he had experienced in his work. In the past on March 3rd 1999, his cows and buffalos were confiscated by the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] battalion group from Hkyay Yoh Hpaw area. Despite this setback he continued working [trading], but had to pay taxes at individual checkpoints.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

It was his own experience which he himself suffered.

3. Complete description of the incident

Uncle A--- is a trader of cows and buffalos. To support his livelihood, he borrowed money from others [his friends to buy cows] to trade. He shared his experiences of trading with me. There are a number of checkpoints which he has to pass through and numerous arbitrary forms of taxation which he has to pay.

For the KNU [Karen National Union] checkpoints in Brigade (3) [Nyaunglebin] he has to pay (5,000) Kyat (US \$4.85) for a pair of cows, in Brigade (1) he has to pay (5,000) kyat and they must provide a receipt as well.

For the BGF [Border Guard Force] checkpoint at Maw Loh Kloh [they ask] 5,000 and no receipt is provided.

At Weh Gyi he has to pay 10,000 kyat (US \$9.71), no receipt provided.

At Ma Eeh he has to pay 10,000 kyat, no receipt provided.

At Lay Ka Hsoo he has to pay 15,000 kyat (US \$14.56), no receipt provided.

At Wa Kluh Kaw [check point] [it is] required to give as much money you are happy to give so the guard can pay for a cheroot²⁸ or [something else].

At Ta Ra Kaw he has to pay 6,000 kyat (US \$5.82), no receipt provided.

At Brigade (7) [Hpa-an District] he has to pay 1,000 kyat (US \$0.97) to pay for the guards' cheroots.

At Hkler Day he has to pay 10,000 kyat for [to] Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw].

At Hkler Hkoh he has to pay 10,000 kyat to BGF.

Uncle A--- said *“as for the KNU they [make you pay the] tax only one time in each brigade [district] and provide a receipt. As for BGF, they demand [tax] from many checkpoints and they do not provide the receipts. I think that their [BGF] salary is supplied by the Burmese government, but are they not the same thing? And does the money that they collect [from people] go to the Burmese government bank? It was not only me that had to pay tax but also many other people who work in the same job as me. They also face the same problems.”*

4. Permission for using the details

The victim gave us full permission to use the information knowing that the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government are expected to read this report.

Source #39

Log #	14-85-l8
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
Part 1 – Incident Details	
Type of Incident	Burmese [Tatmadaw] military camp situated in the village
Date of Incident(s)	Unknown
Incident Location	B--- village, Yoh Klah village tract, Bilin Township, Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District
Victim Information	
Name	Saw A---
Age	43
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Three children
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager

²⁸ A cheroot is a traditional Burmese cigar.

Village	B--- village
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Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Kyaw Thu Rein	Battalion Deputy Commander	Battalion Deputy commander	Kyaw Thu Rein	Battalion Deputy Commander

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

I asked him [Saw A---] about his opinion and perspective on the Burmese [Tatmadaw] military presence in his village.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The respondent was asked about the issues he has faced as a result of the presence of the Burmese [Tatmadaw] military in his village and his interactions with the military.

3. Complete description of the incident

Saw A--- is a B--- villager. He is involved in farming and motorboat transportation for his livelihood. He had to face many kinds of difficulties in his work before the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire. Because of the many obstacles involving Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers he could not work freely. After 2012 [the preliminary ceasefire], [he] has a little more freedom of movement and [freedom in] conducting work as some of the obstacles are now gone. But there are still some concerns regarding the Burmese [Tatmadaw] military presence in the village so [the villagers] have to be aware and afraid whilst moving around at night time. Saw A--- said *"The best thing would be if they [Tatmadaw] were not in the village. Another concern is it is difficult for the women to go around in the village at night time alone. They worry that if they encounter with the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] they will do something to them"*.

4. Permission for using the details

The victims stated that they would give permission for this information to be used as they do not want the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldier's to be present in the village.

Source #40

Log #	14-85-19
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District

Full Text

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	N/A
Date of Incident(s)	N/A
Incident Location	N/A

Victim Information	
Name	Naw A---
Age	72
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Three children (oldest is 42 years old and youngest is 36 years old)
Occupation	Village head
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Elder of the community
Village	B--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Kyaw Thu Rein	Battalion Deputy Commander	Column #2, Battalion #2, Division #44	Yoh Klah military camp	Min Min Htwun

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

I received this information from Naw A--- because she is a village head and knows everything that has happened in the village.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The information describes events seen and faced by Naw A--- herself.

3. Complete description of the incident

Naw A--- is a female village head in B--- village. She was appointed as a village head in 1990. She is a village head for both the Karen [KNU] and the Burmese [government]. She is good at management related to the village. Whenever the village has problems, she tries to manage it as best she can. The Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] come in and stay in the village on a group by group [troop by troop] basis. Some groups are friendly and some groups are aggressive. Sometimes people [other armed groups] attack the Burmese [Tatmadaw] and the Burmese [Tatmadaw] get angry and scold her [Naw A---] but as she is wise and a good liar she manages to persuade the soldiers [that she and the rest of the villagers have not done anything wrong]. She has never been involved in a situation of violent abuse [by the military] and moreover she has also never been seriously scolded [by the Tatmadaw]. She has to control [take care of] B--- village which has [number censored for security] houses in it as well as also the Burmese [Tatmadaw] and Karen [Karen National Liberation Army] soldiers.

Nowadays, we can say that there is no scolding going on either by Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers or Karen [KNLA] soldiers. But because the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers are still in the village, there are still obstacles for the villagers when they want to travel around the

village at night time. Naw A--- said *“If it is possible, we [she and villagers] would like them to be absent from the village”*. The school in B--- village has up to eight standards²⁹ and there are 15 teachers: six teachers from the government and 9 teachers from the civilian [village] side. The civilian teacher’s salary is provided by the students. For a year, each teacher receives 110,000 kyat and in the case of the government teachers, the government provides them a salary. The villagers also have to provide rice and money for other food-related expenses [to the government teachers]. Regarding healthcare, there is no clinic in the village. There are only two medics who have completed medical training from a health organisation under KNU health department [KDHW]’s supervision. They buy medicine from the town and take care of the patients. Patients who are critically ill and who cannot be treated by themselves [the two trained medics] are sent to the town hospital.

4. Permission for using the details

This information has been granted permission to be used as the villagers feel that it will be better for them with the absence of the military government’s [Tatmadaw] soldiers in the village.

Source #41³⁰

Log #	14-85-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Date Received: November 12th 2014

1. Photo numbers from 152-0258 to 0268

I [KHRG researcher] took these photos on August 2, 2014 and the place is close to A--- village, Ta Aoo Hkee tract, in Bilin Township, Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District. These photos were about the Bilin Township officer who is Saw Kyaw Day. He is conducting logging and the sawing of planks of wood. Then they [Saw Kyaw Day’s workers] transport it [the logs] downtown in order to sell the planks of wood. In this case, villagers [also] wanted to do logging just to [get planks of wood] to build the house but they were not permitted. The [Bilin] Township Officer said to the villagers that, *“If you want the wooden planks to build a house, you can come and buy them from me; just give [pay] me 900,000 kyats for one ton [of wood].”* Villagers in the whole township are complaining about this case because the officer is allowed to do logging but the villagers are not. Some villagers have reported this case to the group leaders and demonstrated their desire [to also have access to logging]. [Therefore] the group leaders went and reported the case to the Township Officer. Then, in May 2014, it was declared that villagers from the villages in Tah Aoo Hkee territory are allowed to do logging for one month in Bilin Township, Htee Hpah Doh Htah tract, in Kywun Waing territory.

²⁹ A standard refers to a school year in the education system of Burma/Myanmar. The basic education system has a 5-4-2 structure. Primary school runs from Standard 1 to Standard 5, lower secondary school is Standard 6 to Standard 9, and upper secondary school is Standard 10 to Standard 11.

³⁰ Please note, direct reference to this source document was removed from the final publication of Foundation of Fear.

- 2. Photo numbers from 152-0270 to 0276**
 I took these photos on February 13, 2014 and it was at a place between B--- village and C--- village which is [between] Tah Aoo Hkee and Aee Soo Hkee tract, Bilin Township, in Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District. The photos are about Htoo Company U Ye Htut that has come to do logging at a place in Tah Aoo Hkee tract and Aee Soo Hkee tract in Bilin Township. The photos that appear are of the road construction for the transportation of the logs. The logging is permitted by KNU [Karen National Union] and [the KNU] charges the company 90,000 kyats for a ton of wood [in logging tax]. Based on these charges [taxes], KNU also pay back 20,000 kyats to the villagers who are from the villages that are close to the areas being logged. It [the KNU] knows that this road construction is impacting on some villagers' land and forests in D--- community. Villagers reported this [impact] to the KNU and KNU arranged to pay them back a fair price for the destruction [of the land and forest].
- 3. Photo numbers from 101-0153 to 0158**
 I took these photos on January 1, 2014 and it was at Lah Kyoh Hkoh village, Noh Ber Baw tract in Bilin Township, Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District. The photos show the villagers who gather together to help build the nursery school. Villagers try their best as much as they can just [to help] the next generation's education.

Source #42

Log #	14-85-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
	<p>1. Photo #0378 - #0392 These photos were taken on October 25th at Lay Kay village in monastery, P'ya Raw village tract, in Bilin Township, Thaton District. These photos show the Red Cross Society [ICRC] implementing a three-day workshop on the topics of disease prevention and the land mine risk education. This workshop requested 15 youths to attend the workshop and provided 2,000 kyats of pocket money per day.</p> <p>2. Photo #0406 This photo was taken in October 27th at Yoh Klah village in Bilin Township, Thaton District. It shows Tatmadaw LIB #2 Corporal Kyaw Hsan from Yoh Klah Army camp, which is led by Kyaw Thu Rein, searching for animal traders to tax in the village. His battalion's headquarters is located in Kyaikto Town and he is the one who has been looking for cow and buffalo traders who trade on the black market, who he taxes when he finds them.</p>

Source #43

Log #	14-89-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District

Full Text
<p>1. These photos were taken in C--- village, Toungoo District on September 3rd, 2014 at 10:00PM. On March 2nd, 2014, Maung A--- and Maung B--- were [going around] and selling snacks on their motorbikes [as they do] every day. The [pair] were hit by a car in C--- village as they were coming back from D--- village after [they had finished] selling their snacks. The car was [seen] in the village. Therefore, a villager went to the [village] administrator in order for the two injured people to receive help. When the [village] administrator arrived, he asked whether they had motorcycle licenses and threatened them. The car [belonged to] Toungoo Township's C--- village administrator U Kyaw Win, and he [village administrator] immediately went back [to his house] and did not do anything for the injured people. Therefore, the families of these two injured people from Toungoo Town came and took them back [home] by motorcycle.</p> <p>2. These photos were taken in Pay Lay Wa [village] church in Thandaung Town, Toungoo District on August 23rd, 2014 [and were] taken by me [KHRG researcher]. On August 23rd, 2014, at Pay Lay Way [village] church, there was a notice saying that staff from Thandaung Township hospital will come and treat patients for free. Therefore the villagers were encouraged to come for treatment and did. The unknown doctor from Thandaung Town arrived to treat [patients]. [Yet he was there for] only one and half hour on that day. The villagers [attempted to] barge [through] to the doctor in order to know their health situation and to get treated. However, a resident said that the doctor's assistants scolded the villagers. As a result many became shy and most of the villagers went back [home] without getting treatment.</p>

Source #44

Log #	14-96-A7-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Interview Date: October 30th 2014</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>Saw A---.</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>41 years old.</p> <p>What is your village's name?</p> <p>B--- village.</p> <p>What ethnicity are you?</p>	

Karen.

What is your religion?

Buddhist.

What is your job?

I work as a farmer.

What is your village tract, township, and district?

Mae Klaw tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have in total?

Six.

How old is your eldest child?

14 years old.

How old is the youngest child?

6 years old.

How many households are in your village?

25.

How about the population?

Over one hundred.

What is your position in the village?

Village head.

Tell me about the situation of your village?

There was the abduction of children who were taken and asked to serve as soldiers. In this month they [the KNU] already took two children.

Who took the children?

Tah Kit.

Tah Kit is a villager or soldier or something else?

He is a soldier.

What type of soldier?

He is from Military Intelligence Department.

Is he is Karen National Union (KNU) soldier or State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) soldier [Tatmadaw]?

KNU [Karen National Liberation Army/KNLA].

How long has this situation been going on?

One child was taken on 13th October [2014].

What is the name of that child?

Saw C---.

What is his age?

Around 16-17.

Is he the only child they have taken?

[They have taken] two.

What is the name of the other one?

Saw D---.

How old is he?

14.

Do you remember the date when they were taken?

I am not aware of that exactly but if had to guess it would be Sunday or Monday.

How many days would you guess it has been [since they were taken]?

It has not been a week yet.

Was this in October?

Yes it was.

Do you think that they are just taking children like this or were they asked to serve in the military?

They intend to recruit soldiers by taking them.

Did their parents know that?

No, because Saw D---'s mother went to Hpapun to get an injection for his brother and I was outside so I didn't know.

Which battalion does Tah Kit belong to?

I don't know.

Battalion #102?

I think so.

Do you know the commander of Battalion #102?

No.

How about the commander of Tah Kit?

I don't know either but in the past his commander was Bo Toe Nyo.

What is the [other] name of Bo Toe Nyo?

His name is Tah Day Lit.

So he is a subordinate of Tah Day Lit?

Yeah.

What is Tah Day Lit's position?

Intelligence officer.

Has he just started taking children or has he done this before?

In the past he has taken some children, starting in 2013.

How many children has he taken?

He has taken three; one child from B--- village, one from E--- village and one from Fd--- village.

Does he inform the children's parents that he is taking their children?

No.

Are the children that he has taken old enough to serve in the army?

Some of them are not old enough.

So he has asked the children that he has taken to serve as soldiers?

Right.

Do children's parents report that to his officers?

No they just let their children go because one day they will have to serve.

As the children are underage do the parents go and ask to get back their children or are they not able to?

I think they don't take any action.

Is that because of parents are do not know the law?

Yeah they don't know a lot about the law.

What about the two children that were taken in 2014, what are their parents' views?

In the case of one of the children, his parents were out and he was with his siblings. His parents felt that as he is not smart and if he enjoys it [serving in the military] they will let him go, but his elder sister didn't totally agree and she asked to get him back. For the other child maybe his parents do not know the law, we have no idea about them. For those who took the children maybe there is no one in charge of the [village] tract or a village head [to provide villagers with security], if so the one who took the children could do anything.

So you mean that as a military [commander] he was just taking children and the person in charge of the tract didn't know about that?

Right.

Do you think that he asked the children he took in the past to serve in the military?

Yes.

So in the case of the two children taken in recent days you think that he will ask them to serve in the military?

Yes I think so.

There is no follow up yet then?

Not yet but I think I will follow up the other one.

So the other one is your relative?

That is my son.

Do you feel that the forced recruitment of children to become soldiers is appropriate?

I see that it is not appropriate [to recruit an underage boy] that is why I have tried to follow up [with the KNLA]. But if it [recruitment] is through a request from the village tract leader then I'll agree to grant [permission] if [my son is] complete in age [eighteen years old]. But now my son is not old enough and secondly he is the older sibling therefore we need to have him to help us so I can't give [permission to] them [KNLA] and he still has three brothers then if one is free from being recruited one [other brother] will be available [for recruitment] and if [my] sons do not go then father [I] will go.

Is this [underage] recruitment happening because this [KNLA] officer had not given the order [to his soldiers] not to recruit underage soldiers?

I don't know that but where I live in Mae Klaw Hkoh, Htee Ber Ker Htah, the village tract brigade commander himself, came and gave the order not to recruit soldiers who are underage. It makes me unsatisfied the way that this soldier came and took the children.

What is the name of that brigade commander?

The brigade commander's name is Bo Kyaw Mu.

Which brigade commander?

Brigade Five [Hpapun District].

So he came and held a meeting and during the meeting he said not to recruit underage soldiers?

Yes

He announced this to the public?

Yes.

Was he only informing the community and not his soldiers?

I've no idea about that because I didn't meet with his soldiers much.

Do you personally feel happy/unhappy that your underage son has been recruited?

I don't feel satisfied at all by the way that he [Tah Kit] took my son without informing the village tract leader in charge, and secondly my son is not old enough.

It is not appropriate?

Sure.

If he is old enough there would be no problem?

Even if he was around 17 years old I would be satisfied [with his recruitment] but now he is just 14 years old, therefore I am not satisfied.

Regarding the issue of your son's recruitment is there anything else you want say?

No more, just that I will follow him up and try to get him back, if I am not successful then I will deal with it through the court.

You said that Battalion #102 normally used to take children in the past?

Right.

Their soldiers are from military intelligence?

Yes. The initial person who took the children [forced recruitment] is Pah Naw Dah but later on it was done by Tah Kit instead.

Don't you know which brigade [district] Tah Kit comes from?

No.

You just know his commander [is] Tah Day Lit?

Yes just him, I don't know the others.

Is he the member of military intelligence?

Yes.

Do you know his position and role?

No.

What is the major occupation of your villagers?

Just farming and hillside cultivation.

Do villagers have sufficient food to eat?

No, only enough [for example] for three people in the whole family.

Do the majority of households have sufficient or insufficient amounts of food?

Insufficient.

Can people who have sufficient food help those who are insufficient?

Not really, those who are insufficient have to earn money or work on daily wages.

Are there ways to get income in the village?

No.

Those villagers who have insufficient food, how do they deal with the situation?

They just have to work for daily wages if there is [work] available; if not they won't be able to feed themselves.

How much can a villager earn for their daily labour?

If the worker is from the same village they can get two thousand five hundred kyats per day, and three thousand kyats per day [if they are] from outside [the village].

What are the tasks of those daily labourers?

Just harvesting paddies; there is no alternative.

What daily work is available outside [of the village]?

There isn't any daily work available outside of the village except logging and some other work such as collecting or harvesting chili.

So alternative work is available from time to time?

Yes it is, in harvest time.

Do people have freedom to work?

Recently, they have freedom [to work].

[For] how many years has there been freedom [to work]?

Just around one or two years.

Do villagers have to work for the Burmese government and military [Tatmadaw], for example in forced labour and so on?

Not anymore, just in the past.

When in the past?

Many years ago.

No more now?

I think after one or two years of [preliminary] ceasefire there has been no more cases.

Do villagers have to take permission for travelling?

From SPDC's [Myanmar government/Tatmadaw] side?

Either SPDC or KNU.

[There is] no need to.

Is there questioning and harassment when villagers travel around?

No.

Have any armed groups come and asked for forced [or] arbitrary labour, from [either] KNU [KNLA] or SPDC [Tatmadaw] after the ceasefire?

Just from the KNU [KNLA] side, sometimes we have to provide people to be porters and do sentry duty. Sometimes we just hire sentries [pay others to do this duty]. From the SPDC [Tatmadaw] side, nothing has been asked yet, just from the KNU [KNLA] side.

If KNU [KNLA] is still asking this, what do they ask the porters to carry?

Sometimes they ask porters to carry rice and oil.

Do they force the villagers to work or do they ask for volunteers?

It is not done as forced labour. The villagers just try to help like that because individually they [the KNU/KNLA] cannot carry all of the things by themselves.

How much weight does a villager have to carry?

Sometimes ten viss [16kg] and sometimes around seven to eight viss.

Do villagers have any difficulty doing this?

I don't think so.

What about financial requests? Does that still exist?

Like what?

Does the KNU [KNLA] or SPDC [Tatmadaw] collect money from villagers?

No.

There is no need to hire porters for them as well?

Yes, no more [need].

Are there any armed groups who have come and threatened villagers orally after the [preliminary] ceasefire?

I don't know about other villages but in my village that does not happen anymore.

Have the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] come to your village after the ceasefire?

Never.

What about the KNU [KNLA]?

They do.

When they come are villagers confident [not scared] to see them?

Yes.

Do they ask to be given the villagers' livestock?

No, just one time they asked for one hen but we didn't have one so we replied 'no'.

How would you compare the time before and after the [preliminary] ceasefire?

I feel things are getting a lot better after the ceasefire. Before, we had to flee all the time.

What is your view on the [preliminary] ceasefire?

I see it as very good because we don't need to flee and sleep in the forest, so I feel better than before when we had to flee very often.

Are there schools in the village?

Yes, until grade one.

How many school teachers?

There is only one teacher.

Was that school built by the government or the community?

[It was] built by the community.

What about a salary for the teacher?

[The teacher is salaried] not by month, [the teacher receives] two hundred thousand [kyat] per year.

Does the school teacher get support from a religious group, or was he hired by the villagers?

Religious villagers only support the teacher by providing food.

Which religion does that teacher belong to?

Christianity.

How do the villagers refer to him?

They call him a missionary teacher.

Is he a missionary of Hpapun [District]?

Yes.

What about food? Do the students' parents have to provide it?

Yes they do.

How much per individual [student] do they provide?

Individually they provide support of 1.5 baskets of rice, a package of MSG [flavor enhancer], a litre of oil, 1 viss [1.6kg] of onion and garlic each month.

Do students also have to pay for the school fee as well?

No

Are there ways to get support for your school?

We have not found any yet.

There is no support from either KNU or SPDC [Myanmar government]?

Right, there is only one [form of] support from the teacher's senior [an elderly teacher who does not teach].

Do the students receive support such as books and pencils?

No they don't.

Are there any development projects in your village that are run by the Burmese [Myanmar] government?

Yeah a dynamo, solar panels and drinking water from a pipe.

Are villagers able to use those properly?

For the dynamo if the hydropower is too strong then the light bulb can be blown by power surges. For drinking water if you serve yourself then you can have it and from the solar we can access electricity properly.

Does your school allow students to study Karen language?

Yes it is included in the curriculum because Karen people should know their language first then other languages second.

Do students have freedom in their study?

Yes they do.

Are there monasteries or churches in your village?

No.

If not where do people go for religious activities?

Mostly people go to the Mae Tharow Monastery for Buddhist practice, and other religious sections go their own way.

Do people have freedom when they do religious activities?

Yes.

Are there clinics for healthcare in the village?

No.

If not when people get sick where do they go for medication?

People go to Hpapun Town for medication; they go and get an injection over there.

In Hpapun Town do they go to a hospital or elsewhere?

They go to the hospital but if the disease is not serious then they can get an injection from outside [from a non-formally trained medic].

Does the hospital charge them?

Yeah, they have to pay.

What kind of hospital it is?

A Burmese [Myanmar] government hospital.

Are the medication and treatment fees appropriate [proportional]?

I am not sure about that, but it cost me eighty thousand kyats for four days when I went for my kid's hospitalisation.

What disease was that?

I cannot recall the name of disease as there are many kind of diseases.

Do you think eighty thousand kyats for medical fees is appropriate for four days of treatment?

Not really.

What are the common diseases in your village?

Fever, sickness, eye disease and more that I don't know how to explain.

In your village how much is one viss of pork and chicken?

A viss of pork is two thousand kyats and a viss of chicken is five thousand to six thousand kyats.

How much is one basket of rice?

Five thousand kyats.

Do you think that the [preliminary] ceasefire is real or not?

Right now I can't know for certain. If it is real then that would be great, if not then we have to flee again.

Is your village is close to the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] army camps?

Yes.

Which army camp?

Close to Battalion #642 and Battalion #19.

How far is the distance between Battalion #642 camp and your village?

It is just an hour by walking.

Do they [Tatmadaw] frequently arrive in your village?

They have never arrived after the ceasefire but before that they always came.

Do you think that there will be a change after the 2015 election?

I am not sure yet as it hasn't happened yet.

What is your view on SPDC [Myanmar government] and KNU?

I see that if they do [the election] it in a good way it will be good for us, if they cannot manage [the election in a good/fair way] then as villagers we will have to be fearful again.

How do you feel about the Burmese [Myanmar] government development projects [that are being established] for the villagers?

I think what they do is good but as we are Karen people we have to be ourselves. A proverb says "*P'aaw Hkler Thah P'Ka Nah Klee Thae*" which means birds have to listen for the sound of arrow shot while eating the banyan fruits [We have to be careful while we are enjoying these offerings].

How is that good?

It is not actually that good, just that we don't have to flee and sleep too far away [from the village] like before.

Have you heard whether the SPDC [Myanmar government/Tatmadaw] or the KNU

[KNLA] has killed anybody after the ceasefire was declared?

I didn't hear anything around my area.

What about the sexual abuse or rape of women?

No I haven't heard about that.

What is your future expectation?

If there is peace in the future it will be good for us and if not it will be hard for us. I don't expect anything more.

Do you feel any change after the ceasefire?

I have no idea.

Have you heard of any oppression after ceasefire?

No.

Do people in your village use the microfinance program initiated by the Burmese [Myanmar] government?

Some do.

How do they do that?

Some people who do not have sufficient food take the money and buy the necessary food. Then when the time is up, they repay the loan. I don't know whether they do business [with the loan] or what.

Is there land confiscation in your village by both Burmese [Myanmar] government and military [Tatmadaw]?

In my village only a plot of paddy field was confiscated.

Have you heard whether it has been returned following the ceasefire?

No.

Have you heard whether they have returned land in surrounding villages?

I don't think so.

Can you tell me a little bit about your experience?

I don't know what to say.

Are there any additional things that you want to say regarding the information about taking children to be recruited as soldiers?

No more, just I will go over [to the KNU/KNLA] about my son and try to get him back, I will follow up first. If there is no success [at this level] then I'll go forward [raise the issue to a higher level authority/court] but if there is success then I won't take the issue any further.

How would you expect those kinds of things [to be addressed] in the future?

I think that if, in the future, the people in charge of the township and village tract will handle these issues it is best, otherwise we will not be happy.

Is there anything else you want to say that I didn't ask?

No

Thank you so much for answering my questions.

Source #45

Log #	14-97-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously published in June 2015: http://khrq.org/2015/06/with-only-our-voices-what-can-we-do-land-confiscation-and-local-response
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Tatmadaw activity

From May 5th to November 5th 2014, Tamadaw activities have [been] no different [than they have been in the past]. In our township, in Boo Loh Kloh valley, the Tatmadaw are based in A--- [village], B--- [village], C--- [village] and D--- [village]. Tatmadaw troops rotate every four months. When they are patrolling they go to KNU limited control areas and patrol these areas as well. Fighting never happens. They [Tatmadaw] have no army camp recruitments and have not reduced it [their camp]. [They] still have the same [army camps as they did] in the past. At this time I cannot write if it is an IB or LIB at each place, I just [know that it is] Tatmadaw.

Forced labour

From May 5th to November 5th 2014 [there was] no forced labour or forced demands. If the Tatmadaw military needed leafs or bamboo ties³¹ for building [they did] not demand [them from] us. For building, if [they] need bamboo ties and leafs [they] ask the head villager to find [the materials] for them and buy them, [and they] pay money [the same way] the villagers [would]. With regards to forced labour, the Tatmadaw are not forcing villagers to [work as] porters. They carry [their supplies] for themselves.

Civilian livelihoods

From [the beginning of] 2014 until now, civilians in our township are mostly [earning their] livelihoods from farming, hill field [cultivation], and sesame plantations. Since [the beginning of] 2014 the situation [is] getting better and the civilians are [earning] more. In the past

³¹ Bamboo ties are thin splints of bamboo that are used as a stiff rope to secure or 'tie' things together.

[before the ceasefire], [some] plantations the people did not cultivate [and] [some] farms of the people could not be worked on. [However], this year the civilians farm all [these farms and] plantations. In the past, [the] DKBA was active on the farms [and] plantations, [which became] desolate. Now [villagers] cut down the trees and clear the grass on the land in order to farm it.

Some villagers [are earning their] livelihood from cutting bamboo to sell [and] some sift for gold as well. The civilians [are earning their livelihood] from cutting bamboo to sell [and] sifting for gold because [they] have no property, [such as] a plantation or farm.

Education

Since [the beginning of] 2014, education has gotten better in our township. In the past, [some] villages had no school. Now [they are] establishing a school. The children [who are old enough] can all go to school [in their own village now].

If we look in our township, education is getting better. I am so happy [to see the better situation]. In the past, in some villages the children wanted to go to school [but they] had no school [in their village]. But this year, the villages which had no schools [are establishing] schools and their children can go to school. [Therefore] the children's parents are so happy.

Healthcare

In our township, the healthcare [we have] is one clinic in Ler Htoo Poh [village], Meh Thoo village tract. Some civilians, if [they are not] feeling well and live very far [from the clinic], cannot make it to that clinic. The [other] villages [and] village tracts have no clinic. There is [just one] township clinic [and it is] located in Ler Htoo Poh [village]. [In] some villages, the children go to study medicine and [then come back] to look after patients [in their own village]. Some *Tharas* [teachers] who look after the patients after they are treated have asked for money for medicine. For the people who have money, if they get a serious disease and go to a hospital in the towns it costs a lot of money.

In our township area civilians mostly suffer from health issues [such as] malaria, stroke, [and] bird flu. [Those are] the most serious diseases. Some [people] suffering from serious issues [such as a] stroke cannot get treatment and become paralysed.

Gold mining

From 2009 to 2014 gold mining did not stop in the Dwe Lo Township area. I have done research to understand this gold mining [issue]. If we look back at [the reason for gold mining] it is not due to a mistake by the [KNU] leaders. The [KNU] leaders stay in their own areas. The [powerful] civilians who live in town and in our township are very good at convincing [the leaders to allow them to gold mine] so the leaders gave them permission. After they [KNU] did this [gave permission], the civilians who suffer [are the ones] that are not good at speaking and have no power. They are suffering due to contaminated water [and] a lack of access to fresh water. If I look back at this [situation] it is not the fault of the leaders. The leaders are trying their best to manage [the gold mining]. If I look back at the gold mining [issue], although some villagers said that their lands had been destroyed, they were compensated enough for the land that had been destroyed. If I look at this, [to me] it cannot [be seen as] an abuse of their rights. With regards to gold mining, [the issue] is not the leaders, it is between the civilians.

Conclusion

At this time I am sending this report to document the above [issues]. As I see it, civilians told

me [about the issues] and I report them.

Source #46

Log #	14-99-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>Naw A---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>--- [Age censored for security reasons].</p> <p>Which village do you live in?</p> <p>A--- village.</p> <p>What is your occupation?</p> <p>I attend school.</p> <p>Which standard³² are you currently in?</p> <p>4.</p> <p>What is your father's and mother's name?</p> <p>My mother's name is Naw B--- and my father's name is Saw C---.</p> <p>Can you tell me about what happened to you?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>What happened to you?</p> <p>I went to school. When I went to school, I said to my sister to go first and I was left behind. Phar Pa Har asked me, 'Sister, allow me to touch your vagina.' I scratched his hand and I left him. He carried me from the back and took me to the cow fence. My purse fell down and I picked it up. I twisted his finger. He asked to touch my vagina. I answered no. I ran. I ran to</p>	

³² A standard refers to a school year in the education system of Burma/Myanmar. The basic education system has a 5-4-2 structure. Primary school runs from Standard 1 to Standard 5, lower secondary school is Standards 6-9, and upper secondary school is Standards 10-11.

the school. The teacher asked me, 'why are you late?' I said nothing and the teacher hit me.

What did the teacher do to you?

The teacher hit me.

When did it happen?

September 27th [2014], after 7:00am.

Where did it happen?

In the field.

Where did he take you?

By the cow fence.

What is his name?

Phar Pa Har.

Where does he live?

Poh Khay.

Before he physically restrained you, what did he say to you?

He came in front of me, and said that my sister allowed him to touch my vagina. I said no, and I left.

Is Phar Pa Har a student or something else?

Teacher. He goes to teach in Hti They Oo.

When he physically restrained you, did he do anything to you?

He tried to touch my vagina.

Did he manage to do [this] sexual harassment to you?

No.

After he physically restrained you, when you got back to your house, did you tell someone about it?

I told them about what he did to me.

How did you tell them?

I said, 'Mom, come here,' and when my mom came, I said, when I went to school Phar Pa Har asked me to let him touch my vagina. I scratched his hand and left him. He caught me

from behind and brought me to the cow fence. He said, 'let me touch your vagina' I said no and I left. When I arrived at school, my teacher asked and I said nothing and my teacher hit me.'

After you told your mother about it, how did your mom reply to you?

She did not say anything to me.

So she did not reply. Did she do anything?

She told my father and my grandmother heard. She went to tell Phar Pa Har's grandmother and Phar Pa Har's grandmother went to tell.

Who did she go and tell?

She went to tell Phar Pa Har.

When the one who physically restrained you heard [that you had reported the abuse], how did he come and tell you?

He came to tell me [off] and before I replied, he slapped my face and squeezed my throat. When my mom tried to stop it, he hit my mom's face and went down from the house.

After he hit your mom and you said he went from the house, after he had left [and was] outside of the house, what did he do?

He shouted at my mom.

So he shouted at your mom?

Yes.

After then where did he go?

He went under the bamboo trees.

After that, did people arrange something for you for the case?

Yes, they have arranged [something]. After that I asked for 500,000 kyat and he replied that if he has to give me money, then I have to give him my life. The village head arranged to give me 50,000 kyat. But he said he can only give 10,000 kyat. He said that if he has to give 50,000 kyat, he has to take my life.

After he said that, what did the people who arranged [the case] say to the other people?

They said we arranged for 10,000 kyat and that if you do not accept it, we cannot help you with anything.

After that, later, did the people arrange something for you?

His father and brother came and many other people come. I asked for 2,000,000 kyat. They

told me to only ask for 50,000 kyat and they would give me their cow. I answered that I do not want [the cow]. I have my own goat. They answered that if you do not agree, we cannot do anything. I answered that I do not want [anything].

How do people call his father?

Po Mo Klaw.

When people arranged [the discussion], why did the person who physically restrained you not come?

Maybe he ran away.

Where did he run away?

I do not know.

Did the father of the one who harassed you give you something?

He gave me 250,000 kyat.

Did he say something to you?

I told him that the one who has harassed me was Phar Pa Har but the one who came to apologise to me is Phar Pa Har's father. The one who had to come [to apologise] would have had to have been Phar Pa Har. I asked for 3,000,000 kyats. People told me to only ask for 500,000 kyats and that would be enough. Phar Pa Har's father said 100,000 is enough. My grandfather said that 250,000 kyat is enough. I accept.

They give you 250,000 kyat and are you satisfied with that amount of money?

Yes.

Regarding this case, would you like to add more information?

Yes.

Tell me what you would like to tell.

I want to tell you that [the person] who harassed me, later on he did not do it again. Do not do it more later on.

Ok. Thanks.

Source #47

Log #	14-99-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar

Location	Hpapun District
Full Text	
How do people call your name?	
Naw A---	
Which village do you live in?	
In A--- [village].	
How old are you?	
24 years old.	
What is your occupation?	
I am a farmer.	
What is your religion?	
Buddhist.	
What is your ethnicity?	
Karen.	
Are you S'gaw Karen or Pwo Karen?	
S'gaw Karen.	
Can you tell me about what happened to your daughter?	
Yes.	
When the case happened to your daughter, how did your daughter come back and tell you?	
<p>When my daughter [aged 11] came back from the school, she said that in the morning she was going to school, and Phar Pa Har [her teacher] hit her in the head and touched her vagina. I asked her: "Did he touch your vagina?" She said he did, and she scratched his hand and she left. When she left him, he grabbed her from behind and brought her to the cow fence. After that, he touched her vagina and buttocks, everything. My child came back and told me this, and I feel sad. And I felt sad and I went to tell her grandmother and Phar Pa Har's grandmother heard. And she went to tell her grandson. And her grandson came. He came on Friday evening at 4pm. He did not ask kindly. He asked: "Naw B---, Naw B---. You said that I touched your vagina. Is that true?" And Naw B--- answered: "yes, you touched my vagina." Before she had even finished talking, he grabbed her throat and slapped her in the face. I stood up and tried to stop him and he beat me. He shouted loudly. I told him: "you are a teacher and you should have understanding and respect." In front of the people, he did not listen to what I said and he shouted. He shouted and went back to his</p>	

grandmother. After that I said some words to him. When he went back, he pulled his pants down and slapped his buttocks and shouted.

Where did he beat you?

He beat me at my mum's house.

How do people call her name?

C---

Which part of your body did he beat you? Your shoulder, face, hand or leg?

My chest, calf, and face were beaten. He beat me all over.

How many times did he beat you?

About five or six times. One time on my thigh. My thigh is swollen now. I showed him when they came to meet.

About this case, what did you do?

Regarding this case, I said I would solve it. Solve it well. Solve it until I am satisfied. When they came to solve it, Phar Pa Har followed me one time. But not his father. I asked him where was his father. He answered that this does not concern his father. Naw B--- asked for 500,000 kyat as compensation for touching her vagina, slapping her face and grabbing her throat. He answered that he absolutely would not compensate her. He said: "if I have to give [money], you have to give me your life." He asked for her life. And the village leader said: "you ask for the child's life; what are you going to do?" He did not tell anymore. The leader decided to pay 50,000 kyat. He said: "I will not give. If I have to give, you have to give me your child."

And then, when people came, how many people came and who were they?

When they came, the people were the village leader D---, E---, F---, Phar Pa Har, my village leader, me [A---], her [Naw B---], grandmother [C---], and her father.

How do people call your village leader?

G---

Village?

A---

When he dealt with your case, how did he decide for you?

A--- village leader decided to give 50,000 kyat to satisfy the child. And Naw B--- said that if it is 50,000 [kyat] then she will not take it. He [Phar Pa Har] said he will not give it if it is 50,000 kyat. And the village leader asked him [Phar Pa Har]: "how much do you want to give?" [And he said:] "If I have to give 10,000 kyat, I have that amount of money." But the child was not

satisfied. She did not want 10,000 kyat.

Later, did you arrange something again?

Yes, because he did not agree with what the child asked for. He did not agree with the 50,000 [kyat] that the village leader had decided.

So when you arranged the next time, who came and which authorities came? Tell me how many people there were?

When they arranged the next time, people included were one authority and his son-in-law and the village leader.

When they arranged it, how do they decide for your daughter?

They asked [her]. The child asked for 500,000 kyat and [she asked them:] “how will you?” He answered: “I do not have money to give. I will only give 100,000 kyat.” And the child did not want 100,000 kyat and she said: “if you give 100,000 [kyat] you do not need to give me it.”

How much did your daughter ask for? How much did she ask for to be satisfied?

She said: “if you arrange with the village tract leader, I will ask for more money. Each time you arrange I will increase the amount of money I ask for time.” When we met with his father and my village leader, she said: “give me 2,000,000 kyat. If he gives 2,000,000 kyat, I will be satisfied.” And when she went to the village tract she asked for 3,000,000 kyat.

And how did the people decide for her later?

Later, they decided on 250,000 kyat.

For 250,000 kyat, how did your daughter say?

My daughter was not satisfied. And the village tract persuaded her and gave her the money and she had to be satisfy, she explained. And people asked her whether she was satisfied and she said she was not satisfied.

Can you remember the name of the people who told her that she has to be satisfied?

Two women’s organisation leaders, her grandfather, and the village tract vice-secretary.

How do people call the vice-secretary’s name?

H---

Are you satisfied that people have given your daughter 250,000 kyat?

I am not satisfied.

If you are not satisfied, what do you want the authorities to arrange for you?

I want the authorities to take action.

When people meet, the one who did the harassment was not included; so where did he go?

He ran away.

He ran away; has he come back now?

Not yet.

Does anybody know where he is?

Maybe his parents know.

Regarding your daughter's case that I am asking you about, do you want to add any more information that I have not asked you about? Regarding the case, do you want to tell me any more about the woman's rights violation?

I want our leaders to arrange that there will not any more children's rights violations in the future.

Thank you.

Source #48

Log #	14-100-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Tanintharyi Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
Full Text	
<p>1. This photo was taken on November 20th 2014 between K'Hsaw Noh village and Ra Mwee village in T'Naw Th'Ree Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. The photo shows the place where Nway Ka Bar Company extracts lead. In the past, these places were rice fields. Now the fields have been destroyed by Nway Ka Bar Company, which is owned by a businessman named Ko Htay Lwin, since 2008 to date (as of November 2014). This extraction has negatively impacted the villagers' land.</p>	

Source #49

Log #	14-103-S3
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hti Lon Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
<p>This situation update is regarding villagers' lands being forcibly confiscated in A--- village, Hti Lon village tract, Hti Lon Township, Hpa-an District.</p> <p>The villages where villagers had been forced to move from are <i>Kaw La Thoo</i> [Muslim]. The villagers from A--- village had their land and their [original] living place, which is called B--- village, confiscated. There are about 100 houses in the village. Starting in 1995, the</p>	

government soldiers [Tatmadaw] increased their number by forming a council and militia in the village.

The council and the militias told the *Kaw La Thoo* villagers that, “since *Kaw Thoo Lei* soldiers [KNLA] come into the village we cannot take responsibility for your security, therefore we have to move your village and chase [force] you out”. The *Kaw La Thoo* villagers had to come and live in A--- village where they did not have any land. They had to come and live on other people’s land. In 2010, government [Tatmadaw] LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #203 came and built their camp in the *Kaw La Thoo* village after they had moved [the villagers] to B--- village. In 2010, since the government soldiers [Tatmadaw] built their place [camp] in B-- - village, they also chased [forced] out [the villagers] to another village which is called C--- village. In C--- village, there are 20 houses. All of these villagers [in C--- village] have to come and live in A--- village. Some of them also have paddy fields in D--- [village] and they are still working on the paddy fields. Then the [government] soldiers built a dam in D--- village. Their paddy fields drowned and they do not have any land left to work on. Now as they do not have any land left, they have to make homemade fried snacks and sell them. When I went and interviewed them, I saw some of them had tears which were falling down. They were crying.

The dam was built in 1995 and was finished in 2010. Because of [the construction of] the dam, about 3,000 acres of villagers’ paddy fields were destroyed. When the dam was built, the villagers were not consulted about anything. After building the dam, the villagers who live in D--- village were chased [forced] out and the villagers were told that, “*The water is going to come, and you cannot live here.*” Then they channeled the water [for the dam] and the villagers were able to leave just in time [before it flooded]. They were not given anything for their paddy fields which had drowned [been submerged]. When the dam was built, the villagers were not told [consulted] on anything. The *Kaw La Thoo* villagers have [had] to suffer the most. The first time was when [Tatmadaw] LIB #203 confiscated their village, which was called B--- village. The second time was that [when] the C--- villagers were forced out [of their village]. The third time was when their paddy fields drowned from the water of the dam. As a result, they reported [to the researcher] that they want to get back [either] their lands or the cost of their lands [restoration or compensation].

Source #50

Log #	14-104-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

1. Photo #0107

This photo was taken on April 9th and shows a villager’s rubber plantation from Lay Hpoh village. He fenced the [rubber plantation] with barbed wire. He said they [road constructors] said to remove the barbed wire. [The villagers] told them [the road constructors] not to flatten the land and cut off their plantations but the [project] leader from Man Pyi T’Khwun flattened the land and the [land owner] removed as much barbed wire as much as they could and fenced the area again. They [road constructor] then moved the land in the rubber plantation.

Source #51

Log #	14-105-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>There are a number of concerning situations which [have an] effect [upon] human rights in the area and there are also development projects affecting civilians and there are also many activities undertaken by Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw].</p> <p>The condition of the road, the peace process and its impact upon the occupations of villagers</p> <p>Despite villagers having freedom [of movement] for their living [livelihoods] the [issues relating to] natural disasters still remain and cause [problems]. Furthermore nowadays, even though villagers can travel freely and work comfortably for their living because of the KNU (Karen National Union) and Burma/Myanmar government peace talks, they still have limited confidence in the peace talk process. The trustworthiness of the peace talk process from both sides of leaders is low and [villagers are] worrying that armed fighting will happen again. Because of the numerous activities of soldiers, villagers have low confidence [in the peace process]. There is little trust for the peace talk process from both sides of leaders and [people are] worried that the armed fighting will happen again. Because of the numerous activities of soldiers, villagers have less confidence [in the peace process].</p> <p>The Burmese soldier's [Tatmadaw's] movement activities and encampments</p> <p>Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] have a lot of activities such as the active battalions, rear battalions and support units. In Ler Doh Township the army camps that Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] set up are (1) Mu Theh army camp, (2) Hkler Soe, (3) Kaw Hplah Lay Hkoh , (4) Maw Day Kleh Hkaw, (5) Baw K'Htah, (6) Ton T'dar, (7) Paw Khay Hkoh (8) Nat Than Kwin and Noh Ku Army camp.</p> <p>In Moo Township [Tatmadaw set up] (1) Military base IB [Infantry Battalion] #60 Battalion commander Zarni Aung at Than Bo, (2) LID [Light Infantry Division] #351 Lieutenant Ye Htut Zaw at Sit Hsin Kon, (3) LIB #599 Lieutenant Soe Tint Lin in Intoinshay area, (4) #590 Lieutenant Aung Than Htay in Yay Ao Sin area. The army camps are Yaygate camp, Thit Kyat Seik, Htee Toh Loh, Paw Pee Der, Myaung Oo, Kyo Pay Say, Nyaung Pin Thar, Aaw Law See, Mar Lar Daw, Ma Lwan Pon, Thapyay Nyunt, Hsaw Mee Loo, Htee Mu Htah, Kyaung Pyan are Aung Soe Moe army camps.</p> <p>In Hsaw Htee Township there are five [Tatmadaw] battalions of military operation which are IB #57 Shwe Kyin, LIB #349, LIB #350 Shwe Kyin, LIB #598 Z'lok Gyi and LIB #589 Do Seik area. The army camps are K'ser Kaw Htee, Ler Htaw Thoe, S'loo Chaw, Kaw Lar Seh, Hkoh Hpeh Htah, Meh Teh Htah, P'hee Soe, Thit Hkay Meh Soe, Wah Hkoh Law Teh, Ler Kyoe Hkaw, Moh Kyoe Hkoh, Thoo Ter Ther Hkoh, Paw Loe Htah, Kyaw Ku and Aye K'nee. The amount of military activity has increased in 2014. Therefore civilians worry that armed fighting will happen [again].</p> <p>KNU Situation and Activity</p>	

There is no military activity of KNU [KNLA], just the arrangement of leaders and responsible people in cooperation with CBOs (Community Base Organisations), CSOs (Civil Society Organisations), Village tract's community committee and NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) for the civilians. Regarding the support that comes from the independent organisations, the KNU assigns it to the village tract human right committees and lets them handle it. The cooperation between the KNU and village tract has increased these days. Public support [from the KNU] has increased and civilians also dare to present [complaints] if there is a weak point [problem] involving the KNU. There are no activities involving the KNU [KNLA] soldiers. If there is any problem or conflict involving either governments [Myanmar/KNU], they meet and solve it. The Pegu region [Bago Division] peace representative team and the KNU formed the peace committee and if any issue has been raised, these two groups, who meet frequently, will solve the problem.

The Circumstance of Peace

Because of increasing government military activities, despite the [fact that the] ongoing peace process between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government is over two years old, the peoples belief in the peace talk process is still less [not strong]. And because of the non-observance of the peace talk process and ineffective decision making of the peace talk process of the two groups of government, the belief in the peace talk process amongst the public is not strong. On 27 September 2014 in Nyaunglebin District brigade 3rd in Ler Doh Township KNDO (Karen National Defense Organisation) Battalion #3 encountered and fought with government military [Tatmadaw] LIB #361 [under command of] Lit-Colonel Kyaw Swar Moe.

This government military [Tatmadaw] is based in Kler Soe army camp (Ton T'dar sakan) and their [perceived] activity is to enter the KNU [KNLA] area at Hkeh Der tract in Beh Kaw Plaw. This area is where the villager's paddy field and their working place is, which is located three miles from the vehicular road. Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] came across several miles of the KNU [KNLA] area and the fight happened there. The KNDO corporal Saw Poe Law died and a [KNDO] soldier, Pah Tah Au was injured.

On 1st October 2014 in the KNU [KNLA] region in Moo Township the government military [Tatmadaw] was active all the time. Then the KNU [KNLA] warned them not to enter [or to be] active in the area but they did not listen and on the day that they said they would leave, a KNU subordinate asked the village head to inform the Tatmadaw not to continue but they didn't care and they continued to the headquarters of KNU [KNLA] 3rd Brigade, Battalion #8. Therefore, the KNU [KNLA] gave a warning shot to the government military LIB #598 Battalion commander Zaw Win Naing and his soldiers. The villagers were frightened and they are increasingly worried and their belief in the peace process reduced because of this conflict that was happening.

Baw K'htah Dam Project

The Burma/Myanmar government has had a plan for this dam for a long [time] but the KNU forbade [it] and interfered [in the plan] therefore this program was not successful. Now that the KNU is holding peace talks with the Burma/Myanmar government, the Burma/Myanmar government has a program to construct the dam at Theh Loh Kloe (Baw K'htah River). In spite of the KNU leaders' request to overcome [not proceed with] this dam project, on 18 October 2014, a community meeting on the Baw K'htah Hydroelectric Project was held in Ler Doh Township in Hkoh Poe area. The meeting was held as an initial study and it was just discussion and dialogue with CBOs and CSOs about whether they should proceed with the

[construction of the] dam or not. In this meeting although villagers presented a lot of their opinions and desired questions, the leaders and responsible personnel failed to answer all the questions that villagers asked. Over twenty villages' representatives and community religious leaders attended this meeting and asked questions and answers. There were over two hundred people including [people from] foreign countries, such as the Norway Embassy Representative (Mattal), MPSI (Myanmar Peace Support Initiative) Representative (Ashley), [other] professionals from Norway and KNU Representatives from Brigade One [Thaton District], Brigade Three [Nyaunglebin District] and headquarters. In charge [of the meeting] was Saw Tah Doh Moo who led the program and held the meeting. Padoh Saw Tah Doh Moo told the villagers *"The people who come and support the dam construction have to listen to the local voices and follow the rules of the community"*. The Norwegians who came for the dam project [meeting] are not the people who will construct the dam, just the people who are investigating it in order to examine and confirm whether they should construct the dam or not, to meet with local people and set up the regulations for the dam construction.

Conclusion

There will be negative consequence if the [dam project] plan [is implemented]. This information was reported with community members, according to their situation.

Source #52³³

Log #	15-3-A3-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpa-an District
Full Text	
Interview Date: November 24th 2014	
What is your name?	
My name is Saw B---	
How old are you?	
I am 57 year old.	
Do you have family?	
Yes.	
How many children do you have?	
I have five children.	
What is the age of your oldest child?	
37 years old.	

³³ Please note, direct reference to this source document was removed from the final publication of Foundation of Fear.

What is the age of your youngest child?

18 years old.

Where do you live?

In the past I lived in C--- [village].

Now where do you live?

I live in A/D--- [village].

What do you do?

I am a farmer and work on a peanut plantation.

Do you have any responsibility [hold public office in the village]?

Yes I have responsibility for looking after the villagers.

So you are a villager?

Yes.

How is the situation regarding villager's livelihood in this year?

This year the situation is not so good because of unfavorable weather and also there are many impacts upon peanut production. The peanuts should produce five viss but it produces only two viss. Some people were able to produce three viss. If weather is good there is not a huge problem.

This is the kind of barrier that local villagers have been encountering?

Yes villagers encounter these problems with their livelihood.

If we look back at the situation in detail, is there anything that has hurt villagers or is there anything else happening?

In our village there is nothing else happening, only that people murdered our monk.

Can you tell me what happened with the monk?

I did not see any problem with the monk. We worshiped the monk and we could not see any problem. I usually go to the monastery every two or three days. After he passed away there is no one to lead the monastery.

You said people murdered the monk. Who murdered the monk and why did they murder him?

Ta Wah is a killer [the perpetrator]. We do not know his reason for killing the monk.

What does he do?

He is a KPC [Karen Peace Council] soldier.³⁴

Do you know his position?

He is a 2nd lieutenant.

Can you tell me how he killed him, step by step?

They [KPC soldiers] came [to the village] one time and called us, when we went to them they told us that after one or two days there will be a bad smell in your village. I was very surprised with [what he said]. I questioned him, where will that bad smell be? Is it in the village or outside the village? He replied to me that in one or two days you will know. I thought it [what the KPC soldier was talking about] was a methamphetamine case [a dead body related to yaba]. However I told him [to tell me] would it take place inside or outside the village, please tell me, I am a village head. He replied that in one or two days you will know. After we finished our conversation he went back to his [village] and I also decided to go home. When I went back home I went to another house to the north of my house.

Where did you have this conversation?

In Ta wah's house.

Where is his house?

Just in the upper part [of the village].

What is the place name?

We also call it A---. His house is located beside the road. We were not aware about that because every time he comes back to his house, he always goes back to the [army camp]. We were not aware that he would do something like that [be involved in the killing of the monk]. If we were aware then we could have done something to him.

How did he come?

He came back by car.

How many people did you see?

In the house when we had this conversation there was him, who spoke to me and under the house, four of his serving soldiers. If we include him there will be five.

³⁴ The KNU/KNLA Peace Council (also called the Karen Peace Council or KPC), is an armed group based in Htoh Kaw Koh, Hpa-an District, which split from the Karen National Union (KNU) and signed a ceasefire agreement with the SPDC government in 2007. The KNU/KNLA-PC subsequently refused to comply with orders from the then-SPDC government to transform into a Tatmadaw Border Guard Force in 2010. The KNU/KNLA-PC signed a preliminary ceasefire agreement with the Burma/Myanmar government on February 7th 2012, and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on October 15th 2015.

This was the conversation, what happened next?

After we finished our conversation he drove his car to go home and I also went back home. We finished our worship program [Ka Tin festival] and the next day the woman and many people came for us and we had a drink together. He came back early the next morning at 9:30am.

What was the festival?

Ka Tin festival.

Did you remember the date?

The 8th, 2014 was the day when we held our worship program.

Was it in October?

Yes.

You worshipped the monk [during the program] and after that what happened?

Next morning they [KPC] came back and arrested the monk.

Was that on October 9th 2014?

Yes. After they arrested the monk we could not see where they had taken him.

Where did you stay when Ta Wah arrested the monk?

I stayed in a house which was near the upper side of my house.

You stayed in the village?

Yes.

You did not stay in the monastery?

No.

Where did they arrest the monk?

They took him in the monastery. When they took him from the monastery the children who were learning at his place saw it [the monk being arrested by Ta Wah] so they ran to me to say "*Puh Dah, Puh Dah [Grandpa, Grandpa]*". I asked what was happening? They said Ta Wah had already arrested the monk. I asked how did he take the monk? They said they [KPC] took him into their car and went back [away]. We started to organise ourselves to follow him but it was difficult to organise each other because we do not all live together. We hired a truck and car which were in the village and every vehicle was full of people [to follow the monk].

How many trucks and cars were there?

There were three full trucks and two full cars. We were going to his [Ta Wah's] house.

Where is his house [army camp] located?

It is located in Lan Kwun.

Is not his home in A--- right?

Yes.

What is another name for Lan Kwun?

We call it Ta Bluh Wah Kwee. It is where four roads meet.

What are those roads used for?

One road is for Ka Rer Poo, one is for E---, one is for F--- and another for G---.

What is Ka Rer Poo?

Ka Rer Poo is a KPC [Karen Peace Council] place [army base].

Is there any other name for it or is it just called Ka Rer Poo?

Another name is Way Ler Moo. Some of the younger people [villagers] were going ahead [to look for the monk]. They were afraid of them [KPC soldiers] because they have guns. They were following yet were afraid of them because there was an old man with a gun. If they went further maybe they would have shouted at them but if they went a little further ahead they would have gotten to see where they killed [the monk]. Yet instead of going ahead they came back and met us in Ta Wah's house. After a few minutes he [Ta Wah] was coming back a different way. When he was coming back I asked him, *'where did you hold the monk?' They said 'we already let him go'.* We asked him to take the E--- road and go back to Burma [to leave the area]. I told him that it was not good to let him go in this way as he is a monk and the monk also has Ta Ka [monk supporters]. They said that they want to have breakfast and I questioned him again and asked him with what did you tie him with? He said that, *'I tied him with rope and [I have] already left him'.*

Which people did you ask?

Ta Wah. I asked him go back to Burma [out of Karen State].

Why did you ask him and what is reason behind it?

He said he did not need to answer my questions. I said monks have their own leaders, soldier have their own leaders and villagers have their own leaders. You cannot end the case like this. If monks commit a crime the monks themselves can solve their own problems. If a soldier commits a crime they have their leader to solve the problem. If a villager commits a crime he/she has their own head villager [to solve the problem] therefore I told him that you cannot solve it [this case] alone. There is no way for you to end the case on your own.

Where did you meet him?

I met him at his house in La Kwun. He said he will go to his corn plantation and will go back to his house. I phoned [his leaders] and they told me do not let him go anywhere but he had already gotten into his car [to go somewhere]. I went to stop him and told him that you are not allowed to go anywhere because a group of people will come to meet you. He was not willing to start his car because many people surrounded us.

Where did they confine you?

They confined us in his army base. They [his leaders] phoned me back and said let him go. I said, *'Why? you required me to stop him and I did.'* They told me that this is his business he can do it by himself. I asked *'Should all of them be let go?'* *'Yes,'* they replied. I let them go and went back to my home.

Where did he go?

He went back to Way Ler Moo and we were also going to Way Ler Moo. When we reached there the people [of Way Ler Moo village] said Ta Wah had already been in Way Ler Moo.

How many people did you go with?

18 people.

Did you go by car?

Yes we did because we hired Shine's car. We told their battalion commander Naw Pay, company commander Myit Thing and Kyaw Pu [about the case]. We asked where did Ta Wah hold our monk? They replied that they have already killed him because they already questioned him. I said we have not found where they buried him and asked if they could let one of them show us [the location of the body] because there is a thick forest. Their leaders arrested them [the culprits who killed the monk] the same day. They [battalion and company commander] told me do not let anyone in [the compound] but this case had spread widely throughout the village. There were a lot of people in the village [who had gathered].

Why?

Because the monk was dead.

Did they know?

Yes they did. They already knew before we came back. The villagers said lets go to find the monk. I said it is already getting dark, we cannot find him as there is thick forest.

Did you go the same day?

Yes we went in the evening.

Did you go at night?

Yes we did. I came back from [H---] it was already dark because the villagers had used up the lamps but we were ready again to look for him. We could not find him because there was thick forest. The KPC and Bo Tin Win had already gone ahead of us.

KPC also went there?

Yes there are 20 or 30 people which are part of KPC. They went with their guns and uniform. They did not find him and we also came back. In the same night they picked up their family and took them to G--- [village]. The next morning I phoned battalion commander Naw Pay and said send two of them [Tah Wah and Dee Dee, the perpetrators]. We were very sure that the monk was already dead but if I knew that he was dead for certain on the day when I met Ta Wah I would not let him go anywhere. In the morning they sent one person.

Which person did they send?

They sent Saw Dee Dee and they tied his arms behind his back.

They bound him?

They tied his arms behind his back.

Who came with him?

Battalion commander Naw Pay and his soldiers and they bound him under my house. No one was allowed to go to him but I went to him because I got very angry. He [Saw Dee Dee] usually calls me Kyaw Gay [term of affection meaning good brother] I said you call me Kyaw Gay but now I am not Kyaw Gay. Now I am Kyaw Aer [meaning bad brother]. After I finished talking I went to prepare the car or truck [for the removal of the corpse]. Later on one villager came and hit him [Saw Dee Dee] and another came and hit him too.

How many cars did you go with?

There were three trucks and two cars. Even though there were three trucks and two cars we had to come back and pick up more villagers two or three times.

When did you go to remove the corpse?

In morning at 10:00am. We were going group by group because everyone wanted to go [to the corpse]. We went to take the villagers and then came back to pick another group. There were around 1000 people who went to remove the monk's corpse.

Where were they from?

They were from G--- and here.

Where you removed the corpse?

Yes.

So the people were from three or four places?

The abbot monk who is from H--- [village] also came and removed the corpse. There was around 1000 people.

You removed the corpse out from the hole?

Yes, they buried the corpse in the slope of the valley and filled in the hole with mud and covered it with logs. We could not find [the corpse] because we went to find it in night time therefore we asked him to show us.

Was it at night?

No the same day. They arrested him at 9:30am.

So you got to see where he was buried?

Yes.

You removed the corpse so what did he look like? [Did he look like] himself or had anything changed?

There was mud on his body and there was blood on his head and ears. We could not touch it [the body]. His back was injured and one of his ears was cut.

What did the injuries look like?

It looked like fire burns. When we brought back the corpse we gave him a bath and some people took photos.

How long did you stay [at the place] where you removed the corpse?

It was around 1 hour because many people did not allow [want] us to remove the corpse. They said wait for other people.

After you removed the corpse how long did you keep it for?

We were there only for a few minutes and then we came back.

How did you come back?

We came back by track.

Where did you keep the corpse?

We kept it in the monastery. We gave him [the deceased monk] a bath in front of the monastery and after that we brought him back in the monastery.

What was the next step?

We asked people to buy the coffin and we put the corpse in the coffin in front of the monastery and built a place for it. It is not good to keep it in monastery because there is food for the other monks inside.

How long did you hold him in the monastery?

After two nights we burnt the corpse.

How far was it [from the monastery] where you went to burn him?

Not very far from the monastery, it was only 100 or 200 yards.

You said he was arrested on [October] 9th [2014] so when did you find him?

We found him the next morning on October 10th 2014.

You kept the corpse for two days?

Yes.

When did you burn the corpse?

On October 12th 2014.

Did you burn the corpse in morning or evening?

We burnt him at night time at 11:00PM.

Who stays in the monastery nowadays?

Now there is two monks and two novices but I got a phone call from a monk and said all novices were disrobed because monk [Ku Tha La] passed away therefore only monks are there.

Have you ever gone to meet him [a monk at the monastery]?

No, I have not met him [recently] but we used to meet with each other.

You met him in the day before yesterday so did he say anything?

He did not say anything. When the novices are there he looks after them.

Do you wonder how that monk will affect [work with] the village?

Now he takes responsibility for looking after the monastery but we have to find a new monk to replace monk Ku Tha La. That monk did not communicate well with the villagers in Karen language, he communicated well in Burmese but the villagers do not understand Burmese language. Therefore we will find another monk who can speak Karen or P'wo Karen.

Now because that accident [murder] occurred do the villagers still have any suspicions [worries for their security]?

There are no special suspicions from the villagers, but if we find a new monk they said that we must choose the right monk. If the monk comes to live here he does not have to worry

about his security. If we find the monk we will talk to Grandpa I--- and he will tell us which monk we should choose. KPC Battalion commander also suggested us to do like that; we do not know yet which monk we should choose.

Is it a suggestion from KPC?

Yes.

What about the five people, they do not stay here now right? So where did they go?

I do not know, since they killed the monk I have never seen them. I saw only the one who was sent to us [to show the location of the monk's grave]. I have not seen the others.

So did you know where they are?

Sometimes the other villagers have said they stay in Kyait Pa Htaw. Sometimes they have said they stay in the lower part [of the village]. The people [leaders] do not let us know so we do have not seen them.

What do you want people [leaders] to do to those five people?

There are two or three groups of leaders, I think they can decide it. The villagers here and in other villagers such as Shine villagers do not want them to stay alive. I think the leaders can make the best decision.

So you said it depends on the leader to decide it [their punishment]?

Yes. If we made the decision, we would not allow five of them to stay alive, but we do not know what the leaders will decide.

The information that you have shared to me is enough. Would you like to add anything else? If you want to add more you can add more, but if you want to stop here you can stop.

I can stop here because if I add more maybe I will repeat something so I will stop here.

I am happy because you told about me the incident that occurred to the monk and it was very detailed. I want to say thank you.

Source #53

Log #	15-3-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
Date Received: February 4th 2015	
1. These photos were taken on December 7th 2014 show NIPPON FOUNDATION	

distributing 700 bags of rice within three villages in Hpa Ka village tract [Hpa-an District].

Source #54

Log #	15-5-P4
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: February 17th 2015</p> <p>1. This photo was taken on December 31st 2014. It show a temporary teaching place in A'pa Lon village, Win Yin Township, Dooplaya District, which is under a monastery as there is no school in this village. In total there are 65 students from Kindergarten to Sixth Standard. The students are divided into two groups to be taught as they don't have enough space for more classes. One group is taught under the monastery, the other group of students is taught outside.</p>	

Source #55

Log #	15-5-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>This Situation Update describes events in Dooplaya District, in Winyay Townships covering issues regarding the Burma/Myanmar government, the Karen National Union (KNU), Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), private companies, civilians' livelihoods, development projects, education, health, and social and economic issues.</p> <p>The Burma/Myanmar Government</p> <p>On January 12, 2012, the Government of Myanmar signed a ceasefire with the Karen National Union (KNU). But the Tatmadaw continues to be active by using villagers' plantations for target practice and destroying some plantations in A--- and B--- Village. This shows that they [Tatmadaw/Myanmar government] are unwilling to address the needs of the local community and the requirements for the country's development. A villager went and met with the top battalion commander at Me'Zali military training center # 5 in 2014 in Waywin Township, Dooplaya District. When the villager went to submit his complaints to the commander, he [commander] threatened [the villager] and told him not to come and complain about anything because they [Tatmadaw] could initiate armed fighting in the area or confiscate these hills [land belonging to the villagers] at any time. This villager reported this in A--- Village in Win Yay Township. When the commander said this to him, the villager could not think of any response. The villager told KHRG researcher, <i>"I just wanted to make sure the issues concerning the damaged rubber plantations and unexploded ordinances that remain in the area [will be addressed.]"</i> When villagers reported this to the KNU nothing happened. When villagers told them about the Tatmdaw's target practice activities, they</p>	

[KNLA senior officers] said, “the issues in A--- and B--- are the concern of human right organisations, and it sounds like it does not concern local armed groups [KNLA].” I do not understand why this is not their concern since they are also Karen and have had discussions with the government and the Karen people who live in Dooplaya District, Winyin Township. They [KNLA] did not solve this case A--- and B--- villages were used as a target practice area] but a KHRG researcher who did not have protection tried to go to the target practice area [to solve the issue], they [KNLA] should stand for local people in meetings [to solve these issues]. Local villagers claimed that the KNLA mediator, Eh Dah, went to the area once but nothing changed. Villagers have no concerned authorities who will take action on their behalf.

In the past, the military training area was located nearby C--- Mon village, but after the ceasefire, the areas for military training activities have expanded and the training takes place in three villages: A---- D--- and B--- in Win Yay Township Dooplaya District. From the surrounding villages, the Tatmadaw used this area as a triangle position and the battalion held military trainings [in this area] once per year, and for the division they held trainings three times per year. A KHRG researcher witnessed Tatmadaw soldiers entering into communities with their weapons to ask questions after hearing about incidents in the village. This is a concern to villagers.

The Tatmadaw commanding officers come to monitor the army camp on the frontline. On 13th of January 2015 in E--- Village and F--- Village, before they patrolled the army camp on the frontline, one sentry appeared [showed himself] in the area beside the Asian high way road, while the rest of the sentries were hiding in the rubber plantation. On January 21st 2015, the village head said that he found five sentries monitoring the army camp near G--- Village. On the 22nd they set up another sentry station near H--- Village. The soldiers were from I--- army camp. When a KHRG researcher went and asked them about their activities, the Tatmadaw said that there were only three sentries. When the KHRG researcher went to speak with them he brought them four cans of juice, but since the discussion was lasting longer than they anticipated, they [Tatmadaw] could not waste any more of their time and they departed from the H--- Village. Altogether the researcher spoke with seven soldiers, in rank there was one two star, two corporals and four privates. One of the soldiers told the KHRG researcher that their operation commander was going to monitor and support the Chaung Sone camp. The Chaung Sone army camp, where they live, and the shops are really close to each other. However, the shopkeeper didn't see all of them that came [to his shop] and the shopkeeper saw only three of the soldiers. They spoke with the shopkeeper and said that they wanted to smoke, but they informed him that they did not have any money. Then the shopkeeper offered them cigarettes. They also asked for a coconut for their superior officer, but when the owner also allowed them to take one, the soldiers took two coconuts. The KHRG researcher witnessed this. He [KHRG researcher] also saw that each of them grabbed betel-nuts and filled their bags with them, but the shop owner did not complain about that. The shop owner would have complained if they grabbed a lot of betel-nuts, but since only seven of the soldiers took betel-nuts, he didn't feel the need to complain yet. The price of betel-nut is seventeen kyats per one betel-nut. The battalion that was camped in I--- Village in January 2015 was Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] # 538. It consisted of: 1. Lt. Colonel Kyaw Naing Soe, 2. Captain Win Koko Oo, 3. Captain Ye'Min Htet Thu, 4. Captain Aok Ka Htay, 5. Lieutenant Myo Thet Htwe, 6. Lieutenant Si Thu Naing. There were many soldiers, but the identities could not be verified by the KHRG researcher.

A KHRG researcher spoke to one of the soldiers about his military [Tatmadaw] involvement. He [Tatmadaw soldier] said that he signed a contract to serve in the military for five years,

but he worked for free [without pay] and he could not withdraw from the Tatmadaw. He was told the salary would be 170,000 Kyats and it would be determined in order by rank, so at the time he did not know the exact salary. The Burma/Myanmar government claimed that the military activities were launch by the Ministry of Progress of Border areas and National Races and Development Affair [now known as Ministry of Border Affairs].

On the ground, local people still have many concerns [after the NCA] because they still experience many types of destruction. While human rights abuses do not happen as severely as they did in the past, they still continue more subtly. For example Tatmadaw soldiers slap us [Karen people] across our faces [Tatmadaw are disrespecting their promises for peace]. The Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA) also patrol the area in Win Yay Township around Dooplaya District.

Although the Asian High Way is not finished yet, many armed groups have already set up checkpoints around the area: in total there are ten check points that have already been set up from Three Pagodas pass to Thanpyu Zaya. Car drivers have said there are three Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) check points, two Mon Army (MNLA) check points, two Democratic Karen Benevolence Army (DKBA) check points, one Karen Nation Union- Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA) check point, two Border Guard Force (BGF) check points. How can the country develop [and villagers' situation improve] if there are many taxes being collected from villagers at these checkpoints, and commodity prices are also increasing. Civilians who work by transporting goods along this route face many financial challenges from these taxes and checkpoints located along the Three Pagodas Pass. Even when the Tatmadaw don't ask for taxation they ask villagers to transport for them without giving them [villagers] the option to say no.

In Winyay Township in the eastern region of Dooplaya District, the Tatmadaw operation commander inspected the frontline army camps and in the western region, in J--- Village, Than Pyuzaya Town, Winyin Township, Dooplaya District, Tatmadaw soldiers frequently use the villagers' rubber plantation for target practice. After the Tatmadaw soldiers leave, the children who look after the grazing cows have been seen playing with the unexploded mortars shells that remain in the military training area. Local people reported these issues to Karen Human Right Group (KHRG) to help support them [through reporting and documentation] and possibly assist in reducing these risks. Villagers said that they feel as though the Burma/Myanmar government is targeting the Karen villages since the government sees this situation but does not take any action to stop Tatmadaw target practice activity in the village.

One of the most critical issues affecting villagers, is that many soldiers from Mon National Liberation Army [MNLA] are entering into Winyin Township. They charge a tax for owning rubber plantations based upon the number of rubber plants. In the western areas of these hills, if the rubber plantations are in Karen villages, the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] will tax villagers, and if in Mon villages, the MNLA will tax the rubber plantations. On January 20th 2015 shots [from flare guns] went off during the night, which was followed by other gun shots. This happened in We Daw Monastery. The flare guns were shot three times but the Tatmadaw soldiers only hit the target two times. This occurred at 9:13pm, which made villagers afraid because usually this form of military practice occurs in the morning and in the afternoon. Villagers had never seen a flare gun being fired. Another thing is they never used to see the flare gun shooting so several villagers including myself watched. No one knew about this before but people came out of their houses after hearing the shots and then they witnessed Tatmdaw engaging in target practice during the night.

Karen National Liberation Army Situation

Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA] has not engaged in any military advancements at this moment of time. However, villagers have reported that five KNPF [Karen National Police Force] officers were killed by the KNLA. Villagers are afraid [of the KNLA]. Villagers are too afraid to speak openly about the killing case in Winyin Township, in which five KNPF were killed by KNLA. They have to be careful because they [villagers] could be in danger [receive threats or be targeted by the KNLA] if they speak about the case.

Currently, they [KNLA] charges taxes on people who work on the road construction based upon the number of vehicles transporting stones. They [junior officers] only work by charging villagers vehicle taxes while their superiors [senior officers] attend meetings. They [senior officers] do not care to monitor the situation on the ground and only hear the information about the activities from their junior officers. A local villager said, *"They [KNLA] are not like they were before the ceasefire. Some KNLA officers are abusing their power."* Some villagers stated that soldiers from Battalion #16 and the soldiers that oversee the checkpoints in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District are the main people who abuse their powers. KNLA soldiers are everywhere and local people must be like a chameleon [hide from them and say yes to their demands to avoid attention].

At the union meeting of Karen National Committee it was decided that the committee members would be elected by the people, but before people could vote, the warrant officer from Battalion #16 already selected the committee members of the Karen National Committee. Within the meeting only the KNLA Warrant Officer [from Battalion #16] had the power to elect the committee members, which included people responsible for committee work, finances, catering, construction, security and religious affairs, etc. At first, I [researcher] heard that the committee requested funding from villagers so K--- Village offered to contribute 70,000 kyats. Later on I [researcher] heard they [Karen National Committee] requested more money, therefore people who responsible for their funding have had difficulties communicating with local people and the village head. I was also informed that [Karen National Committee] requested a budget of fifty million kyats. The poorly led funding initiative, caused problems and misunderstandings between the local people and the KNLA. To avoid having to make payments and fund the committee some villagers from L--- Villages joined the peace council [KNU/KNLA, which made them exempt from these requirements].

One hundred and fifty of villagers intend to hold a demonstration to protest the Myanmar government and a company who was constructing a road that would destroy villagers' land. They objected and raised placards, which stated, "Ye Yint Thau A'Pweh Pone Aouk Ga Aa Mate" [we local villager order the government and company to stop]. They organised in order to protest against the Company, but the commander of KNLA Battalion #16 Companies 2nd, Tin Win, and his subordinates came and took the placards and arrested those villagers following the orders of his superior officer within KNLA Battalion #16. Therefore, the rest of the villagers were frightened, and joined the armed group, peace council [KNU/KNLA to avoid threats from Battalion #16. The people who were arrested told me that they tried to demonstrate and protect their land from being destroyed by the company. Now they [demonstrators] are in the peace council armed group.

The Situation of Civilians

During 2013, 2014 and 2015 the general situation of civilians has improved in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District. Na Ta La [the Department of Progress of Border Area and

National Races and Development Affairs] entered into the villages and questioned the village heads about the village's needs. Since international aid organisations have begun entering into the community there has been more freedom for villagers to travel. However, villagers have also experienced some Tatmadaw disturbances. In 2014 and 2015, they [Tatmadaw] came to the local community [A---and B---, Win Yay Township] and started using the area for military training and target practice. They put a signboard with the statement, "*target practice area*" and villagers worry that their lands will be confiscated by the Tatmadaw.

Even more land issues are occurring as the result of the construction of the Asian Highway. The road construction destroyed some of the villagers' land, but they did not know which company was overseeing the road construction. When business people makes business deal, they cooperate with local organisations [local authorities] without informing or consulting with villagers about what they decide regarding development projects. The villagers' situation now is even worse than it was before 2012 and 2013 because, although the civil war has ended, villagers have to worry about retaining their lands and experiencing livelihood challenges. Tah Au, who is a checkpoint officer for the KNLA came to ask villagers "*Do you agree for us to construct the road for you? If so, you have to sign for us.*" Then some local villagers agreed and signed the document without knowing any of the details of the project or the possible impacts it could have on their lands. He gathered villagers at the village head's house and asked them [villagers] to sign the agreement. The villagers were not told anything by the checkpoint officer about why he was asking them to sign and they were also afraid of him [which is why they signed]. Thus, rights violations are still happening in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District, but they are happening in a more concealed manner. The Burma/Myanmar government [Tatmadaw] and the KNLA are the main perpetrators of human rights abuses.

Local people worry that the government will stop their development projects and will start fighting the Karen like they did with SSA [Shan State Army] [because previously the government fought with the Karen when they had a ceasefire agreement with SSA, and when they made a ceasefire with KNU they fought with SSA]. Local people said, "*If our Karen people are cheated [and asked to sign without knowing the details of the road construction], it would be awful to imagine [the Myanmar government/Tatmadaw breaking their ceasefire agreement with KNU] since there are some Tatmadaw officers involved in the road construction project.*" Local villagers are also suspicious of the LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #310's ,who are from L--- village, and their target practice in We Daw in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District because they [villagers] think it might be in preparation to fight with SSA since it [firing flare shots for target practice] takes place during the night. They question why they are shooting flares near villagers' plantations when there are other lands that are available for that [activity]. It seems like the Burma/Myanmar government [Tatmadaw] do not want to have peace if they sign a ceasefire with the KNU, but [the Tatmadaw] simultaneously prepares to fight with SSA. Villagers are frightened that fighting will also break out between the Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU.

Recently, even though the township has received support from the Nyein Foundation, which is a local NGO doing community development, villagers face issues because the Tatmadaw soldiers started to use 200 acres of villagers' rubber plantations for their target practice. Villagers also want the KNU to explain the road construction to them and inform them about how and if they will be compensated for the destruction of their land as they [KNU] are responsible for the road and for communicating with villagers about it. However, the KNU only told the village head about the road construction and when the village heads come back to the community, they cannot explain it to the villagers effectively. Furthermore, some

village heads said that when they [the KNU] held the meeting about the road construction, they mostly spoke Burmese so village heads who did not speak Burmese could not understand. When they attend these meetings, it is like showing a movie to a dog or feeding Indian pancakes to cows [it doesn't make sense]. That is why they [village heads] cannot explain what is happening with construction projects to the villagers.

Development

Development in Winyin Township in Dooplaya District is no longer as it was in 2008. After 2012 the development situation has changed and things have improved because there are more roads and communication infrastructure. However, the construction of the Asian Highway has not been completed and it has destroyed some villagers' property. When there is heavy rain, villagers cannot travel on the road properly. Recently, more organisations are supporting villagers, but they do not assist and distribute aid to all villages, and villagers do not understand why. According to a local villager in Kawkareik Town in Dooplaya District on January 29th 2015, villagers received aid in the form of one bag of rice per person. Yet, in Kyauk Ki Village in Kawkareik Town, another villager said two bags of rice were distributed to one house, and in villages in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District, one house only received one bag of rice and some villagers who had not registered their household, did not receive any rice. Some villages do not receive any rice at all. A Japanese organisation [Nippon Foundation] distributed solar panels and light bulbs to 96 villages west of the mountain in Winyin Township. The villagers do not know everything about all the development projects, but there has been development.

Education

In Winyin Township, Dooplaya District villagers face difficulties in regards to education. The Karen people are not well-educated in this region and the highest education level accessible is the eighth standard because schools that teach higher standards are only in Pa Pya Village and Kyue Tha Wi Village, which are too far for local people to access. According to a teacher from Win Ka Na Village, Winyin Township, Dooplaya District who spoke with a KHRG researcher at a community meeting, "*Some students cannot afford to continue their education after they finish eighth standard, and some students do not want to live far from their parents.*" In regards to community development in the region, the Myanmar government should give more support to education because according to their slogan [within the Myanmar government's social objectives], "*They will uplift the education standards of the entire nation.*" Is that only for the Burmese ethnicity? Why does the government not do the same for other ethnicities? Moreover, roughly only half of Karen people have access to education [schools]. Since many [Karen students] do not have educational opportunities in Myanmar, many have to go to Thailand to look for work. Some [Karen students] are taping the rubber trees [working on rubber plantations to earn money] because their parents are not doing well in regards to their livelihoods. Furthermore, you may even see children including Burmese children are working at Than Pyu Zaya to O---/P--- vehicle road construction. This is their employment predicament, which is why people have to do this type of work for their daily wages. Road contractors pay 3,000 kyats per day to women and 4,000 kyats to men to pave the roads, but some [contractors] pay men and women equally. These occurrences [of students working as manual laborers] in the villages contradict the Myanmar government's social objective stating, "*They will uplift the education standards of the entire nation.*" What this really means is that the local people in Myanmar have to spend their lives working on the roads [and not attend school], while the country develops. In rural areas it is more difficult to access education. The leaders of the Karen [KNU] have the responsibility to improve levels of education for the people, so they can work for their people within the government and then they can achieve the four principles demanded by Saw Ba Oo Gyi

[former President of KNU]. A teacher from M--- village said, *“In some villages, they [villagers] have to hire more school teachers [and support their salaries themselves] because there are too many students. Either the Myanmar government does not know about this, or they just ignore it.”*

Health

There has been nothing particularly noteworthy about the local health situation during 2014-2015. However, in A’Nan Kwin Village, Winyin Township, Dooplaya District, goiters [disease characterised by thyroid swelling] have increased. The secretary wife’s from A’Nan Kwin village had the disease and had to go to Mawlamyine for an operation, which cost her one million kyats. How can poor people afford treatment for this disease? Because they [poor people] face difficulties accessing [and affording] treatment, they go untreated. Another issue villagers have experienced recently is that companies constructing the road are not paving it completely, which is causing a lot of dust. As a result, children have been inhaling dust and eating food that is dirty which has caused diarrhea and goiter [thyroid swelling] diseases. In 2013-2014, people with enough money were able to go to Mawlamyine Town and get treatment. One of villagers said, *“Since development is occurring, we want health organisations to come into the villages two times per year and provide services and monitor the health situation in the village.”*

Social Services

The situation regarding access to social services in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District has changed in 2014-2015. The KNU [Karen National Union] arrived to the villages nearby the vehicle road, but they [KNU and other organisations] have not gone to villages near the mountain pass [further from the road]. Only KHRG has visited all of the places in this area, including villages near the mountain pass and along the vehicle roads. The living standards [between the area near the road and the mountain pass] are different. 70 percent of villages living near the road are literate; whereas in smaller villages further away from the road only 40 percent of villagers are literate.

On January 23rd 2015, a KHRG researcher arrived at Me Tha Li village and stayed the night at the village head’s house. There the researcher was visited by the village’s school committee and school secretaries. In the village there are thirty five households. The village head said that this village has changed a lot over the last ten years. Previously, the villagers had to porter for Tatmadaw, and then were told to be guides by KNU[KNLA]. Since the ceasefire, no one comes to the village [and gives villagers orders]. Only one health organisation has come here after the ceasefire, but they arrived here accidentally because they lost their way.

The village secretary and other villagers also spoke [of issues before the ceasefire] and said, *“Before the police’s second lieutenant, Thein Oo, [passed away], he forced villagers to work like cows without giving them a break, he told villagers to build houses [for him], to cut down trees in the forest, and he confiscated villagers lands, but no one dared to complain about it as the villagers were not educated [and did not know how to report it].”* Therefore they felt that they would do whatever they were asked as long as they would not be violently tortured and killed. It was far worse when people from the same ethnic group [Karen] oppress each other [referring to when the KNLA members killed members of the KNPF], more so than when other ethnic groups do [oppress them].

The mother organisation [KNU] does not make any effort to improve community development for local people. If so, they only initiate activities inside villages that have

already received some community development projects. The KNU [members] are no longer living in small huts like before. Now they have bigger homes and are traveling by vehicles and they have forgotten their past and are no longer concerned with villagers' needs, but local people still love [respect] them. The only thing local people want is to have a good relationship with the KNU. I [researcher] have seen them [KNU members] myself and when I look at them they seem very arrogant and they discriminate against local people [people with less money]. Some villagers have complained to KHRG and asked, *"Do KNU's soldiers [KNLA] only receive officer training and learn how to fight in battle? Do they not also receive training about social issues and advocacy?"* To which the researcher replied that he did not have information about their officer training. The village head also said the KNLA does not oversee and monitor the actions of the KNLA soldiers in their area [who mistreat villagers].

Business and Companies

Business opportunities have increased in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District, but not for local people. One villager said that since the situation has become more stable, local villagers have tried to start a pig farming business [buying pigs in the village to sell in the city], but KNU officials [KNLA soldiers] at Lut Shan check point, use this as an opportunity to tax villagers and charge the pig traders five thousand kyats each time they pass the checkpoint. There are no taxes at Mon check points. When a KHRG researcher asked the check point officer [the soldier's superior] about this issue, he said that they only received two thousand kyats [leaving 3,000 kyat unaccounted]. Warrant Officer Tee Keh, from Battalion #16, *"this is just business"* and also said that they were commanded [to tax villagers] by the Battalion Deputy Commander. One local villager said that the check point officer told them if they [villagers] did not pay five thousand kyats, they [villagers] were not allow to pass [the checkpoint], so they had to pay. The pig traders are Karen, and they said that they usually receive six thousand kyats per one viss [of meat], but this also depends upon the check point fees as well. They sell it to the Burmese who work at the road construction sites and some villages also buy their pork meat as well. But when those people [Burmese road constructors] leave to go back home after completing the road construction there will be no way to do business.

Another issue is that the rubber plantations were burnt down because of the Tatmadaw's target practice and they also put up a signboard prohibiting villagers from the area, so I cannot work on my plantation anymore. Only armed groups and companies have opportunities to do business and take part in development projects during this time. Local people who live beside the O--- and P--- vehicle road and the Asian highway said, *"local people are charged taxes for whatever they try to do"*. What is worse is that the companies' owners and local armed groups cooperate and threaten local people.

General information

In Winyin Township, Dooplaya District, local villagers still have to fear, [they feel] under threat, face the loss or destruction of properties and do not dare to speak openly because if they say [anything] it can have negative consequences for them if there is armed conflict again. I [researcher] have to explain everything them [local villagers] and tell them not to worry about what they say and [not to worry about] providing information [because] it is about human rights issues. We are just trying to live according to the law and if something happens, I [KHRG researcher] will stand for local people and sacrifice my life for all of you because armed groups should know that all of this information was received by myself [a KHRG] researcher. After [the KHRG researcher collected this information, he] explained it [land rights] to some villagers, and they tried to fill out the land forms [KHRG's land grabbing forms] by themselves as much as they could. Some villages keep their land documents [land

titles] to use as evidence [and to protect their land] from being confiscated [by authorities including companies, armed groups, and government officials]. Some villagers cannot write, so they asked their daughters to write down what they say to them. Thus, I have empathy for local villagers who have lost their own rights [to their land, and other rights]. Local villagers have been fighting for their rights for about 66 years since the revolution.

Conclusion and Field Researcher Opinion

In my point of view in Winyin Township Dooplaya District the education has not been adequately supported yet, because as I [KHRG researcher] reported in 2013, the government has only supported wealthy villages and ones which are easily accessible [from roads]. They [the Burma/Myanmar government] do not care about poor villages. Companies also do not help villages and there are no benefits for villagers. They [companies] only do what will make profits for them. In Winyin Township Dooplaya District, Shar Moo Lar Company helped Lut Shan village they provide solar panels, light bulbs, and electrical wiring and so on. However, they do it just because they [Shar Moo Lar Company] profit from mining the mountain and then when they get the stone they pave the road and sell the stones as well. If local people were educated and aware, they would also be able to work with development projects and mine the mountain. In Q--- Village after the company mined the mountain, they left nothing for the villagers except for a large dirt mound, which was left in front of the school since 2013. More than half of the villages in Winyin Township Dooplaya District do not have access to clean water. Villagers want to be supported with water, education, health care, infrastructure, development and livelihood security, but water is their first priority. In some villages, the entire village uses the river but some are washing [themselves] in the river. While the country is developing, hospitals need improvements [more need to be built] most so more people from the rural areas can access healthcare, instead of having to travel to the township hospitals. Recently, there was a case, in which a rubber plantation burnt down in Winyin Township, Dooplaya District in Winkana village tract, and villagers asked for help from KHRG to convince leaders at the Township and District level to help and take action. They [villagers] also question whether or not there are laws since administrators from the District and Township do not enforce them properly. If they [District and Township administrators] are not able to make a clear decision regarding the case of the burnt plantation, how can they handle murder cases [regarding KNPF and KNLA]? I [KHRG researcher] did not dare to inquire about this case in the field, but villagers questioned me about the five KNLA soldiers involved in the killing case, so a monk from R--- village told villagers that they were confusing me with one of their [KNLA] soldiers.

To conclude, I [KHRG researcher] want the KNU to help villagers with their problems which concern, water, education, healthcare, businesses, social services and land titles too because villagers have no documents for their land and have nothing [no land titles] to show from either the KNU or the [Burma/Myanmar] government. Finally, what I want to report is that villagers need support [from the KNU and/or Burma/Myanmar government] for their livelihoods.

Source #56³⁵

Log #	15-71-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished

³⁵ Please note, direct reference to this source document was removed from the final publication of Foundation of Fear.

Location	Thaton Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 28th 2015	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Photo numbers – 100-0001, 0002, 0003, 0004, 0005, 0006, 0007, 0008 and 0009 These photos were taken on March 3rd 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract, Ta Maw Daw Village and it shows government staff taking photographs for the villagers ID card.2. Photo numbers – 100-0010, 0011, 0012, 0013 I took these photos on March 4th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Htee Nyah Paw village tract in Mi Chaung Aaing village. It shows villagers from T'Rweh Kee village tract cutting the thatch during the summer period and selling it in the city for their livelihood.3. Photo numbers – 100-0014, 0015, 0016, 0017, 0018 and 0020 I took these photos on March 6th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract in Naw K'Bo village upper part. The photos were about the distribution of solar panels and inverters [battery packs] by the [Myanmar] government's rural regional development ministry.4. Photo numbers – 102-0006, 0007, 0008, 0009, 0010, 0011, 0012 and 0013 I took these photos on March 16th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, T'Rweh Kee village tract, Naw K'Toh village lower part. It shows a clinic built by UNHCR at the lower part of Naw K'Toh village. UNHCR also distributed mosquito nets to villagers; almost every family.5. Photo numbers – 102- 0014, 0015, 0016, 0017, 0018, 0019, 0020 and 0021 I took these photos on March 17th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Neh Paw Htah village tract in Hpah Paw village at the monastery. It is about <i>Myo Set Thit</i> [new generation] students giving awareness [training] to the local people.6. Photo numbers – 102-0022, 0023, 0024, 0025, 0026 These photos were about <i>Myo Set Thit</i> [new generation] giving the awareness training to the local people. They were taken on March 19th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Noh Tah Hsuh village tract in Noh Pah Htaw village at the monastery.7. Photo numbers – 102-0027, 0028, 0029, 0030, 0031, 0032, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036, 0039, 0040, 0041, 0042, 0043, 0044, 0045, 0046, 0047 I took these photos on March 19th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Noh Tah Hsuh village tract nearby F--- village. It shows the place where the caustic soda factory will be built.8. Photo numbers – 102- 0057, 0058, 0059, 0060, 0061, 0062, 0063, 0064, 0065, 0067, 0068, 0070, 0071, 0072, 0073, 0076, 0077, 0078, 0079, 0080, 0082 I took these photos on March 20th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, G--- village tract at G--- School. They are about the meeting of the Karen armed groups committee for unity. [...]	

9. Photo numbers – 105-0238, 0239, 0240, 0241, 0242, 0243, 0244, 0245, and 0246

I took these photos on May 8th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township at Brigade #2 hall and it shows the first training of Community Health Workers (CHW).

10. Photo numbers – 105-0247, 0248, 0249, 0250, 0251, 0252, 0253, 0254, 0255, 0256, 0258, and 0259

I took these photos on May 11th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, T'Rweh Kee village tract, T'Rweh Kee village. They are about *Myo Set Thit* [new generation] giving awareness training to the villagers.

11. Photo numbers – 105-0260, 0261, 0262

I took these photos on May 12th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract, at Noh Tah Baw village, and they show the villagers forming a self-reliant group and building up a bridge that heads to another village.

12. Photo numbers – 105-0263, 0264, 0265, 0266, 0267, 0268, 0269, 0270, 0271, 0273, 0274, 0275, 0276, 0277, 0278 and 0279

I took these photos on May 27th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, J-- village at the monastery. Villagers from Maw Lay village tract are not able to elect their village tract leader in their own village tract as government military [Tatmadaw] do not allow them to elect the leader in their own village tract. Therefore, they have to go to the Neh Paw Htah village tract to elect the leader.

13. Photo numbers – 105- 0280, 0281, 0282, 0283

I took these photos on May 26th 2015 n Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Ma Daw village tract at the upper part of Naw Ka Bo village. The American Refugee Committee (ARC) constructed a bridge for the students to go to the school from another village.

14. Photo numbers – 106-0007, 0009, 0010, 0011, 0013, 0014, 0015, 0016, 0017, 0018, 0019, 0020

I took these photos on June 5th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township in Maw Lay village tract at L--- monastery. [The issue is that] Light Infantry Division [LID] #22 and Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #202 disturbed KHRG community researchers on the way when we went to [talk to] local people [to research about] the issue of Maw Lay cave.

15. Photo numbers – 106-0022, 0023, 0024, 0025

16. I took these photos on May 7th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Maw Lay village tract, at L--- monastery. Villagers from Maw Lay village tract came and listened to the discussion about the case of Maw Lay cave.

17. Photo numbers – 106-0027, 0028, 0029, 0030, 0031, 0032

18. I took these photos on June 7th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract at A--- Monastery.

19. Photo numbers – 106- 0034, 0035, 0036

20. I took these photos on June 8th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, A--- village tract at A--- village. They show Pyu Min Htun Company Manager Min Thu who came and met with Thaton Township joint secretary in A--- village at the village tract leader's house.

- 21. Photo numbers – 106-0037, 0038, 0039, 0040, 0041, 0042, 0043, 0044, 0045, 0046, 0047, 0048, 0049, 0050, 0051**
22. I took these photos on June 12th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Maw Lay village tract at L--- village. It shows Maw Lay cave that Pyu Min Htun Company will test [for suitable stone for a cement factory].
- 23. Photo number – 106-0052**
24. This photo is about Interview No #1 and I took it on June 15, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Sa Kan Gyi village tract at M--- village. It is about the one [man] who suffered because of the Yar Zar Min [robbery] and this is U N---.
- 25. Photo numbers – 106-0053, 0054, 0055, 0056, 0057, 0058, 0059, 0060, 0061, 0064, 0065, 0066 and 0067**
26. I took these photos on June 15th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Sa Kan Gyi village tract, O--- village. It shows the people who suffered because of the Yar Zar Min [robbery]. These are the family [members] of Saw P--- and Saw Q---.
- 27. Photo numbers – 106-0068**
28. I took this photo on June 15th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Sa Kan Gyi village tract, O--- village. It is Saw R--- from Interview #3, a [position censored for security] of Sa Kan Gyi village tract.
- 29. Photo numbers – 106-0070, 0071, 0072, 0073, 0074, 0075, 0076, 0077, 0078, 0079, 0080, 0081, 0082, 0083 and 0084**
30. I took these photos in June 16th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Noh Ta Hsuh village tract, F--- village. They are about the Caustic Soda Factory.

Source #57

Log #	15-11-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Date Received: March 5th 2015

1. This photo was taken on November 24th 2014 in A--- Village, Meh Klaw village tract in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The photo shows villagers preparing to make natural fertiliser during the short-term two-day training that was conducted by Shwe Yaung Lwin Pyin (Golden Land) association and Help Age International in Hway Hsan village. The training focused on making and processing natural fertiliser which aims to support agriculture for villagers.
2. This is a photo of Daw B--- from C--- Village. She was photographed when she came and gave information to villagers who had invested and lost money in the Tha Ma Di (informal saving organisation). She provided information about who they could contact, including non-government organisations that operate on the Thai-Burma border such as UNHCR or TBC and how to the report the case and receive assistance in order to get their money back. She was photographed on 30th

December 2014 at 12:14pm in D--- Village in Meh K'law village tract in Bu Tho Township, Mu T'Raw [Hpapun] District.

Source #58

Log #	15-12-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: March 5th 2015</p> <p>1. These photos were taken on December 24th 2014. It shows the place where the Tatmadaw killed Thara Poh Law in A--- area. [He was shot to death] 15 feet away from a road which the villagers use to travel. The side of the road was marked by a pile of stones. It also near B--- village, Kheh Der village tract, Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Township, Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin] Township.</p>	

Source #59

Log #	15-12-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukki Township and Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: March 5th 2015</p> <p>Nyaunglebin Situation Update This Situation Update was written during the period between November 20th 2014 and December 25th 2014 in Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District, Ler Doh Township, Kheh Der village tract and Moo [Mone] Township, Saw Hka Der village tract. This Situation Update includes information regarding livelihoods, health care, education, religion and military activity in the region.</p> <p>Livelihood issues Since September 20th 2014, villagers in Saw Hka Der village tract and Kheh Der village tract in Moo Township have experienced unfavourable weather conditions and their crops have not been fruitful. When they started growing small paddy plants insects including ants, grasshoppers, and termites ate their paddy seeds. The remaining seeds did not grow well. Rats also infested and destroyed their paddy during the harvest, which negatively impacted the quality of the rice and has reduced the amount of rice that can be collected this year. In Saw Hka Der village tract, Moo Township, one villager from Saw Hka Der village called Saw Ghu Htoo and his family members earn their livings by hill farming. However, this year's harvest was not fruitful; he only collected 15 baskets of rice in this year. Saw Gu Htoo also said, "<i>Other villagers also received less rice this year, 2014, so there will be challenges regarding food security in 2015.</i>"</p> <p>Healthcare</p>	

In Kler Lwe Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District, Moo Township, Saw Hka Der and Kheh Der village tract, communities contracted the common cold and experienced symptoms such as headaches, diarrhoea, and coughing. A villager, Mu Gha [Auntie] Naw Htaw Lah said, *“Villagers that contracted the infection mostly live in rural areas and hill areas, which do not have access to clinics. These villagers were also harassed by the Tatmadaw in the past, so they fear traveling outside their village [to access clinics]. They just stay in their village quietly and if there is no medicine available, they try to cure the illness using traditional medicine collected from the forest, which was the method they used to cure illnesses in previous decades. Since the situation has improved slightly, villagers have more freedom to travel to go and buy medicine in Ler Doh Town.”*

Education

There are not many schools in this area. In the past, the villages had middle schools, which taught up until the seventh standard. However, because of the Tatmadaw’s activities [during the conflict], villagers were forced to flee. They became IDPs [internally displaced persons] and now cannot afford to rebuild their school. Some villagers can only afford to attend school up to the second or third standard. One villager, Hpa Tee [Uncle] Saw Ghu Htoo from Moo Township, Saw Hka Der village tract said, *“In the past this was a big village with a large number of people and there was a school, which taught until the seventh standard, but after the Tatmadaw burnt down our school and all of our villagers became IDPs, we can no longer afford to rebuild the school.”*

Religion

After the Tatmadaw burned down the churches and schools in this area, the villagers are only able to rebuild their church with bamboo. Christians and animists live with each other and have not set up boundaries to divide the villagers into different communities. Instead, they have continued to help each other from the past until now. When Christians celebrate Christmas, animists help them at their cooking places by burning bamboo sticky rice. In 2015 they decided to rebuild the school and church. However, villagers are not confident about publicly presenting themselves to the Burma/Myanmar government and the Tatmadaw because the outcome of the [preliminary] ceasefire is still uncertain.

Militarisation activity

The Burma/Myanmar government said that there will be peace but if we look at the situation in Kler Lwe Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District, Moo Township and Ler Doh Township, militarisation is still ongoing. [One] villager in Hn--- village, Naw Ho---’s father, talked to me and said, *“After the ceasefire the situation has not changed [improved] very much. Instead, there is more freedom for the Burma/Myanmar government [Tatmadaw] because they now [have] more opportunities to travel and transport their military equipment and rations freely without disturbance from other armed groups.”* On September 7th 2014, they [the Tatmadaw] actively travelled towards KNU/KNLA [Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army] controlled areas and the KNLA battalion deputy commander warned the Tatmadaw not to cross into de-limited KNLA territory. However, the Tatmadaw ignored this warning. The battalion deputy commander explained to the Tatmadaw that the villagers in this area do not show themselves [are unfamiliar with strangers] so if they see the Tatmadaw cross into the territory they will run away in fear. However, they [the Tatmadaw] ignored the KNLA order and crossed into the de-limited territory on September 27th 2014 at 12:30 PM. The KNLA battalion deputy commander ordered his fellow soldier Thara Poe Law and four others soldiers to tell the Tatmadaw not to cross into the [de-limited] territory because terrified villagers were going to run away. After he received the order, Thara Poe Law and his fellow soldiers approached the area where the Tatmadaw was located. When the gap between

Tatmadaw and Thara Poe Law's group closed to 15 feet, the Tatmadaw began to shoot. Three KNLA soldiers were able to escape [unharmed] but Thara Poe Law died. He had a wife and a small baby and was 27 years old. The 20 year old soldier, Hpa Ta Au, injured his legs. The Tatmadaw soldier who shot at Thara Poe Law is battalion deputy commander Kyaw Zaw Myo from LIB #361, which has around 50 to 70 soldiers. They [LIB #361] are based in Kler Kyoe Army camp near Khey Der village and Hpa Kaw Kee village. Additionally, on December 21st 2014, LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #440 transported 17 trucks full of military equipment to Paw Kghy Koh military camp, K'Baw Tuh military base and other locations.

Source #60

Log #	15-13-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township and Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District

Full Text

Date Received: May 1st 2015

1. This photo was taken by a KHRG community member on March 10th/11th 2014, on the road between Kler Lah village and Toungoo Town during a Tatmadaw troop rotation. The soldiers are from Military Operations Command (MOC) #20. The troops rotate every three or four months. These soldiers are based in Hsah Hkee village, Tha Ay Hta village and Naw Soh village. Some villagers stated that they do not want the Tatmadaw soldiers to stay in the military camps that have been built. If possible, they want all the military camps to be withdrawn and dismantled.
2. This photo was taken on December 1st 2014 in Kaw Thay Der village, Htantabin Township, Toungoo District. It shows the Tatmadaw using the village road to send rations to their frontline camp in Buh Hsah Hkee village. Villagers report that persistent militarisation such as this makes them fearful that Tatmadaw is preparing for conflict.
3. This photo was taken on April 19th 2014 in Tho Maing village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District shows the photo of KNU and villagers talking after a meeting that was held by the KNU [Karen National Union]. In the meeting KNU explained to the villagers about the current political situation of the ceasefire that they are conducting with the government and they asked the suggestion from the villagers so that the progress of the [preliminary] ceasefire will go properly. It is the most important thing to let the civilians know.

Source #61

Log #	15-15-I1
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Full Text

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Rice incineration
Date of Incident(s)	December 8 th 2014
Incident Location	B--- Village, Meh Klaw Tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District

Victim Information	
Name	U A---
Age	Unknown
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Muslim ³⁶
Family	Yes
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Muslim
Position	Villager
Village	B--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
U Than Naing	Assistant Manager	Agriculture worker	Hpapun Section (2)	U Saw Htun Hla Shwe [Agriculture Manager]

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

I heard about this incident then I went and questioned U A--- and he said that the one who burnt his mound of rice is working in the Myanmar government as an Agriculture Assistant Manager, [and is called] U Than Naing. Before the incident happened U A---'s son had asked to borrow U Than Naing's motorbike, afterwards his [A worker for U Than Naing's] money, ring and video camera was lost and he complained that U A---'s son stole it [the

³⁶ The classification 'Muslim' in Southeast Myanmar is referred to and often self-identified as both a religion and an ethnicity. Muslims in Myanmar can be of different or mixed ethnicity. In Rakhine State there are two main groups, the self-identified Rohingya Muslims (not recognised by the Myanmar government and referred to as Bengali) and the Kaman/Kamein Muslims (officially recognised as one of Myanmar's 135 ethnic races). Outside Rakhine State, Muslims can also be Indian Muslims, Pakistani Muslims, Malay Muslims, Chinese Muslims (Panthays), Burmese converts, and Muslims from mixed marriages. Throughout KHRG's 25-year reporting history Muslims in southeast Myanmar have not identified themselves as Rohingya and mostly self-identify as 'Muslim'. For more information regarding Muslims in Myanmar see: YEGAR, M. (1972) *The Muslims of Burma: A study of a minority Group*, Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz; YEGAR, M. (2002) *Between Integration and Secession: The Muslim Communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, and Western Burma/Myanmar*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books; PRIESTLEY, H. (2006) '[The Outsiders](#)', *The Irrawaddy*, [Online] January; MATTHEWS, B. (2001) '[Ethnic and Religious Diversity: Myanmar's Unfolding Nemesis](#)', *Institute of South East Asian Studies*, [Online] Visiting Researchers Series 3.

items] then neither side were happy with each other.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The victim faced the incident himself and then he explained it to me.

3. Complete description of the incident

The incident happened on December 8th 2014 in B--- village, Meh Klaw Tract, Bu Tho Township. One of B--- villager's [U A---'s son] asked to borrow the agriculture assistant manager [U Than Naing]'s motorcycle to go and buy a goat. When he [U A---'s son] returned the motorcycle after he used it, one of the agriculture manager's workers had lost a video camera together with a ring and thirty thousand kyats in cash. He said that U A---'s son had took [stolen] his things when he had borrowed U Than's motorcycle. As a result this case arrived [was presented] to the village head but the village head could not resolve it. Then the case was submitted to the police and when the police investigated the case it was not the villager [U A---'s son] who had taken [the camera, ring and money]. Later on many people heard that his [the agricultural manager worker's] son took [stole] his things. As a result of this case there was disagreement between them.

Then on December 18th 2014 a mound of rice [belonging to U A---] was burnt down. The one who did [committed] this act is a staff member of the Myanmar government, who is not happy with [U A---]. After the mound of rice was burnt down, U A--- complained to the police, then when the police went and checked they found footsteps. Then they melted 20 packages of candles and poured it upon the footsteps [in order to make a mold of the footprint as evidence] and let the wax set. They then took the [mold of the] footsteps and said that they are going to go and check it with the CID [Criminal Investigation Department] so that they might work out whose footprint [it belonged to]. There is no information regarding the mound of rice to date and there has been no solution provided. Many people including the mound of rice owner [tried to] investigate this case and [believe that] the one who incinerated [the mound of rice] belongs to the Burma/Myanmar government [U Than Naing]. [Many people believe that] because the perpetrator worked in the government, [the perpetrator] bribed the government and the case was silenced.

4. Permission for using the details

The victim who has suffered gave me permission to either to use his story for information or in other sources.

Source #62

Log #	15-16-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	<p>1. Photo numbers #5331, #5332, #5334, #5335, #5337, #5339, #5341 These are pictures I [KHRG researcher] have taken of students who were punished by their teacher because they did not pass their exams. The teacher is named Naw A---, and teaches in B--- village, Pa Heh village tract, Bu Tho Township. She teaches up to grade four in her primary school. Kindergarten students who did not pass their subjects were asked [by Naw A---] to sit down and stand up 500 times for every</p>

subject they failed.

2. **Photos #5331, #5332, #5339 and #5341** show kindergarten students who were asked to sit down and stand up 1,000 times because they did not pass their exams.
3. **Photos #5335 and #5339** show a female grade four student who was asked to sit down and stand up 2,000 times in October 2014 after she was not able to pass her exam. After I heard these reports from the parents of the students, I met and photographed the affected children. The parents said that after their children were punished they [the punished students] were not able to go back to school for three days.

Source #63

Log #	15-18-I2
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Rape
Date of Incident(s)	November 15 th 2014
Incident Location	B--- Village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District,

Victim Information	
Name	Naw A---
Age	13
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Single
Occupation	Student
Religion	Christian
Position	Villager
Village	B--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Saw Htoo Baw	Formal police sergeant	N/A	Unknown	Unknown

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

Related to this information, I heard from villagers and I personally went to the village where the incident happens and I met with the villager who personally knew about the incident.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The person who gave me the information personally caught the offender so the information is true.

3. Complete description of the incident

A rape case happened in Toungoo district, Thandaunggyi Township, B--- Village on 15th November 2014. Saw Htoo Baw, 78 years old went to B--- village to sell things [trading goods/selling goods]. When he arrived at Naw A---'s house, as he was not familiar with the village geography, Naw A---'s mother asked Naw A--- to guide the way for him. After they finished selling things they came back to Naw A---'s house and when Naw A--- entered the kitchen room, Saw Htoo Baw grabbed her and pushed her down [on the floor] then raped her. While he was raping Naw A---, her mother arrived home from the forest and when she saw this [the rape] she shouted at Saw Htoo Baw to run out. For this reason, after she had gotten rid of him, she told the other villagers and the others villagers followed him and arrested Saw Ywa Blu then handed him over to the police. After it was handed to the police, he had to open the case and face the courts. However, as the victim's family lacked knowledge about the law, as well as money, the victim faced problems [in following the case].

4. Permission for using the details

The interviewee allowed KHRG to use the information.

Source #64

Log #	15-18-I3
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
Part 1 – Incident Details	
Type of Incident	Violent abuse
Date of Incident(s)	December 2014
Incident Location	A---- Section , Thandaung [Myo Thit] Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Victim Information	
Name	Saw B---
Age	22
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Single
Occupation	Plantation
Religion	Christian
Position	Villager
Village	A--- Section , Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Thandaunggyi Township

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Win Naing	Sergeant	N/A	Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Thandaunggyi Township	Sein Than Aung

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

This information had been told in the Section [Town] in order for the people who live in the Section to know. I met with the victim and recorded the information. This information is true as I got it from the victim.

2. Complete description of the incident

An assault case happened at night on December 2014, in A--- Section , Thandaung Myo Thit [Town], Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. Saw B--- and three of his friends were driving back home from their rubber plantation. They were stopped and checked by the Police Sergeant Win Naing and his group who were patrolling [the area]. As they were carrying rubber tapping knives and [actual] knives, Police Sergeant Win Naing punched them and then took them to the police station and put them into custody. Saw C---'s parents and the section administrator were informed and they came and guaranteed their release. As they [police] asked for fifty thousand kyats [to guarantee Saw B--- and his friends for release], the [section] administrator U Ba Maung paid them. However, since Saw B--- reported about how he was arrested and had money demanded of him by a retired police officer, Win Naing and his group [of police officers] did not take the money. However, they [the police] ate as much as they wanted in a restaurant and then they asked Saw B--- to pay for them. It cost about 30,000 kyats.

3. Permission for using the details

This information can be used by KHRG.

Source #65

Log #	15-21-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Date Received: March 5th 2015

1. This photo was taken on December 27th 2014 at Leik Tho Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. It shows a free healthcare service provided at the public hospital. The service was led by the local KNU government and medical specialists.

Source #66

Log #	15-23-D1
Title / type of report	Short Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>On March 5th 2015, I, Saw A--- (KHRG advocacy officer) met with Naw B--- (villager from C-- -) in Mae Sot [Thailand/Myanmar border]. During the meeting, Naw B--- reported that the Border Guard Force [BGF] had built more army camps and was demanding labour from villagers in KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] controlled areas in Dooplaya District after the [preliminary] ceasefire was signed between the KNU [Karen National Union] and the Government of Myanmar in 2012.</p> <p>Since the ceasefire was signed, Border Guard Force Battalion #1012, led by battalion commander Maung Tho, has built two camps in KNLA controlled areas in Brigade 6 (Dooplaya District). BGF Battalion #1012 ordered villagers to build their new camps and [ful]fil their daily labour needs (date is unconfirmed).</p> <p>On January 30th 2015, BGF Battalion #1012 built a new camp but they were ordered by KNLA Captain Hla Min to withdraw and burn down the camp after BGF Battalion #1012 left. On February 27th, villagers reported to Captain Hla Min that BGF Battalion #1012 had returned and was building up their camp. Captain Hla Min ordered his soldiers to go and tell BGF Battalion #1012 to go back. Around 6PM, a KNLA company went to the location [of the new camp] to tell BGF Battalion #1012 to go back. However, while they were on their way to the camp, BGF Battalion #1012 soldiers ambushed them. One KNLA soldier was shot and killed and another soldier was injured.</p>	

Source #67

Log #	15-25-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Shwegyin, Mone and Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Ain Ta Kaw, Shwegyin, Mone and Kyaukkyi Township, (December 2014 to February 2015)</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>The [information in this] report was collected between December 1st 2014 and February 1st 2015. Many human rights issues were reported in Nyaunglebin District during this period. Nowadays, the issues that happen regularly are arbitrary taxation and trouble being caused [for villagers].</p> <p>Although the Burma/Myanmar government and the Karen National Union [KNU] have signed a [preliminary] ceasefire,³⁷ Tatmadaw activities are still ongoing. If this continues, fighting will</p>	

³⁷ This refers to the preliminary ceasefire agreement signed on January 12th 2012 between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the

definitely break out. The Tatmadaw is creating obstacles for the KNU's humanitarian activities. Villagers fear an outbreak of fighting in the future.

Town area situation

The Burma/Myanmar government forcibly confiscated land in K--- village, Tha Ya Gone village tract, Ain Ta Kaw Township, Pegu [Bego] Division. In 1995, the Burma/Myanmar government's #1 Central Ammunition Depot [CAD]³⁸ that [is] situated in K--- village confiscated around 3,000 acres of the villagers' land. In 2010 and 2011 the villagers successfully won back their lands in Pyi Teh Yay Aa Myi Pauk, but there are also many [confiscated lands] that were not returned to the villagers in Pyi Teh Yay Aa Myi Pauk.

The villagers have resumed cultivating and working on the lands which have been returned to them. The Burma/Myanmar government [department] responsible for land, land surveying and the land documents³⁹ has measured the lands and issued land documents (land form #7).⁴⁰ The villagers have not worked on their lands for a long time [due to the confiscation] but after receiving their land documents they were able to [resume] work on their land.

On January 9th 2015, at 2 am, 30 [Tatmadaw] soldiers from #1 CAD, Ain Ta Kaw [Township], came to the villagers' farm huts and arrested four villagers. [They] tied their hands with rope, covered their faces, hit them with the butts and barrels of their guns, kicked and stepped on them. They then released them, chased them and shot at the villagers with slingshots. The villagers who were arrested and hit were:

- 1) Tee⁴¹ K---, 46 years old (K--- village);
- 2) Tee S---, 42 years old, lives in A-----, in Yangon;
- 3) Tee M---, 56 years old lives in N--- village;
- 4) U T---, 40 years old lives in N--- village.

It was raining when they [Tatmadaw soldiers] arrested and hit the villagers, and the villagers were lost in the rain [when they were running away]. U T--- got to A--- police station. Tee K--- - got to N--- village. While running, Tee S--- fell into water in a farm and Tee M--- fell into a bush and was attacked by red ants. Tee S--- and Tee M--- ran away with their hands [still] tied up with rope. They were found by other villagers in the morning. The other two [U T--- and Tee K---] were tied up with cloth rope which came undone while they were running. They got to the police station in N--- village.

The villagers went to the hospital in Pegu [Bago] and reported their case to the police, but they [the police] did nothing for them. According to Tee K---, they [the police] asked him for 300,000 kyats (US \$236.04)⁴² to have their case published on the internet. The villagers

preliminary ceasefire, see "[Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#)," KHRG, May 2014.

³⁸ Military storage facility, specifically used for the storage of weapons and ammunition.

³⁹ The community member is referring to the Burma/Myanmar government Settlement and Land Records Department (SLRD), under the Ministry of Agriculture. The department operates at the State/Division and Township level, and is responsible for the administration of land across Burma/Myanmar, including land registration and assessment of revenue.

⁴⁰ Land form #7 is the land grant required to work on a particular area of land. In Burma/Myanmar, all land is ultimately owned by the government.

⁴¹ A S'gaw Karen title meaning 'uncle' or elder male, also transliterated as 'Dtee'.

⁴² All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 04th November 2015 official market rate of 1,271 kyat to the US \$1.

reported the issue to the Pegu [Bago] division cabinet [state minister Nyan Win] but no action was taken to help the villagers.

The villagers, who were injured and went to the hospital, did not receive any benefits [insurance] so they [were] discharged from the hospital and returned to their houses to receive treatment at home. Since Tee S--- was more seriously injured he went to the hospital in Yangon.

After the Tatmadaw soldiers from #1 CAD, Ain Ta Kaw [Township], beat the villagers from M--- [village], they [Tatmadaw soldiers] fenced off the villagers' farms. They used many people [soldiers] and many machines to fence off the farms. They posted a sign that said "No trespassing under Article #144-influenced area. [All trespassers] will be shot at and arrested."⁴³ They beat the villagers before they posted the sign. After beating the villagers they extended and increased the [fenced off] land area and posted similar signs. In the past, the military land area that they fenced off was situated on the other side of the villagers' farmland, outside of the [current] military fenced off land area, and their [the villagers'] land had been confiscated. The villagers did not cultivate the land that they had confiscated and fenced in the past. However, they have recently taken more of their farmland and are giving them trouble, which caused problems regarding [the villagers'] livelihoods. That place is located in an area controlled by the Burma/Myanmar government, so they [Tatmadaw] oppress the villagers more than in the eastern part [of Ain Ta Kaw Township]. In that place there are a lot of cases of land confiscation and [the Tatmadaw] causing trouble for the villagers. The place [M--- village] has not been reached by NGOs [non-governmental organisations] and reporters, and there is a lot of oppression of the villagers by rich people. There are no groups or organisations that the local villagers [can] depend on so many [people] are suffering.

Nippon Foundation rice distribution

In Nyaunglebin District, the Nippon Foundation⁴⁴ planned to help the civilians, under the management of The Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP), and they distributed rice to civilians; CIDKP found out [who the poorest villagers are] and [developed a] plan to distribute [rice] to the poorest villagers in hill areas in Nyaunglebin District, in both KNU and [Burma/Myanmar] government controlled areas. The CIDKP intended to help civilians, but they have had issues with [Burma/Myanmar] government officers, who have forbidden [the activity].

The flat land areas are controlled by [both] the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government. They [the Burma/Myanmar government] did not give permission [for the CIDKP to distribute rice to villagers], which created problems for the Nippon Foundation and CIDKP's work plans [activities]. The rice was delivered on January 1st 2015. They delivered rice to the civilians in three townships: Mone Township, Kyaukkyi Township and Shwegyin Township.

⁴³ This is Article 144 of the Myanmar Penal Code which states: "Whoever, being armed with any deadly weapon, or with anything which is used as a weapon of offence, is likely to cause death, is a member of an unlawful assembly, shall be punished with imprisonment of their description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both."

⁴⁴ [The Nippon Foundation](#) is a Japanese NGO currently implementing social innovation and development projects in Burma/Myanmar. KHRG has received several reports from community members on The Nippon Foundation's recent activities in Thaton and Hpa-an Districts, see more at "[Hpa-an Situation Update: Hlaingbwe and Nabu townships, December 2014 to January 2015](#)," KHRG, July 2015; and "[Thaton Situation Update Bilin and Hpa-an townships, June to November 2014](#)," KHRG, February 2015.

To distribute this rice to civilians, they started sending rice to other places that they thought needed help [rice]. The distribution period started at the beginning of February. [The agreement entailed the CIDKP] giving the rice to the Burma/Myanmar government and the Burma/Myanmar government taking the responsibility to distribute it. The CIDKP had talks with the [Nippon Foundation] leader who met with the administrator of Kyaukkyi [Township], and they brought seven or eight sacks⁴⁵ (219.45 kg/484.84 lb or 250.8 kg/ 552.56 lb) of rice to the township administration office. The government [officer] had a rice distribution ceremony (and took photos for the record) and they allowed the activity [of rice distribution] to take place.

They [CIDKP] had to transport the rice to the hilly areas. When [the rice] got to Ta Nay Hpah Dam they had to transport the rice by boat. When the rice arrived at the boat harbour, the government officer (Shwegyin Operations Commander) came and seized the rice, so the villagers who were transporting the rations returned with nothing. The government [Tatmadaw] soldiers seized the rice [and held it] for two weeks. After the KNU and the CIDKP negotiated [with the Shwegyin Operations Commander], they [eventually] allowed the rice be transported.

In the KNU controlled area in Kyaukkyi Township and Burma/Myanmar government controlled area in Shwegyin Township, Maw Aoo Loo village tract (Ma Au Bin village tract in Burmese), there are three villages called W---, R--- and L---. The government [Shwegyin Operations Commander] did not allow the CIDKP to distribute the rice that they were planning to distribute in these villages. The villagers really needed the rice as the village tract is really poor. The villagers want to take some [rice] but the village leaders and the village administrators did not approve of them [getting rice]. The Burma/Myanmar government threatened them [villagers] so they did not dare to take any rations and so the CIDKP delivered [the rice] to other villages.

KNU and [Burma/Myanmar] government's situation

On January 1st 2015, the KNU Farming and Agriculture Department conducted land surveys in Aaw Pa Lah area, Hsaw Htee [Shwegyin] Township. When they went [to conduct the land surveys], the Tatmadaw soldier Infantry Battalion [IB]⁴⁶ #39's Battalion Deputy Commander Ye Lin Aung, deployed with his column and stopped them [KNU land surveyors]. At that time they faced many problems and the villagers had to worry about many things. The place [Aaw Pa Lah] is controlled by [both] the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government. There is tension between the KNU Farming and Agriculture Department and the Tatmadaw. The [KNU Farming and Agriculture Department] land surveyors stayed in Aaw Pa Lah village for three days and the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] also stayed there. [After three days] The farm [KNU Farming and Agriculture Department] land surveyors left Aaw Pa Lah village and went to Saw Theh Hkee village. The farm [KNU Farming and Agriculture Department] officials scolded the Aaw Pa Lah village administrator before they left, saying that he [the village administrator] was on the Tatmadaw soldiers' side, and they [villagers] stepped on one side of the boat only.⁴⁷ Therefore, they [KNU Farming and Agriculture Department officials] threatened the village administrator saying that they were going to arrest him. The

⁴⁵ A sack is a unit of volume used to measure paddy, milled rice and seeds. One sack is equivalent to 31.35 kg or 69.12 lb of paddy, and 48 kg or 105.6 lb of milled rice. A sack is also equivalent to three big tins.

⁴⁶ Infantry Battalions are used for garrison duties and sometimes for offensive operation.

⁴⁷ This implies that the KNU land surveyors believe the village administrator to be loyal to one side, the Burma/Myanmar government and the Tatmadaw.

problems between the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government have been ongoing since the start of the [Karen] revolution.⁴⁸

Arbitrary demands

In December [2014], Light Infantry Battalion [LIB]⁴⁹ #598 demanded money from the miners in Mone Township. The villagers who do mining independently have [gold mining] machines. They had to pay 300,000 kyat (US \$236.04⁵⁰) [in tax] for each machine. There are 61 gold mining machines. They had to pay 18,300,000 kyat (US \$14,332.7) [in total for all the machines] and the deadline for the payment was December 26th 2014. The gold mining is taking place in a KNU controlled area; Mone Township (Ka Law Myaung) area, and in a Burma/Myanmar government controlled area; Kyaukkyi Township, in Mon region, Ler Doh [Township]. Kyaukkyi Operations Commander U Ye Htun demanded 500,000 kyat (US \$391.60) for each gold mining machine; he did not allow villagers to mine before he received the money. He allowed [them to mine] only when he received the money.

Logging

In KNU [controlled] Mone Township and the Burma/Myanmar government controlled area in Kyaukkyi Township, Bi Pye Thit Taw Kyo Waing [forest reserve area], the KNU forbade [logging]. Some business people collaborated with the Tatmadaw from IB #60, LIB #351, Kyaukkyi Operations Commander U Ye Htun, IB #92, and IB #35. These troops collaborated with some business people so the KNU Forestry Department could not stop them [from logging], which caused problems. The Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] do logging there but if the villagers go there to buy logs to build their houses, the Operations Commander demands 40,000 kyat (US \$31.33) for each truck [of logs], the Baw Pyeh [military camp demand] 40,000 kyat (US \$31.33), the police station demands 40,000 kyat (US \$31.33), the Sa Ya Hpa [Military Security Affairs]⁵¹ [demands] 20,000 kyat (US \$15.66) and the SP [Special Police]⁵² demand 20,000 kyat (US \$15.66). They limit [the amount of logs] to only three tonnes of wood, and the [profit] money is used to pay military taxes.

After the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire, many opportunities emerged for business people. The local people can only wait and see what will happen. The KNU and the Burma/Myanmar

⁴⁸ The KHRG Community Member is referring to the Karen nationalist armed uprising, dating back to 1949 with the KNU's proclamation of the Karen Free State and the Four Principles of KNU founder Saw Bu U Gyi: 1. For us, Surrender is out of the question; 2. We shall retain our arms; 3. The recognition of the Karen State must be complete; 4. We shall decide our own destiny. See, "[KNU History](#)," KarenNationalUnion.net.

⁴⁹ Light Infantry Battalions are used for offensive operations, sometimes garrison duties.

⁵⁰ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 17th June 2016 at the market rate of 957 kyat to the US \$1.

⁵¹ Military Security Affairs (MSA), commonly referred to by its Burmese acronym *Sa Ya Pa* (*Sa Aa Pa* in Karen) is the office of the Burma/Myanmar armed forces tasked with intelligence gathering. It was created to replace the Military Intelligence Service, which was disbanded as its chief Khin Nyunt fell from favour in 2004. The office is charged with handling political issues, and had played a central role in monitoring the 2007 popular protests in Burma/Myanmar; coordinating widespread arrests of protesters and their interrogation. Human Rights Watch reported that as part of its interrogation process, MSA uses sleep deprivation and condones the beating and kicking of detainees until they are unconscious, see "[Crackdown: Repression of the 2007 Popular Protests in Burma](#)," *Human Rights Watch*, December 2007. As of September 2014, MSA is headed by former army chief of staff Lieutenant General Mya Tun Oo. For further details see, "[Burmese Military Reshuffle Sees New Security Chief Appointed](#)," *The Irrawaddy*, September 2014.

⁵² According to the community member who wrote the report, SP is an acronym for the Special Police, who are responsible for criminal case investigation. In Nyaunglebin District however, they are also reportedly abusing their position to demand money from villagers.

government, arrest villagers who do logging with ox-carts but allow [business] people to do logging with trucks. If you enter into the forest area with a cow and ox-cart they [villagers] might be arrested or they [villagers] might step on a landmine. If you go into the forest area with a car [trucks] and bulldozers, you are free to do [logging]. This is the situation that has emerged after the ceasefire. The peace [ceasefire] is only for business people and power holding classes [those in power].

Source #68

Log #	15-38-A6-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>Naw Y---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>47 years old.</p> <p>What about your village?</p> <p>K--- village.</p> <p>What about your nationality?</p> <p>Karen.</p> <p>What is your religion?</p> <p>Buddhist.</p> <p>Do you have family?</p> <p>What is family?</p> <p>Oh, do you have husband and children?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>How many children do you have?</p> <p>I have five children.</p> <p>How many female and male?</p>	

Two females and three males.

What do they do for a living?

One of them is a farmer, the two youngest are students, one resettled to a third country and one has gone to study at a Thai university.

What is your responsibility in the village?

The village head.

How many years have you been working as village head?

I have been working many years but I do not know for certain the number of years because I do not note it down. I think it will be around nine years.

How many armed groups are there in your area?

In my village?

The armed groups which are located near your area, so how many groups of them?

There are four armed groups as I know.

What are they?

They are the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army [DKBA], Border Guard Force [BGF], the Tatmadaw and the Karen National Union [Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)].

How do they operate in [the local area]?

I do not have any problem with them.

What about the KNU?

I do not have problem with the KNU, instead they help me.

What about the DKBA?

The DKBA also do not make any problems with me.

What about the BGF?

The BGF also stay by themselves in their own way.

What about the Tatmadaw?

The Tatmadaw also stay on their own so do I need to mention the road that they constructed? They also conducted [led] the road construction.

So every armed group is well run in terms of their operations [not committing abuses]?

Yes.

What do you do for living?

I do plain and hill farming.

And everything is going well with your living?

Everything is not going well, but I just do like that and live like that [accepting the situation].

Why is everything not going well?

This year, the paddy cannot provide much [rice] harvest but we still have enough rice in our village.

You said that there is a problem with the road construction so can you tell me what the problem is?

The problem is that before they constructed the road they [the company] met me and said: 'We will construct a road and it will include your land and other people lands, so do you want to get compensation?' I told them that if you are going to construct the road it will be very helpful and useful for many people so I do not need compensation but I will be taking compensation if you conduct stone mining.

You said you will be taking compensation for stone mining so is it [the stone mining] close to your village?

The rock that they will be mining [to use for road construction] is located beside my village.

You will sell the stone to them so do you have any purpose to do development with the compensation that you will get [from selling the stone] in your village?

I will develop my village [with the money] and provide electricity to my villagers.

You will provide electricity to them?

Yes. In my village we do not get any support and my school is also a self-reliant [self-funded] school. If I do not run [out] of money I also plan to supply water for the villagers in order to make their lives easier. The support that the people⁵³ provide does not reach my village therefore if they [the construction company] help [give me compensation for the stone] I will be so happy and I myself also will attempt [to do] my best. They said that they will provide aid to us but later on we did not receive anything.

You will sell the stone to them so who did you make the contract [to sell stone] with?

⁵³ It is unclear whether the interviewee is discussing the government, local authority, development or other actors here.

I signed the contract with Bo Yan Naing and the lower rank [employee] under him, Ye Yain Aung.

Do you remember the date or [did you] note down the date?

Yes, I noted down the list of the stone [mining]. In the list they started mining on May 18th 2014. After they signed the contract there was heavy rain so they did not confirm with us [about the contract] but later his officer came and signed the contract.

So you signed it with Ye Yain Aung?

Yes, Ye Yain Aung himself told me that he will give me the money.

So was it on May 18th 2014, when he signed the contract with you?

Yes, Ye Yain Aung signed contract with me on that day.

Did he give you anything after he signed?

No, he did not give me anything.

When did Bo Yan Naing come to meet you?

I did not note down the date when he met me.

So did he meet you before Ye Yain Aung or after?

He met me after. Ye Yain Aung told me that he would ask Bo Yan Naing to give us [compensation].

How did he plan to give you compensation, can you please explain [to] us a bit?

He came to meet me at night and I told him that regarding the road construction I would not ask for compensation even if it included my lands or the [dividing] line down beside my villagers' lands. I would give him [the land for] free. I will only ask for stone compensation. For the stone, I will sell [one] pile of gravel for 5,000 kyats. I told him that if he collects [enough] for one vehicle I will count it [charge] as two piles of gravel. I asked him if that is fair for him? We do not want to oppress [mistreat] each other. He said it was fair. I asked him if it was fair and when he would give me the money. He told me that if Ye Yain Aung and the boss do not [come to] give me [the money], he himself will come and to give me [the money].

Did Ye Yain Aung tell you [that]?

No, Bo Yan Naing [told me]. Ye Yain Aung himself also told me that [there is] no problem, Ye Yain Aung will come to give me [the money]. Bo Yan Naing told me that if he was not around here [in the village] he will ask Ye Yain Aung to fill up the entire hole that they dug [where they took stone from]. I reported to him [Bo Yan Naing] that they also took the stone from the water drainage [area] and it caused a hole. He told me that when he is not around here [in the village he will] ask Ye Yain Aung to fill it up. If he [Ye Yain Aung] does not do it after Bo Yan Naing has come here he will ask him to do it [again]. Bo Yan Naing told me that he will provide the money fairly [at a fair price] and asked me that is it okay. He said [he would]

provide a fair price therefore when he asked me was it okay, I replied him that [it was] okay. But after we met with them it is not okay anymore.

So when did Ye Yain Aung meet with you?

He met me in the second month [February].

Second month of 2014?

Yes. No, he met with me in second month of 2015.

So last month?

Yes, but now the second month has already gone and we are coming to the third month already because they came on February 10th.

So how much will they give you for the stone?

They asked me to count the piles of gravel that they have collected. If they can collect 1,000 piles of gravel they will give me the [fair] price for 1,000 kyats [per pile] and if they can collect 1,500 piles of gravel they will give me [the fair price of] 1,500 kyat.

So that was only a few month ago?

Yes.

So how many times have you met with Ye Yain Aung during those months?

I personally have gone once to clear the accounting list [get paid for the amount of gravel piles counted] and he told Bo Yan Naing that he had to give me only 8 million kyats. I told him that [the amount is] not 8 million kyats, he had to give me more than that and he [Ye Yain Aung] said that he did not record it [the amount of stone that they collected] over the last year. That time [previously] he had noted down it [the amount] in detail and Ye Yain Aung told me not to worry as he would do it [note down the amount] for me. After I met with them I was not feeling well and [I felt] sick so I ordered the people [villagers] to meet with them and they [Bo Yan Naing and Ye Yain Aung] said that even if they do not give me anything I am not able to sue them.

Did they give you some money?

They did not give me any kyats. They started mining the stone on April 18th 2014 and continued the process through rainy season to December 2nd 2014. They did not give me any money until now, 2015.

Did Ye Yain Aung come along with Bo Ya Naing when he came to meet you?

Yes, he came along with Ye Yain Aung. He seriously agreed to [give] me [the money] when Bo Yan Naing told him. He said do not worry "I will give it to you," but later on he seemed to avoid me. He did he would not come to visit me; instead I have to visit him like I owe him. I also do not want to go now. We did not take anything from them instead we loved and supported them but [now] it is their time to support us. They did not support us and currently

I am pretty fed up to [try to] meet them [again].

You said that they constructed the road and impacted your lands but you did not ask for compensation. Instead [you asked for compensation] only for the stone, so are there any of your villagers' lands that were also impacted?

They [the villagers] also do not want compensation [for their] land [next to the road]. They want compensation for the stone because they will get [buy] electricity. Their lands [are] not affected that much because if you go to build houses on the affected lands it will only fit four to five houses [because the affected lands are not that large]. They said that we [they] are thankful for getting the stone [compensation] price and instead we [they] will get [buy] electricity. But currently, if the villagers ask me [to do this], I cannot do anything. I will just keep quiet because they [the company] lied to me.

Did you go to tell them to reconstruct the water drainage [area] that they ploughed out?

I told them the night when Bo Yan Naing came here. I told them that they ploughed out the water drainage [area] and they have to reconstruct it for the owner to [be able to] store the water. Ye Yain Aung himself agreed to do it and reconstruct it. Later, I never went to tell them [again] regarding this but when I went to meet them for cleaning up the list account [confirming the number of gravel piles] they told me that they will do everything and that I should not worry.

How much money should you have received when you went to clean up the list account [confirm the number of gravel piles]?

When I went to clean up the list account they had carried it [the piles of gravel] 1,550⁵⁴ times already.

1,450 times?

Yes 1450 times and if we count it by piles [of gravel] it will be 2,900 piles.

2,900 piles?

Yes. Later on they carried more gravel and I noted it down, the date that they carried the gravel. So the total is 1,754 times [carrying the gravel piles].

So you combined it already [with the piles of gravel] in total?

Yes.

So they carried it 1754 times and how much will that cost in money?

1,754,000 kyats.

They did not give you any kyats?

⁵⁴ Naw Y--- confirms a different number in the following question which KHRG understands to be the correct amount.

Yes [correct], they did not give me any kyats.

Regarding this information after we got it from you, we will report it to the above level because we cannot do anything [at the village level]. Will we [you] wait and see how the above leaders⁵⁵ will arrange it?

Yes.

So did they [Bo Yan Naing and Ye Yain Aung] sign any agreement?

They did not sign any agreement on paper but Bo Yan Naing personally came once and said it with his own mouth. He said that if Ye Yain Aung and the boss did not give you [the compensation] I myself personally will come to give it you and [therefore] do not worry. Whether you worry or not we [are using] M--- road. It was very far to use that road. If his soldiers all went back [relocated from their base] they will not return here again.

Have they almost finished the road construction in this part?

I do not know because I have not been there to have a look but they already have finished it in some parts.

In your opinion if they finished the road construction do you think it can bring any benefit or [will it] cause the problems for the villagers?

I think that it can bring benefit for the villagers to travel on the road to go to market, but on the other hand it affected the villagers' lands.

Do they give compensation for the destruction [of villagers' lands]?

In my village I did not see it [compensation] but it was given in another village.

Have you heard that they gave it to other villages whose lands were destroyed?

I heard that they gave it to their village head.

They gave it to the village head?

Yes.

It impacted [affected] the villagers' land and they gave [compensation] to the village head?

Yes, I heard the people say that they gave it to their village head.

How much did they give?

I do not know because I never asked and it is not related to me. I only deal with the issues which are related to me. I think each village has their own village head and they can manage

⁵⁵ KHRG is in the process of clarifying the position of these leaders.

to negotiate it. For me I manage [take responsibility] to negotiate it for my own village.

You said that armed groups are well run [not committing abuses] in their activities and the only problem [with them] is related to the road construction. So is there anything that you want to add which I have not asked you about?

I think I cannot add more because every armed group has a good relationship with me and they never get angry with me. They all have a good relationship with me. The KNDO [Karen National Defence Organisation] also has a good relationship with me. I told them that I welcome every group and if you want to eat rice you can and I love them all. They also love me. After the ceasefire has taken place even the Tatmadaw have not come to disturb me. If they need motor [transport provided by villagers] they let us know ahead and do not force us to give them [provide transport]. As we are Karen if the people treat us very good we also treat them in a good way. If the people love us we also have to love them. I do not have any problem with armed groups including the KNU, DKBA, and BGF, [they] stay in their way [area]. The BGF do not even come to demand anything from us. We have to tell the truth. In the future if the conflict happens and comes to disturb us we can tell them [the truth]. At the current time there is nothing happening but on the other hand the road construction that they constructed was given [by the villagers for] free. We gave them [the land] free and we need only compensation for the stone. We will be satisfied if they give us [this compensation]. They did not give me compensation, but they told me that they would give it to me. They could say that they will give you [compensation] 100 times, but it is only words and in reality they [companies] will not give us [compensation].

So regarding to the stone case if we report it to the top leaders will you be satisfied?

Yes, I will be satisfied. You first report it, then they will get to know [the case for] themselves. The people [villagers] did not report anything to anyone related to the road that they were constructing. They [the constructors] might look down on the people [villagers]. They also said that even if we do not support them they can survive by themselves and how can we sue them? They look down [on] us therefore I want to report [the case]. As you are a person [a human being] you should know that patience can win everything but they are impatient. When the young people went to meet them they said different things.

Did you note the date when they told you?

I did not note the date but K--- noted it. As I was not feeling well to [go to] meet them I required him [K---] to meet them and take down the notes so after [the meeting] he told me [what happened when he met them] and then he left.

So how long [ago] did he tell you?

K--- wrote it [the information] in the note book but left it in the hut because I was not aware of it. He [Ye Yain Aung] told me in February [2015]. K--- noted it down but I did not make a note. I did not like what he said so I wanted to report it.

So Ye Yain Aung did not get any payment for his work?

I think he might get because if you do not get [payment] you also do not want to work but I have never asked him if he gets it or not.

Is Ye Yain Aung a staff of the construction company or [is he] Bo Yan Naing's servant [under his military command]?

I think Ye Yain Aung is not company staff. I think he is under the rank of Bo Yan Naing because every single point that was made by Bo Yan Naing he agreed to do. After Bo Yan Naing left [the area] he did not agree and did things in a different way.

So when you went to get [the money] Bo Yan Naing never came back here [to the village] after he left?

No, he never came after he left. When Bo Yan Naing was around here he agreed that he will do everything and arrange for money payment and told us not to worry about the money [compensation]. After Bo Yan Naing left he did not agree to do anything and if we had not submitted the stone list [number of gravel piles] he would not have made any contact with us. I myself submitted the case.

You submitted it to him?

Yes, I submitted it to Ye Yain Aung because Bo Yan Naing told me that [I should] clear [check] the list [of gravel piles] with Ye Yain Aung. [He said] after it [the list had been cleared] if Ye Yain Aung did not pay you I [Bo Yan Naing] myself will come to pay you and I [Bo Yan Naing] guarantee for it; therefore, I went to clear [check] the list with Ye Yain Aung.

Currently, where does Bo Yan Naing live?

The people said this morning he will come to meet the battalion commander. Bo Yan Naing agreed that he would give money [compensation].

He might come to meet you too?

Maybe.

If he meets with you [will] you have to tell him [your case] clearly?

If he meets me I will tell him clearly in a lot of detail. I will tell him that his servant [Ye Yan Aung] is insubordinate to us [not working for the villagers as promised]. I will tell him everything.

You should tell him in detail about the water channel and farms which are affected by the road construction?

I will let him know but when he came it was at night time. I was looking for him and he also was looking for me so everything was inconsistent [not organised]. He left to M--- [village] and came back to look for me but it was very late at night and he also had not finished his dinner, therefore we [only] had a short conversation. If he comes in next time I will tell him everything including how his servants [staff of a lower rank] stole things.

His servants [staff of a lower rank] were stealing things when they were working on the road construction?

Yes.

What did they steal?

They stole coconuts. They stole every coconut and currently there are no young coconuts on the trees because they took all the fruit from the trees.

So you did not see them personally when they climbed the trees?

No, because the coconut owners did not look after the plantation. The owners left the plantation and went to work as usual in the past, but after they came here the owners left their things [possessions] in their huts for two to three days [and] everything was gone. In the past, [because] we are Karen people we did not steal the belongings from the people or get [harvest] all of the coconuts as we knew there would be no young coconuts on the trees. They stole everything including betel nut leaves. In rainy season, they dug up the wild yam from peoples' plantations. You always have to report it [their actions] to their leaders.

Who dug up the wild yam?

The people who dug up wild yam are Kyaw So's servants.

Who are they, Kyaw So's servants?

They are the group of road constructors.

They are the road constructors?

Yes, the road constructors are also Ye Yain Aung's servants and Kyaw So is Bo Yain Naing's manager for road construction regarding filling in the gravel. In rainy season, he came to me to ask permission to stay with me [in the village]. He said that the road was not finished yet and he did not want to go back [to his village]. I told him that I did not discriminate [between] people even if you are Bamar or Karen because everyone is a human being but you have to stay peacefully, love one another and have pity on [compassion for] one another. You can stay around here if you have those kinds of qualities in you and you have to live under the rule of our village. He said yes, but there are many servants of his and the people saw that in rainy season they dug up the wild yam. They hid the wild yams after they dug them up and told the people in H--- [village] that they could buy it.

So there were a lot of wild yams?

Not many of them [the workers] stole the wild yams, only one to two of them.

No, I meant the wild yams that they dug up?

They dug up a lot of wild yams and it will be around 100 to 200 [viss]⁵⁶ of wild yams.

How much is one viss of wild yam?

We sell one viss for 500 kyats.

⁵⁶ A *viss* is a unit of weight equivalent to 1.6 kg or 3.52 lb.

So one viss of wild yam for 500 kyats and [if you sell] 100 viss of wild yam you will get 5000 kyats right?⁵⁷

Yes. The people who stole the wild yam will get 100 to 200 [viss] weight of it because they did not dig it from the jungle instead they dug it from the peoples' plantations.

So you did not report it to Kyaw So and Ye Yain Aung regarding the theft which was conducted by their servants [workers]?

They are not Ye Yaing Aung's servants. Ye Yaing Aung's servants [workers] are working on stone mining, [they] transfer [move] the gravel. They [the construction workers] are Kyaw So's servants.

So you did not let Kyaw So know?

I told him and some of his servants who conducted the theft were retired and he sent them back to their homes. And in summer I did not see his servant with red hair and small eyes.⁵⁸

After you told him, did they [the workers] still conduct thefts?

I told him in summer so the plants of wild yam were already putrid and you could not find it. Now he has sent them [the workers] home so it is much better.

Kyaw So is Karen or Bamar?

Bamar.

Bamar?

Yes.

What about Ye Yain Aung, is he Karen or Bamar?

He is [from] Rakhine [state]. Kyaw So and his wife agreed to instruct their servants [workers]. They asked us to tell them openly and direct them [to the place] where they stole [the wild yam]. They said that we [they] stay here and we [they] also do not want to lose our [their] name [have bad reputation]. They asked us to tell them but in my village the teenagers were the witnesses [to the theft] therefore they did not dare [were afraid] to let us know. For me, I did not see [the theft] and I told him that he had to instruct them [the workers] and they also agreed to do it. This summer if Bo Yan Naing comes [here] I will tell him to ask his servants [workers] to come and work here [in the village] only when they are able to work [in the suitable season only] and if they can work you have to send them back to work here.

Did they steal other special things from your villagers?

No, other special things, they only stole the coconut and betel nut leaves and in rainy season they stole the wild yams. They did not steal the chickens. They also stole [the stuff] in the people's huts.

⁵⁷ This is a directly translated calculation.

⁵⁸ KHRG is in the process of clarifying the meaning of this information.

What did they steal?

They stole the people's longyis.

The men also stole the longyis?

No they did not. But the women stole the longyis.

So did they [the workers] also include women?

Yes, there are many male and female [workers] who do the road construction for filling the gravel on the road.

How many longyis did they steal?

Three longyis.

They stole three longyis, what about other [things]?

They stole pillows. I did not remember everything. They stole it in my village [and] as I did not like them [stealing] I want to say everything. If they did what they had said I could be patient but they did not do what they said therefore I cannot be patient anymore. In the other villages they have their own village head and I do not know how they make arrangements for their villagers. I do not know their situation and if I say [the wrong information] they might say that those [village] cases do not belong to you and you reported it therefore they might say that they will cut off your lips. In the past Tatmadaw battalion #17 came to check [on] me when I reported like that.

What about other things that you want to say?

I do not want to say any other special things, only that.

If you do not have other to say, thank you very much for your information.

Source #69

Log #	15-39-D1
Title / type of report	Short Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Short update, Bu Tho Township, (2015)

When did the incident happen?

The BGF [Border Guard Force] arrested him [the villager] without justification. They [BGF] were attacked by the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] and they misunderstood the villagers [because they thought that the villagers supported the KNLA]. So they beat and

kicked [one of] the villagers until [he] fainted.

When did the fighting between the KNLA and the BGF happen?

The soldiers who committed the abuse were the soldiers of BGF Battalion #1014, whose leader is Hpah Tha Beh. The name of their battalion commander is Maung Chit. The name of the villager that they arrested [beat and kicked] is Maung A--- and he is from B--- village. He was arrested at 7:00 PM on 24th April 2015. They also shot one villager. Have you heard about this?

No.

One of the soldiers of [BGF] Battalion #1013 named Hpah Yu Hkay shot Saw C---, one of the villagers of D--- village, Htee Tha Daw Htah village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The villager [Saw C---] died. The incident happened on March 15th 2015. Hpah Yu Hkay was the leader of the soldiers when this incident happened. The Battalion commander of BGF battalion #1013 is Maung Hlah Kyain.

Do you know why they shot him?

They said that they shot the villager by accident. They thought that the villager was an enemy [soldier] because it was night time.

Summary of Incident #1:

When [did the incident take place]?

7:00 PM on 24th April 2015.

Where [did the incident take place]?

Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District.

[Who was the] perpetrator?

Soldiers of BGF battalion #1014. Their leader is Hpah Tha Beh and their battalion commander is Maung Chit.

Who is the victim?

Maung A---. He is from B--- village.

What [incident took place]?

Arbitrary arrest [and beatings].

Summary of Incident #2:

When [did the incident take place]?

March 15th 2015

Where [did the incident take place]?

D---, Htee Tha Daw Htah village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

[Who was the] perpetrator?

Battalion #1013 called Hpah Yu Hkay, Battalion commander of BGF Battalion #1013 is

Maung Hlah Kyain.

Who is the victim?
 Saw C---

What [incident took place]?
 Villager was shot on sight [and died].

Source #70

Log #	15-43-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District and Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-An District

Full Text

Hpapun and Hpa-An Situation Update: Bu Tho, Dwe Lo and Lu Pe Lel [Hlaingbwe] Townships, March to May 2015

Introduction

This Situation Update describes events occurring between March 16th 2015 and May 18th 2015 in K--- village, J--- village, I--- village, Mel K' Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District, and R--- village, K' Tai Ti village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District, and Myaing Gyi Ngu special region, Lu Pe Lel [Hlaingbwe] Township, Hpa-An District.

Military activity by Border Guard Force [BGF] Battalion #1013 and Battalion #1014

Information related to the BGF Battalion #1013 was provided by Maung Q--- (aged 45), R--- village administrator.

It seems that Major Saw Hla Kyaing (aged 52) and his BGF army did not previously travel anywhere to fulfil their duties since the BGF has formed. Therefore, in order to please their senior officers, Major Hla Kyaing of BGF Battalion #1013 decided to move his troops through the villages located on both sides of the Papun [Hpapun] - K' Ma Maung road. The four villages that were particularly affected include the big A--- village, the small A--- village, B--- village, and C--- village.

In a meeting held in K' Tai Ti operations commander's office on May 15th 2015, Major Hla Kyaing, told village administration officers on May 15th 2015 that [BGF] troop movements do not imply that they desire a battle. He [Major Hla Kyaing] said that they will try and avoid head to head meetings with opposing KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] battalions and said that when his troops intend to travel, he will inform local authorities and obtain permission from them. If the local authorities do not give the BGF permission, then the BGF will not travel.

Security concerns of local people due to armed group activities

In the same meeting discussed above, after Major Hla Kyaing announced his troop movement plans, KNLA troops informed the local people that in order to protect themselves they had placed landmines around the areas they are controlling and where the BGF might

cross over.

The villages that the BGF troops will travel through are entirely under the control of the KNLA. This may be another reason why the BGF troops will move their troops. Since the KNLA troops have created forbidden areas by placing landmines, local villagers – especially from big A--- village, small A--- village, B--- village, and C--- village (in K' Tai Ti village tract, Dwe Lo District) – cannot travel freely to farm, find firewood, and visit nearby villages; they travel with anxiety.

The murder case of a B--- villager, Maung Thin Lwin, by Border Guard Force Battalion #1011.

The murder case happened in Myaing Gyi Ngu special region, Sone Nan Thar Myaing Shwe Myo Taw, E--- Myaing section, on April 23rd 2015. The person who committed the murder is soldier Saw Maung That, aged 42, who is in BGF Battalion #1011, led by Battalion Commander Major Soe Naing. The person who was murdered was Maung Thin Lwin, aged 37, from B--- village (K' Tai Ti village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District). It is unclear what should be done [with this case] because although the BGF soldiers do not understand the law they were very [over] proud [confidantes to commit murder].

The details of the murder case are as follows: Maung Thin Lwin lived in B--- village, K' Tai Ti village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District but worked as a chef in the health training boarding school which is located outside of K' Ma Maung City. Maung Thin Lwin sometimes drank alcohol and he was a bachelor.

On a day in which he had no responsibilities to attend to and had money to spend, he was slightly drunk and visited Myaing Gyi Ngu special region, Sone Nan Thar Myaing Shwe Myo Taw, E--- section which exists beyond the river of K' Ma Maung City. After he got into an argument with several car drivers at the sugar factory's car gate in E--- section, he was sent to the BGF Battalion #1011's gate (which is in front of the sugar factory) and BGF soldiers beat him. Maung Thin Lwin died because of the wounds inflicted by the soldiers at 12 AM, on April 23rd 2015.

Although the relatives of Maung Thin Lwin asked for 10,000,000 kyat as compensation and BGF Battalion commander Soe Nai (aged 53) agreed to provide 3,000,000 kyat as compensation, Myaing Gyi Ngu special region, second senior monk U Nyar Ni Ka, aged 50, only provided 500,000 kyat [as compensation]. Maung Thin Lwin's brother (F---, aged 45), sister (G---, aged 39), and uncle (Saw H---, aged 52) accepted this compensation because they were afraid. Both of Maung Thin Lwin's parents, Oo Kyaw Thein and Daw Ma Kyi, are dead.

Section administrators of B--- village have not resolved the problem. Similarly, BGF Battalion #1011, led by Battalion Commander Soe Nai, has not taken any action [discipline] against the soldier Saw Maung That. Murder cases like this are caused by BGF soldiers' ignorance of human rights and will continue until their pride is reduced.

Threats after the murder

The threats began on April 25th 2015 in the monastery where U Nyar Ni Ka, Myaing Gyi Ngu second senior Sar-Cha [lecturing] monk (aged 50) lives. U Nyar Ni Ka threatened Maung Thin Lwin's brother (F---), sister (G---), and uncle (Saw H---). His threats are due to his pride and belief that his knowledge and position as a senior monk entitles him to rule over others as if he was a dictator.

After BGF Battalion Commander Soe Naing agreed to compensate Maung Thin Lwin's relatives with 3,000,000 kyat, he asked U Nyar Ni Ka to provide the money to the relatives. However, when they [Maung Thin Lwin's relatives] arrived at U Nyar Ni Ka's house, U Nyar Ni Ka said, *"Bring me my sword! I will attack everyone! Do you not know that you cannot drink alcohol and get drunk at places like this?!"* After acting unruly, he only provided 500,000 kyat as compensation. In fear, F--- and his relatives took the money.

No responsible organisation came and resolved the issues raised by the threats. No organisation took any action towards U Nyar Ni Ka, who has also threatened other people.

On March 6th 2015, Staff Sayar [teacher] Tee Ku from KNU Headquarters in the Office of Land Surveys and Registration began cooperating with the department in charge of P' Doh Saw Thaw Thi and his team from the Mu Traw District Department of Land Surveys and Registration to survey the lands and farms from I--- village, J--- village, K--- village, L--- village, M--- village, N--- village, O---village and P--- village, and give them land grants.

For KNU land surveys, villagers have to pay 2,000 kyat for each acre surveyed and 5,000 kyat for one land grant. [Villagers] also have to pay 5,000 kyat for contracts which allow them to buy, sell and mortgage their property. At the time that this report was being written, the land surveying teams' work was ongoing. Although the KNU wanted to also survey the SPDC [State Peace and Development Council] army's lands which were confiscated by the SPDC army from Hpapun, the Hpapun [Hpapun] Operations Commander has not given [the KNU] permission. Due to this, the KNU is not able to conclude how many acres of land they have surveyed in total.

Source #71

Log #	15-47-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
Date Received: June 3rd 2015	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken in April 2015 in A--- Town, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. The new town was constructed by the Myanmar government between 2011 and 2015 on lands left behind by fleeing villagers, who left for refugee camps along the Thai- Myanmar border between 1981 and 1982. 	

Source #72

Log #	15-57-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above photo was taken on June 6th 2015 in Hpapun Ka Tin Ta Ya Hospital, Hpapun Town, in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The picture shows Saw A---, 40 	

years old, who lives in B--- village, Hkaw Poo village tract, Hpapun District. He was hospitalised after stepping on a landmine while out hunting between Y--- forest and Z--- forest. Both KNLA and Tatmadaw have denied responsibility for the landmine.

Source #73

Log #	15-57-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township (June to July 2015)

The Disappearance and Murder of the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader

One or two years after the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA] re-established control over the Htee Tha Daw Hta [village tract], [KNLA Commander] Pah Mee⁵⁹ returned to [begin] military activities in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, as he was assigned to command and protect [secure] the region. When KNLA Commander Pah Mee was posted to Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, he told Saw A---, the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract Secretary,

“I will find someone to assign to your village tract, and the person who I am going to assign is my uncle. I will ask him to serve as the head of the local force.⁶⁰ But you will have to take care of and support my uncle and his family, and you will have to make financial arrangements for him.”

Secretary Saw A--- replied to Commander Pah Mee,

“We will be pleased if you assign a person who understands the regional situation and who is a former leader.”

So Commander Pah Mee assigned his uncle to serve as the head of the local force in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract. According to Secretary Saw A---, when he collected money for the head of the local force in B--- village, the villagers donated 1,000,000 kyat (US \$785.55)⁶¹ to him and when he went to C--- village he collected 1,350,000 kyat (US \$1,060.49) [from the villagers]. He also added,

“I gave all the money that I collected to Commander Pah Mee’s uncle.”

Commander Pah Mee’s uncle said that he will help [serve] as the head of the local force in Htee Tha Daw Hta [village tract] for three years, and that he would require 500,000 kyat (US \$392.77) [in payment] for each year. Although he agreed to serve for three years, [in the

59 Pah Mee was killed by soldiers from KNLA Battalion #102 on November 13th 2015, in Pa Teh Hta village, Htee Th’Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. Saw Pah Mee was well known in Hpapun District and beyond, as a capable fighter, but also as a human rights abuser who instilled fear in the civilian population. See [“The death of Saw Hpah Mee \(November 13th 2015\).”](#) KHRG, July 2016.

⁶⁰ The local force being referred to is a local branch of the Karen National Defence Organisation to which villagers are assigned part time roles.

⁶¹ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the October 22nd 2015 official market rate of 1,273 kyat to the US \$1.

end] he didn't even complete one year of service because Commander Pah Mee confiscated his gun and fired him from his position [as head of the local force]. Around that time, Commander Pah Mee came to the secretary [Saw A---] and explained,

“My uncle is planning to find a new role, because he previously was a member of the Democratic Karen Benevolence Army [DKBA] and he also served in the Border Guard Force [BGF] for a while as well.”

After Commander Pah Mee's uncle was fired, he was replaced as head of the local force by a villager from Htee Tha Daw Htah village tract. The new head of the local force was Kyaw Heh Noh, and he was posted as head of the local force for [a period of] only five to six months.

Another issue took place in 2015: One of the D--- villagers whose name is unknown (people just call him E---'s father), gave 500,000 kyat (US \$392.77) to the village tract leader, Kyaw Dah Dah, and asked him to buy a walkie talkie; village tract leader Kyaw Dah Dah went and bought a walkie talkie from Commander Pah Mee for 200,000 kyat (US \$157.11). After this [took place], Commander Pah Mee asked village tract leader Kyaw Dah Dah to collect the elephant tax⁶² in the Htee Tha Daw Htah village tract. Commander Pah Mee then asked E---'s father *“Have you given me the elephant tax?”* and E---'s father replied *“I already gave it to the village tract leader, and the tax for one elephant is 200,000 kyat (US \$157.11).”* When E---'s father gave the elephant tax to village tract leader Kyaw Dah Dah, he was told to not let Commander Pah Mee know the amount of this elephant tax [being paid]. Secretary Saw A--- witnessed E---'s father giving the elephant tax to the village tract leader, Kyaw Dah Dah, and said [to the KHRG community member] *“E---'s father gave 150,000 kyat in elephant tax, I saw with my eyes.”*

People do not know the exact reason why Commander Pah Mee was unhappy with village tract leader Kyaw Dah Dah. One possible reason is that he did not give the [total] elephant tax to the commander. However, people know that prior to the disappearance of village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah], Commander Pah Mee issued a command to arrest the village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah]. Moreover, when he [Commander Pah Mee] set up the [KNLA] headquarters offices at F--- and G--- villages, village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah] did not help him [Commander Pah Mee] run it [the headquarters offices]. Based on these facts, many people concluded that the commander was not satisfied with the village tract leader and that [therefore] he had caused the village tract leader to disappear.

Prior to the disappearance, Htee Tha Daw Hta village secretary, Saw A---, said,

“When he first arrived, Commander Pah Mee said that he distributed five guns in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, but he only gave three guns to the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah]. When the Township meeting was held, people asked the village tract leader how many guns he had in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, and the village tract leader replied that Commander Pah Mee had only given him three guns. After the meeting, when he returned to D--- Village, Htee Tha Daw Htah village tract, Commander Pah Mee came to him [village tract leader] and asked him, ‘Do you think I sold the guns?’ Because Commander Pah Mee had said that he distributed five guns but the village tract leader received only three guns, Commander Pah Mee was upset with the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah]. Consequently, he went to the village tract leader [Kyaw

⁶² Local tax paid for, as the name suggests, the ownership of an elephant.

Dah Dah] and asked his subordinate to arrest him [village tract leader], tie his hands behind his back, kick him and hit him with the barrel of an AR [Assault Rifle]. Ever since then, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah] has continuously suffered Commander Pah Mee's oppression."

After Commander Pah Mee harmed him physically, he [Kyaw Dah Dah] quietly returned to his home. When he got back, he asked his wife to rub herbal ointment on his body over the areas where he felt pain. His wife asked him,

"What's wrong with you?"

But he did not say anything [tell the truth], just saying,

"I fell down and my back is in pain, so rub my back with herbal ointment."

When his wife later discovered that Commander Pah Mee was oppressing her husband and was physically torturing him she cried for her husband.

On April 16th 2015 Platoon Commander Saw V--- from Company #4 Battalion #102 [KNLA] went to visit Commander Pah Mee with his two friends: Commander Saw I--- and the Htee Tha Daw Htah village tract co-administrator. According to Commander Saw V---, they discussed the following with Commander Pah Mee:

"Deputy Commander Saw J---, [also known as] Saw K---, from Battalion #102 asked me [Commander Saw V---] to go and inform Commander Pah Mee [that he was required] to contact him [Deputy Commander Saw J---]. Around 12 pm to 12:30 pm when I [Commander Saw V---] reached there and while we [Commander Saw V--- and his friends] stopped at Shwe We port on the Salween River I [Commander Saw V---] saw Commander Kyaw Heh Noh drag the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader, Kyaw Dah Dah, to the place where Commander Pah Mee lives and tie his hands behind his back with rope. When I [Commander Saw V---] went up to Commander Pah Mee after we had docked the boat at the port, I saw that the village tract leader was detained and tied to the post of the hut. I went inside the hut and met with Commander Pah Mee at 1 pm and started to talk about why I had come to meet with him. I told Commander Pah Mee that Commander Saw K--- asked [Commander Pah Mee] to contact him, and then I gave Commander Saw K---'s phone number to [Commander Pah Mee]. "

After he [Platoon Commander Saw V---] gave him [Commander Pah Mee] Commander Saw K---'s phone number, Commander Pah Mee said that his phone was not working well. Platoon Commander Saw V--- said that the people who attended the meeting were himself, Commander Saw L---, Commander Pah Mee, Commander Saw M---, Saw N---, Saw O--- and also Democratic Karen Benevolence Army [DKBA] Company Commander Maung P---. Commander Maung P--- is from the [DKBA] Kloh Htoo Lah Battalion that is under the control of Commander [Bo] Bee.⁶³ The meeting lasted for around two hours.

⁶³ *Kloh Htoo Lah* is under the command of Bo (Officer) Bee and is one of the three current DKBA Battalions, the others being *Kloh Htoo Wah* and *Kloh Htoo Baw*, that were formed in September 2011 and refused to transform into Tatmadaw Border Guard battalions. *Kloh Htoo Baw* (Golden Drum) referred to the DKBA before 2011, but was then reconfigured to have the two additional battalions as well. DKBA forces in Hpa-an and Dooplaya districts that refused to transform into Tatmadaw Border Guard battalions began fighting Tatmadaw forces in November 2010 and have been variously referred to as DKBA #907, *Kloh Htoo Baw*, Golden Drum, and Brigade #5.

After that [meeting], Commander Saw V---saw that the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader was tied up to a tree [which was] in the sun. His hands were tied behind his back and as it was very hot he was sweating. Throughout the meeting and at the time that he [Commander Saw V---] left Commander Pah Mee's place, the village tract leader remained tied to the tree.

According to what he [Commander Saw V---] overheard from [local conversations] Commander Pah Mee asked Kyaw Heh Noh [head of the local force] to arrest and tie up the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader. Commander Saw V---said

“On the same day I returned directly to the place where I work after the meeting with Commander Pah Mee; my work place is Q--- Village and I operate in Q--- Village, Meh Pree village tract. After I returned to my place [of work] I later heard that a dead body floating along the Salween River had been discovered by children. .”

The children who found the dead body floating in the river are D--- villagers; Saw W--- and his other friends. But these children who found the dead body did not feel safe disclosing this information because they were afraid that if any armed groups heard about this, they would come and question them. After several days passed, [more] people found the dead body floating along the river at Kaw Taw Pu (Myine Gyi Ngu). The person who found the dead body is Saw X---. This was the same dead body that was first found by the children from D--- Village.

When Saw X--- went to the river to collect drift wood [for firewood], he found the dead body floating along the river. When he inspected the body, [he recognised] the body as the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader, Kyaw Dah Dah. Saw X--- used to live in D--- Village and was a former villager of D---. Therefore, he [Saw X---] knew the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader because they were from the same village.

Before people could confirm the fact of the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader's disappearance and whether he was alive or dead, the secretary of Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract spoke to one of the Local Force members. The Local Force member is a D--- Villager named Saw H---, and his wife is the youngest sister of the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader, Kyaw Dah Dah. Meanwhile, a DKBA soldier told Saw H--- that [he] was sure that the village tract leader was killed by Saw R---. Saw R--- is a subordinate of DKBA Commander Maung P---. Saw R--- said to [the DKBA soldier],

“Do not reveal [the truth] about this murder; if this information is disclosed you will be killed.”

As soon as Saw R--- said these words, people found the dead body floating in the Salween River. People could then confirm that the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader was killed. Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader Kyaw Dah Dah was 52 years old and had four children. He was also known as S---'s father. Kyaw Dah Dah was posted as the village tract leader of Htee Tha Daw Hta in 2011 for roughly five years. During this five year period he suffered and was oppressed by Commander Pah Mee until his life was taken from this world.

Kyaw Heh Noh, the Head of the Local Force, did not discuss this issue [the murder] to the Htee Tha Daw Hta village secretary. The Htee Tha Daw Hta Village secretary said,

"I have asked him [head of the local force] whether he saw the village tract leader and [knew] where the village tract leader would be, but he did not reply. Later on, I heard the information piece by piece - that people found his dead body floating in the river - and so I could then confirm that the village tract leader was surely killed. However I felt too sorrowful to inform his [village tract leader] wife, that her husband was killed, and I did not dare tell her about it."

Battalion #102 Company Commander Saw T--- said,

"The village tract leader came to me and called me Grandpa U--- (as my walkie talkie name is Grandpa U---). [He said] 'I would like to tell you something, please do not disclose about it because if you do Commander Pah Mee will torture me again when he hears about it.' When he [Kyaw Dah Dah] discussed his situation with me [Commander Saw T---], he was emotional and couldn't speak properly. He said to me 'Please find and assign a new Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader, I cannot do it anymore.' I [Commander Saw T---] did not think that this case would amount to this much, and if I had known Commander Pah Mee was going to kill the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader, I would have hidden him elsewhere, but unexpectedly the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader has been killed. I couldn't imagine [why Pah Mee would kill] the Htee That Daw Hta village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah]; he was a quiet man and who did not tell lie and always told the truth. He was a simple man."

Saw A---, the Htee Tha Daw Hta village secretary, added,

"Two months after the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader's [Kyaw Dah Dah] disappearance I went to Commander Saw V--- and I asked him 'Have you seen the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader come here and where did he go? I have not heard information about him.'"

Commander Saw V--- knew some information at that time, because during his meeting with Commander Pah Mee he saw that the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader was detained and that his hands were tied behind his back, but he also did not think that the Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract leader [Kyaw Dah Dah] would be killed. Although he [Commander Saw V---] knew this, he did not disclose this information to the Htee Tha Daw Hta village Secretary, Saw A---, because he worried that the secretary would feel upset and afraid. Saw A--- only found out about the information after it had already circulated. Saw A---, also said,

"When I [Saw A---] went and met with Commander Saw V--- I didn't dare inform the head of the local force, Kyaw Heh Noh, so I met with him [Commander Saw V---] secretly. Later on, I [Saw A---] heard that he [Kyaw Heh Noh] came and asked the head of the local force in Y--- Village about me."

The head of the local force of Y--- [village], Saw Z---, said,

"When Kyaw Heh Noh arrived to [see] me [Saw Z---], he asked me 'Have you seen my secretary [Saw Z---]? Where was he going? Did you hide him? Do you want to have my secretary [Saw Z---]? If I find him [Saw Z---], I will shoot his head with a gun...Kyaw Heh Noh came to me with two local force members and as soon as he arrived he went into the house and his two local force members stayed on the ground holding guns, taking up positions in which they could guard their leader... I also have five local force members and I think three or five members - it doesn't matter. If he cocks his gun I will take out my gun as well. When Kyaw Heh Noh came and met with me, I asked my subordinates to cook for them and I

offered them hospitality. After, Kyaw Heh Noh had the meal they went back to Aa-- Village and said "If I see Saw Z--- later on I will shoot him." One of the villagers heard what he [Kyaw Heh Noh] said [when they were] on their way back [to Aa--- Village] and recited it to me [Saw Z---]. The villager who heard about this is Bb---, and he lives in Aa--- Village. He [Kyaw Heh Noh] also said, 'If I see Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU/KNLA] I will shoot them, but if I see Border Guard Force [BGF] I won't shoot them.' Saw Z--- responded, 'If I see Kyaw Heh Noh I won't let him go, and I won't stop shooting just because you and I are both men [and know one another].'

Source #74

Log #	15-59-D1
Title / type of report	Short Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 10th 2015	
<p>On July 8th 2015, a local villager, Naw D--- from G--- village reported that on July 6th 2015 in the evening, the Tatmadaw started firing small machine guns and grenade launchers towards the DKBA [Democratic Karen Benevolent Army] camp at Worbo [Waw Poo] Bridge area, in Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. Two men who were smugglers [illegal traders] were hit by indiscriminate grenade launchers in Yaw Poh Toh area, near Worbo [Waw Poo] Bridge and both of them died as a result. We do not know exactly which armed group [DKBA or Tatmadaw] fired grenade launchers at the two men. Villagers from villages near the clash fled from their villages for safety.</p> <p>On July 8th 2015, a local villager Naw E--- reported that two villagers were shot by government troops [Tatmadaw] while they were travelling to F--- village, in Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. Both of them did not know that Tatmadaw soldiers had taken up battle positions. They were shot while they were walking toward Tatmadaw soldiers. Relatives of the two dead villagers tried to take their dead bodies but the Tatmadaw soldiers did not allow them. One of the villagers was 17 years old and the other villager was 21 years old. The 21 year-old left behind a wife and child. Yesterday, five [Tatmadaw] military trucks and a helicopter came to Meh Tha Waw village area. They clashed again [with DKBA troops] starting around 5:30 pm and this has continued until now (8:00 pm).</p>	

Source #75

Log #	15-62-D1
Title / type of report	Short Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
Received Date: July 23, 2015	
<p>On July 21st 2015, a KHRG community member met with A--- monastery monk U B--- in Kawkareik Town, Dooplaya District. Monk U B--- told him [KHRG community member] that</p>	

during the Tatmadaw-BGF and DKBA fighting from July 2nd to July 6th more than 1,000 villagers were temporarily displaced and are now staying in his monastery and another monastery called C--- Monastery in Kawkareik Town. These villagers are from five different villages from Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. These villages are:

1. D--- village, which has [number of households censored for security] with 112 villagers.
2. E--- village, which in Burmese is known as F--- village. Fighting broke out [in G--- village] at 8:00 AM on July 21st 2015.
3. H--- village, which in Burmese is known as I--- village
4. J--- village
5. K--- village, which in Burmese is known as L--- village

Monk U B--- reported that between July 2nd and July 6th 2015, the villagers who were temporarily displaced in his monastery went back to their village to look after their farms, plantations and livestock during the day and then came back in the evening to sleep in the monastery. All of the adult boys and male villagers are staying in the monastery because they are afraid of being ordered to porter for Tatmadaw soldiers.

During the fighting between Tatmadaw and DKBA soldiers, children from these five villages cannot go to school because the schools are closed, so they are instead attending tuition class at a house. The teacher told them that the school is closed because of the fighting. Teachers dare not let them come to school because they are afraid that fighting will break out in the school area. There is a clinic established by KDHW [Karen Department for Health and Welfare] in M--- village. The medics from that clinic dare not live there anymore due to the fighting and they have closed the clinic.

The construction of N--- Bridge in N--- village stopped for two days because of the fighting. The company building the bridge has to finish the project by September but they have had to stop temporarily because the fighting broke out close to the bridge construction site.

On July 4th 2015, Tatmadaw soldiers from LIB #556, led by Major Thet Naing with Column #2 led by Nyaing Chan Soe (from Klay camp), came to O--- and launched an M79 grenade launcher. The grenade destroyed part of P--- school but no students were hurt because [July 4th] was a school holiday.

On July 17th 2015, at 5:30 AM fighting broke out between DKBA soldiers (led by Bo San Aung) in the *na ma kya* [deaf ear]⁶⁴ Company under Kloh Htoo Baw Battalion and Tatmadaw soldiers from battalions LIB #231 [which temporarily] combined with LIB #230, led by Major Thet Paing Zaw and Deputy Battalion Commander Major Soe Min in Q--- village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. Some villagers fled and stayed at their friends' house in Kawkareik Town and some villagers fled to R--- village in Kawkareik Township. Some

⁶⁴ Na Ma Kya is a Burmese phrase which directly translates as 'Deaf Ear'. Na Ma Kya in this context refers to the name of a Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) splinter group based in Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. According to local villagers, this group often acts with impunity, ignoring both the local people's input as well as the higher DKBA authorities' orders. Commander Kyaw Moh, well known as Na Ma Kya, who was leading this splinter group, was killed by one of BGF Commander Bo Tin Win's mahouts on August 29th 2016. For more information see [DKBA Splinter Group Confirms Leader's Death](#), August 31st 2016, The Irrawaddy; According to unpublished KHRG information from Kawkareik Township in Dooplaya District the circumstances surrounding his death remained unconfirmed.

villagers also escaped to A--- monastery in Kawkareik Town and villagers from H--- village and I--- village stayed at C--- monastery.

On July 22nd 2015, people from the 969 organisation [a Buddhist nationalist organisation] came and donated food that was worth 14 billion Kyat to 350 IDP [internally displaced people] families who were staying at R--- monastery, S--- monastery and T--- monastery.

On July 4th 2015, a lady who was over 50 years old from U--- village was injured during the fighting when grenade shrapnel hit her buttock.

On July 6th 2015, fighting broke out between a Tatmadaw soldiers from LIB #545 and DKBA soldiers in V--- place, between W--- and X---, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an Township from 7:00 pm until 7:30; two villagers died during the fighting.

As far as I know the villagers in the fighting area had to leave their homes, cannot grow their paddies and some of their properties were destroyed due to the fighting. However, I cannot document this right now because of security concerns.

Source #76

Log #	15-62-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 23rd 2015	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This photo was taken on July 22nd 2015 between Myawaddy and Kawkareik Town, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District, and the photo shows a section of the Asian Highway that was constructed by Thai companies and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). According to the villagers, their lands were confiscated and damaged from the highway. The highway is overseen by the Myanmar government. 	

Source #77

Log #	15-65-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 28th 2015	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This photo was taken in March 2015 in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. The photo shows the road [from Shan Lal Pyin to Leik Tho Town] which was constructed by Way Yan Kyaw Company. In the past, this company was a Peace Group and it has now transferred to local militia. The owner of that Company is Kyaw Way who is the Headquarter Commander of the local militia and now takes a name 	

of a company and does the development projects. His implementation has no transparency. Moreover, the project damaged the local villagers' plantations which are dog fruit tree, cardamom and coffee tree, and lands along where the road construction took place from Shan Lal Pyin to Leik Tho Town. That group is an armed group. Therefore, villagers do not dare to complain about anything. Additionally they [Way Yan Kyaw Company] cut down the trees that were close to villagers' land and sold them.

Source #78

Log #	15-66-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township and Taundaunggyi Township, Toungoo District

Full Text

Date Received: July 28th 2015

Introduction

There are two townships in Toungoo District, Htaw T'Htoo [Htantabin] Township and Daw Hpa Hkoh [Thandaunggyi] Township. This Toungoo Situation Update describes events between March 1st 2015 and July 15th 2015, and discusses the civilian situation, Tatmadaw activity, healthcare, education, land problems and landmines.

Civilian Situation

The civilians in Toungoo District desire and hope for genuine independence but civilians say that these wishes are unrealistic.

If we look [at the situation] in Toungoo District since 2015, the civilians are experiencing more [land] problems because more organisations and companies are beginning to operate [in Toungoo District] and civilians worry that their land will be confiscated [by the companies]. [They worry about their land] because one villager heard that a [hydropower] dam will be built in Hkuh Hpler Der area but nothing has been confirmed yet. For example, if the dam [project] will be implemented, many lands will be damaged by the dam [project]. Most local villagers in Toungoo District earn their livings from cardamom, and betel-nut plantations. They do not do any special [jobs] to earn their livings.

Tatmadaw Activity

The Tatmadaw are maintaining their operations in Toungoo District. They rotate their military and send rations once every four months. When the ceasefire was recently signed they followed their agreement with the KNU to not pass over de-limited territory but after time passed they stopped following the [rule] to not pass into de-limited territory. In early 2015, the Tatmadaw who live in Kler La [army camp] went to civilians' villages for medical services and provided some medicine to the villagers who live near Kler La [area]. They also gave bread and milk to the children but it is unclear whether or not they are doing this with pure intentions. Villagers also worry [believe] that this might be a trick. They [the Tatmadaw] also bring all of their equipment with them when they travel. Even when they send rations the military bring all of their security [equipment with them on the road]. Therefore, the villagers who live near the road think that the ceasefire has not brought stability.

The Tatmadaw are based in Toungoo District, MOC [Military Operation Command] #5. The battalions [under MOC #5] are LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #371, LIB #372, LIB #373, LIB #374, LIB #376, LIB #377, LIB #378 and LIB #379. The LID [Light Infantry Division] is under the control of MOC #5 and is based in Kler La [army camp]. Two Operation Commands [under the LID] are based in Buh Hsa Hkee and Hplay Hsa Loh. LIB #124 and LID #930 have permanent army camps based in Thandaunggyi [Town]. LIB #603 and IB [Infantry Battalion] #73 are based in Leik Tho [Town] and are operating in Leik Tho. One militia headquarter is based in Pya Sa Khan and another sub-militia head quarter is based in Leik Tho. The front-line army camp is based in T'Khwe P'Lo Shan Lel Pyin Aung village.

Healthcare

The illnesses that are most likely to occur in Toungoo District are malaria, flu, diarrhoea and stomach ache. In Toungoo District, civilians live in two different situations. There are civilians that live in areas under KNU controlled areas and there are civilians that live in mixed control areas [between Myanmar government and KNU administration]. The villagers that live in areas under KNU control have to go to the KNU hospital for medical treatment if they face illnesses but the medicine [in the hospital] is insufficient [for all patients] so, [medics] have to limit their use of medicine. Sometimes, if they [villagers] become sick they cure themselves with herbal medicines. The Burma/Myanmar government appointed health workers for the civilians who live in mixed control areas but [the government] does not provide enough medicine for them [to treat patients]; they have to buy medicine themselves for treatment. Since there is not enough medicine, villagers have to go to Kler La and Thandaunggyi towns for medical treatment when they are ill, which increases the amount of money they have to pay. The Burma/Myanmar government has no special arrangement regarding healthcare even though the ceasefire had been signed.

Education

In terms of education there is no special arrangement in Toungoo District even though some primary schools do not have any government teachers available to teach in their schools. The villagers themselves have to find and financially support schoolteachers. This is not a problem for [larger] villagers who have money but it is difficult for small villages to find enough money to support teachers and also earn enough income to survive. Therefore, the children are unable to go to school instead have to help their parents with housework.

The Burma/Myanmar government has appointed school teachers to teach in mixed control villages but the schools still lack human resources. Moreover, the schoolteachers who were appointed do not want to teach in rural or jungle villages and so even if they are supposed to teach full time they do not go to school on time. When they go back [to the towns] to receive their wages, they sometimes take up to one week or even ten days [off from the school]. This has caused problems for the study of students. In Toungoo District, most of the villagers who live in mixed controlled areas send their children to the KNU's schools. There are two middle schools and one high school in [Toungoo] District. One middle school is located in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township and another middle school is located in Htaw T'Htoo Township. There are not enough school teachers to teach in two schools but the KNU leaders in Toungoo District still try their best to find teachers.

The KNU have only constructed one high school this year [2015]. Standards five to ten are taught in that school and there are 70 students studying there this year. As this school was only opened recently, many [financial] problems may emerge in the future. However, after deliberation, KNU leaders have decided that they will try their best to run this school and

ensure that children can study.

Land Problems

Although there were some land problems that occurred in Toungoo District in 2015, there were no land confiscation incidents. There were only land confiscation incidents in 2014 and in years prior to this. However, there were some land problems in Pya Sa Khan area because the Peace Group sold villagers' working land. The working land belongs to Ta Pyay village and Kwee Tae village. All the land titles for the working land have been sold after Burma/Myanmar government confiscated those lands for use by the Peace Group. One villager said that the people bought the lands in November 2014.

Landmine information

There are no new landmines in Toungoo District but the old landmines have not yet been cleared. There are a lot of landmines that were planted in the area around the Tatmadaw base in Naw Soh and Buh Hsa Hkee places. On March 12th 2015, Mines Advisory Group [MAG] delivered a landmine workshop in Leh Gee Hkoh village, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township in order to increase villages' knowledge about landmines and strengthen villagers' ability to protect themselves and their community members.

Source #79

Log #	15-67-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: July 28th 2015</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On March 28th 2015, in A--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, an annual meeting was held for Thandaung Bwe Mo Religious Group. Their meetings are set to be held 5 times per year [on a] region by region [basis] in 18 villages. Starting in 1992, the [Myanmar] government force relocated and attacked the villages. When the turn comes for their village, the villagers cannot hold the meeting in their villages because the villages have been destroyed or become IDP villages and some [of the villagers] went to the refugee camps. The meetings have to be held only in Thandaunggyi town, which is under government control. After the ceasefire agreement, it is the turn of the other 17 villages to have the meeting in their own village. However there is no village or house able to host the meeting. Therefore they have to host the meeting in a farm or in a forest. Due to these difficulties no children and only a few youths could attend the meeting. [This situation is] because the ceasefire is not in a situation yet that is reliable or satisfactory for the villagers. [Despite a ceasefire existing on paper] there is no security or guarantee for their [villagers] lives. 	

Source #80

Log #	15-67-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished

Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 28th 2015	
<p>1. Photo #149.0934 to #0149.0937 I took these photos on March 3, 2015. Starting from 1992 – 93, because of the attack of the government armies [Tatmadaw], villagers from Par Wel Doh Kar village, They Yar Yu Village, and Lel Koh Doh village, and more than 30 other villages in Thandaung Township, Toungoo District, were separated. Some arrived to camps, some went and lived with their relatives, and some people who could not run away and did not have [any family members to] depend [on] have been staying in the forests and mountains as internal displaced persons [IDPs]. Even though, now is the time of the ceasefire, there is no security and they [IDPs] are living in temporary shelters by building a group of 4 or 5 houses and they cannot live together with all of the family members. Just those who can do gardening go back and stay for a few for short days to do work. They want to live together with all of their family members and live in the village like before [the conflict], but there is no guarantee for their security and they are waiting for the time that is safe for their security.</p> <p>Photo #825.1288 to #825.1290</p> <p>2. These are the photos of the local villagers volunteering for the bridge construction in A--- village and B--- village, in Thandaung Township, Toungoo District, on July 6, 2015. I [KHRG researcher] took the photos by myself. When Hla Thit Sar Pan Kar Mining Company took responsibility for construction; there was no pre discussion with the local people. After the road was constructed, they [Hla Thit Sar Pan Kar mining company] called the representatives from each local village, and forced them to sign an agreement allowing them to construct the road in their village. As the roads are damaged, it is really inconvenient for the local villagers to travel and they have to volunteer [work as forced labour] for road construction once a week. They do not get money for volunteering. When doing development, it must be a beneficial development. These companies do not accept the wishes of local villagers and they just do as they like and it [development projects] happens like this.</p>	

Source #81

Log #	15-68-11
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
Part 1 – Incident Details	
Type of Incident	BGF Battalion #1013 shoot on sight [Naw A---'s] daughter's husband
Date of Incident(s)	February 15 th 2015
Incident Location	B--- village, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Victim Information	
Name	Naw A---
Age	55
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Yes
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Buddist
Position	Villager
Village	B--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Saw Hpah Yu Khay	Company 2 nd in-Command	[Border Guard Force] Battalion #1013	Ka Ter Tee/Htoo Wah Kaw	Battalion Commander is Lah Kyeh;

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

Firstly, I collected this information by radio message and then I went to the field to meet with the victim's relatives and the victim's family.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

Regarding the people who gave me this information, the victim is her son-in-law and she also saw what happened that evening. Moreover, a man who went [fishing] together with the victim [on the evening of the incident] also explained certain information to her [the mother-in-law].

3. Complete description of the incident

The incident is the Border Guard Force [BGF] soldier shooting on sight a B--- villager called Saw D--- or [also known as] Saw E---. It happened on March 14th 2015, at 7:00 pm. This happened when Saw D--- or Saw E--- went fishing [to provide] for his family. He was shot by the Border Guard Force [BGF] Battalion #1013.⁶⁵ Company 2nd in-Command Hpah Yu Khay ordered his soldiers to shoot these villagers. It [the bullet] hit Saw D--- or [also known as] Saw E--- who is Naw A---'s son-in-law. As he was her son-in-law, it caused [her to] worry and [created] problems for her because her daughter has to look after their children [alone]. She also reported that *"my grandson, who is Saw E---'s eldest son, is 16 years old and he is a student so he is not able to do his father's work yet"*.

Naw C--- [the wife of the Saw D---] tried to advocate, [report the issue to BGF] on behalf of

⁶⁵ KHRG continues to receive reports discussing abuses involving BGF Battalion #1013 and #1014, including: ["BGF Battalion #1014 demands forced labour, asserts heavily militarised presence in villages in Hpapun District, June 2015,"](#) KHRG, December 2015; ["Hpapun Incident Report: Villager killed by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1013 in Bu Tho Township, March 2015,"](#) KHRG, September 2015; ["Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014,"](#) KHRG, July 2015. Further reports detailing abuses involving these battalions are also available on the KHRG website.

her children, as well as she could. She collaborated with the village head and met with the Border Guard Force [BGF] Battalion #1013 General to discuss [the case]. She said *“The Border Guard Force [BGF leader] promised me [to pay compensation] but until now they have not given me anything yet”*.

4. Permission for using the details

The victim’s [family] gave us permission to use the details of this case so that this kind of human rights abuse will be documented.

Source #82

Log #	15-69-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 28th 2015	
<p>1. I took these photos on March 21st 2015 in Hkay Poo region [Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District]. The photos show the locations where landmines exploded in Hkay Poo region. These landmines were stepped on because the Tatmadaw crossed into de-limited territory.</p>	

Source #83

Log #	15-69-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
Date Received: July 28th 2015	
1. Introduction	
<p>This report [Situation Update] covers the period from January until the end of March. The information was received [collected] from five village tracts during these three months in Northern Lu Thaw Township. The five village tracts are (1) Hkay Poo village tract (2) Na [Naw] Yoh Hta village tract (3) Ler Muh Plaw village tract (4) Saw Muh Plaw village tract and (5) Kaw Loo Der village tract. Even though we are in the process of peace talks [between the Karen National Union and Myanmar government], those village tracts have not dared to meet with government troops [Tatmadaw].</p>	
2. (a) Villages’ situation	
<p>Since the enemy [Tatmadaw] did (confiscate land) from 2006 to 2008, many villages and villagers became Internally Displaced People [IDPs] and even left our villages. But in 2012 the enemy [Tatmadaw] did (Ya Aung Soe Operation)⁶⁶ and changed the military operation system to a (civilian government) system. They called all ethnic groups to hold a discussion</p>	

⁶⁶ This roughly translates as ‘defeat and control the enemy’.

and solve the country's political problems and have initiated the ceasefire [process] for the whole country.⁶⁷ Based on this result, when both leaders [Burma/Myanmar government and Karen National Union] held the meeting and built the trust for each other during these three years, the villagers did not move from their places. They are still living in the place that they have been living. Nevertheless regarding the villages which had been displaced, none of the villagers have gone back to their own villages. Around the working places, such as hill farms, [villagers] have faced problems. Some people [villagers] went back to their original areas to earn a living from their farm land, but they have to live with fear and worry. They always have to be aware of [the fighting situation] every day and night.

(b) Villagers' activities

The government troops left food along every [length of] vehicle road where the villagers' [usually] pass along. The foods that they left are beans, rice, canned fish, sugar, and alcohol for the villagers to take but they [villagers] did not take them. They also left medicine. The villagers' reported that they might be [used for] persuasion or [the Tatmadaw might have] put poison inside therefore they dared not to take them [the goods], saying *"Even though we have no food, we still have our own leaders [KNU]."* The villagers' themselves bought walkie-talkies in order to get easier communication with each other and they also used their own coding language. The government troops [Tatmadaw] also tuned into their [villagers'] walkie-talkie service line [wavelength] and told the villagers, *'Go back to live in their your places; make your living from the cultivation of farms. You do not have any buffalo left [so] we [Tatmadaw] said we would give you motor ploughs [rotavators], mattocks, and the tools for farming that you needed but [you,] the villagers did not accept.'* They [villagers] also did not talk much [about] that on the walkie-talkie because they also were worried that their talking points might be used strategically by the government troops. They [villagers] reported that, *'we still have our leaders therefore we do not want to stay under control by the government troops.'*

(c) Livelihood conditions and healthcare

[We] cannot live peacefully. We always live with worry and have heart attacks [tension and stress]. Even if we have suitable health, our heart and brain always holds onto worries about how to earn our daily food and how to improve the lives of our children. We are thinking about that and how it impacts on individuals' health [as well as] the whole village, village tract, and the whole township.

(d) Education

It was very difficult to improve the [levels of] education because the Tatmadaw sent their troops in our area therefore we always lived with worry and we had no [time] to think about the improvement in peace. We always live with daily worries therefore it is very difficult to improve education.

⁶⁷ On January 12th 2012, a preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. Negotiations for a longer-term peace plan are still under way. For updates on the peace process, see the [KNU Stakeholder webpage](#) on the Myanmar Peace Monitor website. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014. In March 2015, the seventh round of the negotiations for a national ceasefire between the Burma/Myanmar government and various ethnic armed actors began in Yangon, see ["Seventh Round of Nationwide Ceasefire Negotiations," Karen National Union Headquarters](#), March 18th 2015. Following the negotiations, the KNU held a central standing committee emergency, see ["KNU: Emergency Meeting Called To Discuss Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement And Ethnic Leaders' Summit," Karen News](#), April 22nd 2015.

3. The KNU and the KNU [KNLA]'s troop situation

(a) Governor activity

Nowadays the leaders on both sides [KNU and Myanmar government] are in the peace talk process to build trust with each other but the success of trust building has been very low and there is no political dialogue yet. Therefore is no stable system of control and [the peace process] is not active.

(b) Military activity

[There] are difficulties for KNU troops to carry out their duties regarding development and to maintain the situation for villagers because there is no stable political dialogue.

4. Government military [Tatmadaw] situation

(a) Tatmadaw camps

Apart from Northern Lu Thaw Township, the Tatmadaw situated their camp in five village tracts which are (1) Saw Muh Plaw village tract: [areas] 1. Paw Khay Hkoh 2. Der Kyoo Kyoh 3. Hpah Gaw Loh, 4. Wa Klay Too. (2) Plah Hkoh village tract: [areas] 1. Pgha Gaw 2. Keh Deh Kyoh 3. Hter Ner Kyoh 4. Kuh Hkoh 5. Pla Hkoh 6. Kaw Thway Kyoh. (3) Kaw Loo Der village tract: [areas] 1. Kaw Way Kyoh 2. Moh Loh Day 3. Ler Say Daw Hkoh 4. Plaw Ka Muh Loo 5. Way Oo Khoh Nee Hkoh. (4) Ler Muh Plaw village tract: [areas] 1. Htaw Muh Pleh Meh (5) Hkay Poo village tract: [areas] 1. Hsa Law Kyoh 2. T'May Hta 3. Khaw Daw Khoh 4. Htee Htaw Per border.

(b) Tatmadaw activity

Over a period of three months the activities that they conducted were the reparations of their army camps and barracks. The upgrading included: water channels [to protect their camp], grenades, airplanes, water storage facilitates. The Tatmadaw also sent more rations, bullets and rotated the location of their battalions and companies.

(c) Injuries and fatalities

During this period in which they have been sending rations, they also confronted with a security guard. [In two confrontations] two people were killed and two people were injured.

1. They killed our [KNU/Karen National Liberation Army - KNLA] security guard, named Saw Poo Poo on February 17th 2015 at 10 o'clock in See Day area. [Another man] was injured on his shoulder, named Saw A---.

2. On March 2nd 2015 one of our [KNU/KNLA] servants [security guard] was shot and killed and another one was injured [by the Tatmadaw] at 10 o'clock in B--- area. The one who was killed is called Saw Maw Hkay and the one who was injured is called Saw C---. Saw C--- was hit on his arm twice [by the bullet].

(d) Battalions

The battalions which are currently based in our area are LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #363 which is under the control by the MOC [Military Operation Command] #10 army base based in Der Kyoo Kyoh, Hpah Gaw Loh, Wah Klay Too, and Htaw Muh Pleh Meh. The LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #594 under control by MOC (20) [#20] army base [situated] their camp in Yoo Doh Hkoh, T'May Hta, Hsa Law Kyoh and the LIB #584 [army camp base is] in Khaw Daw Hkoh, and Htee Htaw Per. (3) T'Khaw Hta area: IB [Infantry Battalion] #599's Battalion Commander (Soe Tin Lay).

5. Landmines

In Northern Lu Thaw Township, the KNU [KNLA] and Home Guard are still using landmines in many places because the government troops [Tatmadaw] pass over the restricted area

which includes vehicular roads and other places. The Tatmadaw comes to these places in order for them to know the villagers' location. The villagers live with fear and worry, therefore they want the [KNLA] soldiers to plant landmines and if they explode the villagers will get to know about it [where the Tatmadaw troops are]. They [KNU/KNLA] informed the villagers before they had planted the landmines. The number of [KNLA] soldiers has reduced, therefore they used the landmines to protect themselves in order to be able to earn living [so they have free time and do not have to guard the village]. They produced the landmines themselves; they were not bought from other countries.

Conclusion

This report is about the incidents which occurred during a three month period [January to March 2015]. As the information above states, in many village tracts such as Saw Muh Plaw village tract, and Ler Muh Plaw village tract, many villagers do not have enough food. However they share the food amongst themselves and are able to pass through [survive]. They currently have no food. Some of them there really need the leaders [KNU] to lead them and advise them.

Source #84

Log #	15-72-A3-I2
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thaton Township, Thaton District

Full Text

What is your name?

My name is Saw A---

How old are you?

I am 52 years old.

Where do you live?

I live in B--- section, Ko Laing village tract, Thaton [Township].

Do you have a family?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have three children.

What is the age of your oldest child?

My oldest has already married and is 28 years old.

What is the age of your youngest child?

My youngest child was born when my middle child was six years old. Currently my middle child is 25 years old and my youngest child is 19 years old.

Do you work with any organisation here?

I am working with the [Karen] Literature and Culture Organisation and the Karen People's Party (KPP). Within the KPP, I was selected to be in charge of religious activities.

I want to know some information from you. I think you are familiar with the Ya Za Min case⁶⁸, so could you tell me as much as you know starting from when the innocent villagers were arrested?

If I am going to tell you everything, it [Ya Za Min case] happened when I went to the KPP's anniversary celebrations. Four of us, U C---, U D---, U E--- and U F---, went to the celebrations. We came back from town and once we reached the bus station our children came to pick us up. We arrived at the bus station at 8:30 AM or 9:30 AM. U E---'s wife came to pick him up from the bus station. While his wife was coming [to pick him up], she saw the robbers. We only heard about the [robbery] case [we did not see it] and when they [police] arrested them [suspects] we thought they were the actual accused [guilty party]. I did not know their backgrounds. I heard they were suspected of robbing and killing two people. Therefore, they would have to be punished for what they have done, and the [authorities] might sentence them to death. Five or six months later, I found out information [based on my own research and relating to the case], that there is nothing [no evidence that the suspects committed the robbery]. [The suspected villagers were arrested when] the suspects were working on their farms near the Thaton River. [For example] Saw J--- was arrested when he was ploughing his farm. The total amount of money [that each of them would have taken] would be about one to four hundred thousand kyat, but [when they were arrested they] did not have any money.

After I discovered [this, I found out that] they [the accused] were definitely not involved [in the robbery]. I attempted to help and advocate [for their release] at the office [Burma/Myanmar government] and the KNU [Karen National Union]. When Union Parliament Speaker, *Thara U Shwe Mann* came to Thaton Town, many people spoke with him, one by one, about different issues. I was waiting to hear whether anyone would speak about the Ya Za Min case or not, but no one talked about the case. The [government officials from the] Union Parliament, National Union Parliament, and State Level Parliament were also participating [involved in discussions when *Thara U Shwe Mann* came to Thaton] but no one raised the [Ya Za Min] issue. When I raised that case, I warned the [representatives] from the Union Parliament that the issue that I was about to discuss was a huge issue, because I had found out that the robbery was committed by Mon people, but the people they had arrested were Karen people. Now, it has already been one year since the issue was submitted to the office [Burma/Myanmar government]. They [suspects] have been under

⁶⁸ This case relates to the Yar Zar Min bus robbery that happened in Mon State, Thaton Township, Thaton District on June 8th 2013 when a bus was intercepted by robbers whilst heading from Kyaik Kha Mi to Yangon. A previously published KHRG report, [Thaton Interview: Ma N---, July 2015](#), found that one of the suspects was tortured and confessed under duress. The case didn't not follow legal protocol and it is alleged the men were sentenced without sufficient evidence. More information can be found at "[Villagers claim five villagers sentenced to death are scape](#) goats," Karen News, April 6 2015.

arrest for one year and they have not been punished or released. They have just been held in prison.

Yes? [Go on]

If there is no hope [for the suspects to be released] and if they will sentence them to death, they should just do it [without delay], and if there is hope [if they are to be released], just release them. The case needs to be opened and action needs to be taken as soon as possible, because they have families, wives and children. Their families live in the local society [are still living in the community] and their children also should gain education [therefore], they [the suspects families] need someone who can support them. I presented this information to *Thara U Shwe Mann*. *Thara U Shwe Mann* replied that he called the USDP [Union Solidarity and Development Party] representatives and asked them if they heard about the issue raised by one of the Karen people. He also said all USDP members had to hire lawyers for this case because the previous information [from the police] was not accurate and they mistakenly arrested the victims [suspects]. He [*Thara U Shwe Mann*] told me not to worry because the USDP would solve this issue for me and then he [*Thara U Shwe Mann*] stopped speaking. The next morning USDP members U K--- and U L--- came and asked me, “*what kind of help do you need from us?*” Saw A--- [interviewee] welcomed them warmly with tea as they came to help our people. However, later they did not do anything for us.

Another thing I want to know is when they arrested those people, what evidence did they have?

In fact, as far as I know, there is a village administrator in [each of] the villages. According to police regulations, if they [police] want to arrest someone, they must make an announcement to [notify the village administrator before the] arrest. When they make the arrest announcement, they have to call the village administrator in order to arrest anyone who commits a crime. The village administrator has to follow the police [to the police station]. The procedure to make an arrest should be followed like this, but now the police do not follow the procedure. They [the police] arrest whoever they want and do whatever they like. They arrest people and torture them. When they make an arrest, the village administrator goes to see the police, but the police do not give the village administrator permission to see the people who were arrested. As a matter of fact, if they were following the law, they would have to call the village administrator to the court. Isn't that right? The people they arrested are villagers who come from the same villages [H--- village and G--- village] as the village administrator. They did not call anyone [village administrator] to inform them of the arrest. We were told by the female judge about those people who were arrested and that four of them are from the village that is overseen by the village administrator. Then, she said surprised “*oh really?*” We informed her that the village administrator was not told about the arrest. Therefore they are not following the law. If the police are going to arrest people in the village, they first need to meet with village administrators in order to ask them questions [about the accused]. Isn't that right? They have made up this false story. Now they cannot fix it [and continue to keep covering up their lies]. Because the lower officials lied, the higher authorities also have to lie [to protect themselves]. Our poor villagers [who were accused of robbery] have had to suffer. Now I know that they [police] have tried to investigate the robbery and they did their best. We have also already submitted the case to the court, but we still have to wait for the verdict, which the jury will deliver to decide the fate of those who were accused of the robbery. The verdict we want is for them to be completely set free because they were not involved in the robbery.

So I want to ask you something, what do you want to happen to them [the people who have been wrongly accused of robbery]?

These people want to be completely free. So I want people who know a lot about human rights and the law to come and help them. They should come to see the situation in our village and what they [the authorities] are doing. We are not lying. They should do research [to find evidence and determine] who is right and who is wrong. I think the police who arrested them must know about the situation and know that they are innocent because if they [police] could not solve this case [find the perpetrators], their officers would have forced them [to look for the perpetrators] until they found them. They are afraid of their commanding officers. [In their attempts] to solve this case, the police wrongly arrested people who are ordinary farmers and they [farmers] were treated very badly. They [police] do not have any sympathy for the innocent people they arrested. They just followed the orders [from their higher commanders]. Also, they [Myanmar police] want to oppress the Karen people who live in the village. That is why we do not have stable peace in our country. As for us, we are just ordinary people. If Saw A--- [interviewee] was not trying to solve this robbery case, other villagers would not dare to help the people who were arrested.

If we look at this case, this is not a small case, but it is a big case. We heard that it happened because of ethnic discrimination [against Karen people]. Therefore, I came to ask you information and you told me as much as you know about that case. So I thank you very much.

Thank you too. I want to say something else. Please tell your organisation to help your people if you go back. Good evening.

Yes. Good evening.

Source #85

Log #	15-79-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Kyainseikgyi Township and Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District

Full Text

Dooplaya Situation Update: Kruh Tu [Kyonedoe] Township, Kyainseikgyi and Kawkareik Township (July 1st to 26th 2015)

Health

In 2014, the Burma/Myanmar government began constructing a hospital in Tha May Doh village, Kruh Tu (Kyonedoe) Township for the local people. The hospital opened on March 15th 2015 and the construction was completed on July 14th 2015 but the cost of the hospital is not currently known.

The Burma/Myanmar government also supported the construction of a hospital for the local community in Lah Ta Kaw village, Kruh Tu Township.

In Htee Wah Kluh village, Kaw T'Ree [Kawkareik] Township, there is a small clinic that villagers built for themselves without any support from either the Myanmar government or the Karen National Union [KNU]. A villager named Thara Htuan Win said, *"If we report that we built a clinic to the Karen Human Rights Group [KHRG] there might be something they can do to help."* Another villager said, *"[In our clinics] we have difficulty [maintaining enough] medication."*

On July 13th 2015 I met a group of KNU rangers led by Thara Htoo Gaw Baw that are offering healthcare services to villagers at the village head's house. Villagers are very happy to receive medicine and other healthcare services [in the village head's house].

Education

The Burma/Myanmar government is building a school in A--- village, Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township that they hope to open in 2015. Regarding the difficulties that teachers face in B--- village, a teacher from B--- village said, *"I have been teaching since 2006 and I have faced many difficulties with teachers appointed by the Myanmar government. This school was not built by the government but rather was entirely built by the B--- villagers. However, in 2014 teachers appointed by the Burma/Myanmar government started to enter the school and were appointed to become officers in the school. One teacher was even appointed by the Burma/Myanmar government to be in charge of running the school. [Other] local teachers were not happy about these changes and said that 'The Burma/Myanmar government teachers have become the masters of our school [think they are better than Karen teachers].'"*

Tatmadaw Activity

Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #556 is led by Commander Aung Kyaw Oo and is based in C--- village [located near B--- Village in Kawkareik Township] in a monastery on the top of the mountain. [LIB #556] soldiers are stealing villagers' vegetables and fruits including pineapples, chilis and roselle leaves, which is an abuse of civilians' rights. However, villagers do not feel it is safe to complain about their [Tatmadaw] theft of [villagers'] fruits and vegetables.

LIB #559, Battalion #2 is an active battalion led by Commander Nay Win Aung that consists of around 30 [soldiers] and is based in B--- Village, Kaw T'ree Township. They have constructed a road for the villagers in order to show their care towards the villagers.

On July 15th 2015, the village head of D--- Village, Kaw T'ree Township said, *"We are facing hardships because this group of SPDC [Tatmadaw] came and set up a base in our village and asked us to leave our village. We have not been back to the village for five days and do not yet feel that it is safe to return to our village. Furthermore, some villagers also worry that the SPDC [Tatmadaw] will eat their livestock such as chickens and pigs that they left at their home. However we cannot do anything about that".* Villagers also said, *"This year we will not go back [to the village] and work on our field and land [plantations] so we are worried about what we are going to eat in the coming year".*

I also interviewed a village head in E--- village, which is close to B--- village, in Kaw T'Ree Township. Both of these villages [E--- village and B--- village] are located on opposite sides of the road. This village head told me,

"During the fighting, the SPDC [Tatmadaw] took a 19 year-old girl from E--- village when she went to grow paddies with her friend. The SPDC [Tatmadaw] only kept the girl for a little

while because they [the Tatmadaw] were worried that she would get injured if fighting were to break out. They let her go back to home on the same day and they [Tatmadaw] did not hurt her at all [physically or mentally].”

A group of Tatmadaw soldiers from LIB #559, led by Battalion Commander Nay Win Aung and based in B--- village, Kaw T’Ree Township, Dooplaya District, asked local villagers to transport rice [for them] from F--- village to B--- village. Although they told the villagers that they will pay for the cost [of transporting rice] they did not pay the villagers anything – not even the cost of gas – when they received the rice.

Development conflict between villages

There is tension between Htee Wah Kluh village and Meh Naw Ah village in Kaw T’Ree Township, Dooplaya District because Meh Naw Ah village got support from the Myanmar government (via other countries) to build a dam on the river at the upper part of Htee village [for drinking and domestic use]. Due to this construction, villagers from Meh Naw Ah are facing water shortages in the summer season because the dam that the villagers built has decreased the amount of water that flows to village. Moreover, they [Meh Naw Ah villagers] have connected pipes from Htee Wah Kluh village to Meh Naw Ah village that cross over the Htee Wah Kluh villagers’ houses and rubber plantations and uprooted some of the rubber trees. This has increased tension between the villagers of the two villages; these kinds of development projects have not brought any advantage [brought positive change to the two villages].

Taxation

A villager from T’Kuh Kee village, Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District said, *“In our village there is a taxation of rice and money. Each household was charged twelve thousand kyat and one basket of rice.”* This villager also asked, *“Does the taxation we have to pay in G--- village also apply to every other village? Is this taxation organised at the township level or at the district level? We do not know anything [regarding how taxation is organised]. This kind of taxation is not demanded by our mother organisation [KNU].”* This villager also later stated that she wouldn’t complain about the taxation if there was still fighting ongoing but now that the fighting has stopped, the taxes have become a burden for her to pay.

Conclusion

In conclusion, civilians in Kaw T’ree Township, Noh T’Kaw Township and Kruh Tu Township are continuing to live in a high-risk environment due to ongoing fighting and also face significant health and education challenges.

Source #86

Log #	15-83-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	<p>1. These photos show I Taung Ka Lay, Hpa-an District. The Myanmar/Burma government confiscated these lands from villagers without compensation and set up an industrial zone.</p>

Source #87

Log #	15-84-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: August 28th 2015</p> <p>1. These photos were taken on December 15th 2014 in Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District, A--- village tract, in the forest of Ta Kyaw area where KNU leaders from the brigade level, state level and district level came and held a meeting with local villagers. In the meeting, villagers who live in B--- village tract and A--- village tract requested to get permission from leaders to dig for gold. The place where villagers requested to mine for gold is the upper part of A--- village tract but Deputy Operation Commander Kyaw Thein from brigade (5) didn't give them [villagers] permission. However, at the same time, wealthy individuals did get permission to mine for gold in A--- village tract [area]. Therefore, local villagers do not have the rights to earn income mining for gold on their own land. They were only able to mine for gold on their own land [not on other sites] when the decision was made by the leaders [of KNU], so whatever their leaders decided they have to accept and work according to those decisions. Some local villagers said that they might earn more income mining for gold than if they obeyed the decision that was made by their leaders [and worked on their plantations]. The land where the gold digging took place was polluted and is not good to do plantation anymore so villagers have to find another place to do plantations.</p>	

Source #88

Log #	15-85-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Win Yay Township, Doooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>I am Daw T---. Regarding to our land issue, at the end of 2014 in 2015, [the] New Mon State Party said the country government supports them [with land] and they came and took the land. They said the country government supports them and they did not talk about it with the village head. They came in and confiscated it by themselves and they shared [the land]. They did not pay any money and took the land for free. The locals were sad and could not tell them to stop. [We] just have to suffer like this from then until 2015. Whatever we follow or do, it is still not OK.</p> <p>You said [the] New Mon State Party took it and could you tell me [who are] the leaders of [the] New Mon State Party?</p> <p>[The] New Mon State Party's leaders in the past [when her land got confiscated] were Niang</p>	

Ya Htun, U Ni, U Khin Khyo and Naing Ha Lel. There are many [leaders] that I do not know but those are the people I know.

Like you said before, the country government supports them. What you mean by the country government? From which side and who?

They said the country government supports them with 1,000 acres of free land.

The country government means, from where and which township?

New Mon State Party said it is in Mon state.

Do you know the [country government] person that supports [the New Mon State Party]? I would like to know the name of the person that said [that the New Mon State Party could] take the land. [Are they] from [the] land registration [department] or from the government?

We did not know what the government said, they just came and said [told us] like this. They [the New Mon State Party] were the group that said that [they could take the land], they were the group that took [the land] and they were the group that shared [the land]. It is my own land that belongs to me so I did not measure the land area. Then, they shared the land depending on their people. Until now, we do not know [exactly why they confiscated the land] but I just know it is my own land and how big the land is.

How big is your land?

I don't know exactly in acres because I have never measured that land. Including my farmland and the land around my farmland that belongs to me.

How big approximately?

They said they shared [divided the land into] 10 acres [for] each one of them. I don't know exactly but approximately, it might be about 58 or 60 acres.

The people who took [the land], what kind of people are they?

Only Mon people in the organisation, they took the land. There is no Karen [that confiscated the land]. They took local Karen villagers' land.

The people who took the land were ordinary Mon people or a Mon armed group?

[They were an] armed group [who] took [the land] and distributed the land to the villagers.

How did you know that your land is included there?

I know it because [it is] the place I keep [use] for grazing cows, the place near the stream, there is less low land and more high land and I keep trees on those lands. They came and saw it and they said that it is free and uncultivated land and they confiscated and took the land. I keep those trees near the stream in order to have water for the farm and for the other land which has little [further] distance from the river; I keep the land for [housing or cultivation] land.

In 2014, 2015, when they confiscated the land, how did you protect your land from getting confiscated?

I do not have anyone to help me protect my land, only I myself had to follow the case such as going to Mawlamyine court and later on I asked help from my villagers like the village head, they did help me by talking to them but they did not listen. They took [the land] on their own decision. They said the country government gives them [permission].

Did they have evidence when they say that the land has been given to them by the country government?

They did not have any evidence. They took [the land] as they said [they were given permission by the government].

Now, your land was passed down by [from] your grandparents or you bought it?

Passed down from my grandparents and then to my parents, then to me and it became my own land and it has land grant and Pyay Say [land document] for the farmland, not the land around the farm. Land around the land means, the land that we keep to use for the farm [or housing]. Not including the farmland [when they confiscated] but those lands [which] are close to the stream belong to me so that I want them back. In Nhit Ka Yin [village] when A wel Daing, Nhit Ka Yin have to send rice to A Wel Daing village, have to send them rice always. [unclear meaning].

How many people like you had land confiscated?

Around that time, there were many villages such as Bu--- village and L---village but for Au--- and B--- village, there are only two people [whose land got confiscated].

Two villagers from Au--- and B--- [village]. How about others? Any other people included?

In B--- and Au---, there are only two people.

What do you plant on your land?

Some people plant betel nut trees, at that time there was not rubber plantations and some Karen people grow Nigerian cashew [nuts]. Other people came and cleared the land and the owners grow Nigerian cashew [nuts] on the land and when they grow Nigerian cashew [nuts], they came and took it [the land]. When they came and cleared the land they did not have to cut big trees, we cut them. There were no big trees in the big forest. We planned to grow plants on the land so there were no big trees. There are big trees only in the headwaters [at river sources].

When they came and confiscated the land, they went to leaders. Could you explain me to what kind of leaders they went to and how?

Sometimes they [villagers] met with [the] New Mon State Party group members and told them, 'the land is uncultivated but not free land; they have their own owners [of the land]'. At that time, Major Aaing Khyan Mon from Mawlamyine came and said that those lands are included in the map that shows that they were given to them [the New Mon State Party] by

the country government. They said if these lands are not included in the lands that are shown on the map, they will return the lands. And then, the Mon people among themselves, for the land that is not included in the map, they made up a fake map and included them [the new lands] in their fake map. And they showed the map [to the villagers] and said that those lands are included in the land that is shown in the map. Since then, we cannot complain [to] them anymore.

They showed you the fake map or they showed it to whom?

They showed us.

So how did you see it and think that it is fake?

I saw that then they came and conducted the land survey, there was an officer [Lieutenant General] from [LIB#] 106.

From Tatmadaw government?

He is an officer from LIB#106 from Burma/Myanmar Tatmadaw. He sees and knows if it [the land] is included or not. When they [the New Mon State Party] said it is included in the land on the map and that officer said *'these lands are not included'* and he also said *'your map is fake'*. Only Tatmadaw military has the real map but they [Tatmadaw] did not say it [to the New Mon State Party] and give it [share with villagers].

Do you know the name of the military officer?

I know that military officer's name but it has been over ten years and that military officer has transferred to another battalion and now [he quit the position and] became a civilian. That military officer is called military officer Myint Naing.

At that time, what did he help you with [for the land]?

He did not help but he knew it [about land survey]. He himself was there when they conducted [the] land survey. He knows what [land] is included and what is not included. That is why they [the military officer] said that [land] is not included.

When he [military officer] said it [her land] is not included and then what did Aaing Khyan Mon reply?

For Major Aaing Khyan Mon when [we] met with that officer, he did not say anything. He just said that he will return the [lands] that is not include.

So how about later on? Did he return the lands?

He did not return anything up until now. In addition, there are two people called U Khin Khyo and U Ni. They are their [the New Mon State Party's] members. They said in the letter that the lands that they took were near the farm and if the owners request to return [the land], return 18 arm span of land backwards. There is the letter that they [U Ni and U Khin Khyo] wrote [officially], it is still there the letter that they wrote. Do not say [believe] about 18 arm spans [of land], they do not even want to return one hand span of land.

U Ni and U Khin Khyo, where do they live?

They are in Maw Ka Nel village. In La Maing sub-township [Win Yay Township].

What do they do for their livelihood now? Do you know about it?

I heard that U Khin Khyo used to be a school teacher. For U Ni, I don't know if he does plantation [farming] or not. I do not know much about them but I see them when I go here and there.

So these lands were related to them?

When those lands were taken, there were the people that lead taking the land [process]. And later on they might have their own farm, they said the lands are not related to us [owned by us] so we cannot approach them [U Khin Khyo and U Ni] anymore [to get back land]. We cannot get back our lands even if we go [to meet U Khing Khyo and U Ni]. [I] do not have pasture for cows and buffalos and I had to sell them. And I also had to sell some of my farmlands as they do not have access to water and we cannot work on them anymore.

When they confiscated, how did you respond [react] about the lands now?

In the beginning, there are betel nut trees on the land that I cleared and I did not cut the place where betel nut trees are growing. And they came and fenced the land. [I] tried to stop it by pulling out their fencing [wooden] posts but we could not stop that. And then U Khin Khyo and U Ni, U Ni came and said that those are the lands that they got [from the government] and it is no longer related to [owned by] you [the villagers]. So that they fence [the land] and plant [whatever plants]. And then they came to the land that we grow betel nut trees [on]. They wanted the land not the betel nut trees. They cut those trees and they covered up the betel nut trees and they burned them up and [the betel nut trees] died. Later on it became their land.

They cut it a long time ago?

They cut it on the year that they confiscated in 2005. The leaders [New Mon State Party] took the lands and they distributed [lands to their members]. And since the land became theirs they grow the trees that they want, so they planted rubber trees.

How old were the betel nut trees when they cut them down?

At that time the betel nut trees are only as tall as our waists. And after that the betel nut trees produce fruits and you can cut [to eat or chew them] the fruit because it has been about ten years since 2005 to now, 2015.

So now, how did that land issue come up?

The land owners were not happy with that but they could [do] nothing. We met with our organisation [local organisation] group by group and told them about the story and other detailed information and asked them to help in hope of getting back [our lands]. If we cannot get it then we cannot get it. Now we heard that they are returning the land that [was] confiscated by the country and that is my land and I wish to get it back as our organisation

[local organisation] to help to get back our lands. We go step by step, we just go like that.

Could you tell me when you report the case and when did issue come up?

In 2014 October, Saw Eh Dah's group came in and asked that land owner and he [that land owner] came to meet for a while and [Saw Eh Dah] called him to discuss for the compensation for crops and compensation for land, not for asking them to return the land. They set up an appointment but they [the New Mon State Party] did not come. And again they set up an appointment to meet with Governor Soe Win and Governor Saw Eh Dah [from the KNU] at La Maing sub-township, in Maw Ka Nel village, at the military affairs security office. In their mind they thought they did not come to the appointment organised by Karen [KNU] and when they set up the appointment, it was at the front of the [Tatmadaw] military. They thought that if the KNU is not coming, they will win over the case. They thought that Karen [KNU] dare not go for the appointment but Karen arrived early and they [the New Mon State Party] did not come. We organised the appointment, they did not come. They organised the appointment and they did not come. They never come.

Where is the military affairs security officer?

It is in Maw Ka Nel village.

I would like to know what Sa Ya Hpa stands for?

They said Sa Ya Hpa is [Tatmadaw] military intelligence.

From the government side or the Mon side?

For the government side.

When governor Soe Win and governor Saw Eh Dah went there, did they have time to talk about that issue [land issue]?

No, they did not talk. They [New Mon State Party] did not come. After Governor Soe Win left [they came]. Their appointment is at 9:00 AM. We arrived at the office at 8:30 AM. We arrived earlier [than the appointment time]. [We] were waiting until 10:00 AM and they did not show up yet. And after 10:30 AM, Governor Soe Win left and at 11:00 AM three of their members [or representatives] arrived. They arrived, the people had left and they could not meet.

After that, what was the solution?

After that [we] requested [for] them to come to meet but we could not. And in June, their Mon Division chairperson named Naing Lu Saing Htaw, met in the meeting with Governor Saw Eh Dah. The first time they met, they talked about the issue and said that they will discuss about it and figure it out. And they had an appointment again. They met twice. The second time that they were supposed to meet [us] was on June 26th but they did not show up. But I did not know if Governor Soe Win and Saw Eh Dah got phone contact with him or not. I have not received anything [information] up until now.

Related to the compensation, when they tried for the compensation, what did they say

about it? Are they going to return [the land] or not? Could you tell me about it?

They talked to the division chairperson that they are going to discuss it. It was not about returning the land. It was like this: they plant only trees. The lands belonged to the local civilians. They [Governor Soe Win and Saw Eh Dah] wanted to discuss and figure it out but none of them showed up. Up until now, no one has come.

What did the villagers and village head do when they [the New Mon State Party] first confiscated the land?

At that time, no one could stop them. Elders could not stop [them]. At that time the KNU soldiers cannot travel freely. They report to the [Burma] government Tatmadaw if they see Karen soldiers come, saying that the villagers are associated with Karen soldiers and the [Tatmadaw] soldiers make trouble for the land owners. We have to fear them and they did not want to return our land and we could do nothing. Later on we heard that the country government is returning the [confiscated] lands and the land owner has the right the regain their lands and we ask for help again. But I am following up on my land always in one way and another way. I have dealt with the [land] office for two years. Since 2007, they said that they will return the land and in 2008, I submitted [the case] and followed up [on my land issue].

To which office did you submit it to?

In Mawlamyine big office.

To the land office or which office?

In Mawlamyine division big [main office] office. We submitted the case and followed up on it but it did not work.

Could you tell me the name of the elder [officer] that you submitted the case to? The name of the officer in charge?

That female judge's name? It is only in the paper [cannot remember her name]. If we hire a lawyer, it costs 1,000,000 kyat [\$873.36]⁶⁹ for each time [I go to court]. If the case moves [locations] once for the whole year, [I] have to pay 600,000 kyat [US\$524.01] for that. So altogether 1,600,000 kyat [US\$1397.37] for the whole year. There is a lot of interest [that I have to pay] and I have no money. I only have land, and they took the lands. Now I have to sell all my remaining land to pay the interest [for the lawyer].

You have to hire that lawyer for 1,600,000 kyat and could you tell me, what did that land lawyer do to help you?

That lawyer follows up on the case. I have only one land lawyer and Mon are with a group and they support each other and help each other so I could not win over them. I [and other individual] land owners had to give up on the case and they, the court of law, gave [judges that] the confiscator the verdict that they won the case.

⁶⁹ This conversion estimate for the kyat is based on the 2015 average market rate of 1145 kyat to US \$1.

Could you tell me the name of the lawyer that you hired?

The lawyer's name is Daw A--- from Than Phuy Zayat [town].

What ethnicity?

I think she is a Burmese but I do not know exactly. She follows up on the case. She is the only one and they [Mon] are with group so she could not win.

Where does Daw A--- lives?

She lives in Than Phyu Zayat.

What is the benefit when you follow up on the case like that?

No benefit. There is only loss.

At that time, since 2008, what did KNU help [with land issue]? I mean since 2004 and 2005, the time that they first confiscated.

We asked help but we did not get it [in 2004 and 2005]. We met Tee Dah U Maung Shwe and we told him about the issue and they said the farms' surrounding lands do not have grants and you cannot follow up on it since they have no [land] grant. They just said that. And I said the farms' surrounding lands and the pasture, no one applied for land grants for those lands. They do [land grants for] only the farmland. At that time if everyone applied for the land grant for the pasture land and farms' surrounding land, I would also apply for that. At that time they did not apply for it so I have only the land grant for the farmland. And when I met with U Maung Shwe, I did not [know] who he planned [to meet with]. On the third time in 2014, Saw Ba U [Gyi] - the day I met with him and updated him about the issue - he handed the case to Saw Eh Dah to take care of. Saw Eh Dah also did his best but it is [not] going well yet. He has met with the Mon division chairperson twice but both times did not go well [unsuccessful]. Now I heard from the land's neighbors that the rice people [referring to an unclear group], they do not allow their workers to come to the land [to work] and they themselves also do not come.

So like you said before, the government accuses the local civilians of being associated with KNU if they are against them [the government]. So have they ever done anything bad to the local civilians because of that?

No.

Or did they come and say anything about it?

They did not come but Mon [land confiscators] just reported about it to them. But in Than Phyu Zayat township side, in B--- [village area], they took Karen [civilians'] lands and Karen [civilians] just stopped them and they brought the [Burma/Myanmar] government troops and they had an argument with the land owners. They had an argument and fight and later on it caused many different problems and the Mon left, I don't know if they just gave up doing it or why [they left]. They were just gone. But for the land owners from Than Phyu Zayat township side, the land owners got back their lands and now they are growing plants on their lands. Only our area, L--- sub township and Yay Township, people from here did not get back their

lands. Only [people from] Aung Tha Pyay and Bay La Maing [village area], their lands have not been returned to them yet. In Than Phyu Zayat side, [villagers] get back their lands. For us, we did not get our lands back.

So when you submit like this, did you hear anything about how they are going to compensate [for the lands] with the amount?

No, I have not heard that. They did not say it.

Did you also hear about them saying that they are not going to compensate [for the land]?

They did not say that either but their division chairperson said that they mediate the issue and [will] do it in good way. But I have never met with his farm workers and they did not come [to meet with us]. They set up an appointment: I went there but they did not come and we set up an appointment they did not come.

What trees do they grow in the land?

Rubber trees. They grow only rubber trees. They said they started tapping rubber five years ago but now it is about ten years already so they have been tapping the trees for about four years already. It is like that.

So now they confiscated your land and what are the consequences that follow after the land confiscation?

Many problems. My children are school aged. I could not send them to the government school as I do not have money to support them so I just them to philanthropic [charity] school. I sold some of my lands and pay for the interest for following up on the case. I cannot support them so I send them to philanthropic school. I have two sons. At that time they were still young and we have faced problems since that time [that her land was confiscated]. My daughter, she is in her third year [at college], she came back and asked for money and I did not have money to pay her. I had to borrow from others and had to return the money [to whom she borrowed]. I borrowed the money and returned the money. I send them to school just like that with troubles. If they did not confiscate my land before, I could sell them [the lands] to support my children for the schooling. Now, I have nothing to sell [to support my children]. [I] have to struggle for children's education like this.

[Have] you have been here since you born or [have] you moved here after you married?

My grandparents are from here, my parents are from [here], I am also from here. But my husband lived in Karen State in K--- village. He moved here after we got married.

What does your husband do now for livelihood?

He works on a piece of betel nut plantation that we have. Clears the land and grow plants, just like that. There is no income.

Now, the land issue is up again and what is your concern to that? Could you tell me

that?

I do not worry but sometimes I just think that if I could get fair compensation money, that will be helpful for my children for their schooling. Sometimes I feel bad because we have not got anything and we also have to struggle from difficulties.

You said Daw A--- was the lawyer that you hired?

Yes.

So when Daw A--- went to the court, did you also go with her?

Yes, I did. I went with my sister. She helped us to follow up on the case.

So how did she follow up on the case? And how did the judge decide?

The judge set up the appointment and I brought the lawyer with me and when we got there, the female lawyer said we are the taker,⁷⁰ we said that it is truly our land but there [in the court] they said the land comes from the country government and it is fair and equal.

At that time, how many years did you have to hire her [for]?

I hired her in 2008 and then in 2009. It might be in two years.

So [for] two years?

Yes.

At that time, did you remember the judge's name?

I used to know [the judge's] name. And now if I think I will know [judge name] if I find out [hear it again]. Now I do not remember and cannot remember her name.

Which court and where is it located?

In Mawlamyine division big office.

When you went to the court, could you tell me how the judge came up with [the case]?

What they judged was like I said earlier. They said "*[the land] given [to them Mon] by the country government, we did not take it forcibly*". And they said from their side it is fair. We are the owner [of the land] and it is unfair for us from what they said.

When did they finish the process of giving away the lands [to Mon group]? Which year?

It was done in 2009. The judge's verdict [was] that I lost and I could not follow up on the case. But that female judge made an appointment between the Mon [land] takers and me, on that day I was there in the office. And everyone else came to the office. On that day, she did not come to the office and cancelled coming. And her subordinate, I do not [know his/her]

⁷⁰ KHRG is in the process of following up to clarify the meaning of this point

name. [He/She] said the Mon group went to her house. And she postponed the appointment to another day and I have to go again [to the appointment].

The person who judged this case was that judge?

Yes, that female judge.

Do you remember the month? In which month, in 2009?

I have all the documents in my house. If I review those papers, I will know. I have many documents [from the court].

Do your lands have complete documents?

Yes, [they] do. They have *Pyay Sa* land document as well. They are existing [remaining valud] up until now.

Now, I will ask you some questions that I haven't asked you. How old are you?

I am 58 years old.

Now?

Yes.

What do you do for your livelihood?

Just so so, I have [food to eat] only if my children give me money. I have a daughter and a son who works in Shan state [Thailand]. I have food to eat only if they send me money. 100,000 [kyat] monthly and I eat with that money only. And I support my daughter at school with that money. I send her 100,000 [kyat] monthly.

So now you work?

I do not have work. I have only a small betel nut plantation. Betel nut trees produce fruits only once a year. We could sell only when it produce fruits. 200,000 or 300,000 [kyat].

What is your religion?

Karen/ Buddhist.

What responsibility do you take in the village?

In the village, I am a member of the Woman's Organisation. And for the school, I work on the school committee with five people, as a group. The Woman's Organisation female chairperson moved to Irrawaddy Division to stay with her younger sister as her younger sister had to move according to duty [job]. Currently, in the Woman's Organisation, there is me and another young woman. I take responsibility in the Woman's Organisation.

Could you explain to me about the problems that you encounter, working in the Woman's Organisation?

No problems. I have to go and check [investigate] the case and mediate the issue or case in the village related to the woman. That is [all].

Is there anything that has happened in B--- village related to women?

In Bay--- village, there was a case with a person [woman]. There is also another case that happened with people who came here to work in the plantation.

Has it been long time ago or just recently?

Last year, It was in 2014. There was a case in B--- [village].

What case?

A man and a woman, parents from the boy's [family] side do not agree [for their son to be married yet] as they do not want him to get married early but those two are in love and they make a mistake. She got pregnant and they married and stayed together. And after a month, he does not want to stay together and he divorced her saying that he will pay compensation [divorce settlement]. We have to solve that problem between them. It includes the village elders and administrator, not only us [The Woman's Organisation]. But the case is related to the woman and for us [The Woman's Organisation] we have to check [verify] the case like that.

Where the boy is from?

From L--- [village].

What ethnicity is he?

He is Karen. They both are Karen/ Buddhist. Most people here are Karen/ Buddhist.

Was the girl happy with the solution that you came up with?

Yes, they all were. Me, the administrators, village heads and including the Karen organisations [that dealt with case] as well. We jointly solved the case, they are both happy [with the solution]. And now the two are parted [not together].

So you said you also work on a school committee?

Yes, I do.

Could you tell me a little related to the education?

Work is something that we cannot work [do] alone. It will include school committee members, leaders, villagers and students' parents. If there is anything necessary, the school teachers inform the students' parents and the village heads and tell them about the issue. And the students' parents and the leaders and administrator fulfill the need and do [all the necessary things] like that. The school mistress called me just a while ago to inform me about the need for chairs and tables, how to do this [meet this need] and how we can implement [the plan of getting chairs and tables], she called [a meeting] and discussed about that with the school committee. We just told the school mistress to do it as necessary and

the village head and students' parents will follow your [school misress's] plan. We just told her like that.

So now related to the school, the school is set up by the government or from KNU?

Set up by the government.

Up to what standard [does the school teach]?

Sub-middle school.

How about the number of students?

This year there are 377 students.

How many female students?

The teachers have the students list. I am not a school teacher so I do not have the list.

So up to what standard?

Eighth standard.

How many teachers are there?

There 13 school teachers. There is one local [school teacher].

For the local teacher, the government hires them or the village hire them?

From the [Myanmar] government.

So can the students get things easily [for what they need]?

This is with support from KNU side, UNICEF side, from the government side as well. But [the school is] rotating [continuing] well.

Are there [school age] children [who are not able to go to school]?

The teachers said that all the school age children have to study but some children do not go to school and some children study and quit half way. And there are also some school age children who went to Shan state [the border area of Thailand for work]. And some just do not go to school.

Could you explain to me why they do not study? Or because they are not afford to go to school?

There are some who cannot afford to go to school. [Problems with] money and livelihood. Some children do not have parents and stay with their aunty. But some children stay with their aunty and their aunty sends them to school but they do not want to study. They have different situations. Some [children] have problems and they cannot go to school. But the school teachers call them [to study] but some children do not go to school. Not all children

are going to school.

Is there free school here? Or only schools where you have to pay?

In the previous years, they have to pay for the school registration but this year they do not have to pay for the school registration.

Up to what grade that they do not have to pay [for school registration]?

Up to grade eight. They do not have to pay for this year for primary classes up to middle classes.

What is your opinion of the village social situation and villagers livelihoods?

It is so so. Some are doing well [with their livelihood], some are in the middle and totally [do] not have [money to survive], they have only to eat. Some people eat [have food] only if there is work with day labour. They work in the farm here and there. It is just like that. There are many people so they are different [problems]. Some people who are doing well [in livelihood] they live easy. Just like that.

For those who work in day labour, how much they get for one day. They get 4,000 [kyat] for one day.

What is the main thing people here do, flat land farming or hill farming or plantation farming?

Currently, there is farming and rubber plantations. Only those two things. For those who do not have farms and plantations, they send their children who are working age to Thailand for work. They work in Thailand and they send the money back home from the money that they got from work [in Thailand]. And the parents use the money for home. Like me. I also can eat only when my children send me 100,000 [kyat] monthly. Because I do not have a farm, plantation, income and work.

How many houses are there here?

In Bay L--- [village], there are [censored] houses in the village.

What about the population?

I don't know the exact population number but in A--- [village], there are [censored] houses. I have to tell [the household number] as a total because they go to the same school, same library, same hospital and same office but two different village names. B--- and A--- village. But there are two monasteries. For the village name, B--- is B--- and A--- is A---.

What other religions are there in this village?

There is only Buddhist around here.

Is there anything that you want to say that I did not cover from my questions?

In Karen ethnic [areas], some [Karen] are doing well [for their livelihoods], [but] not very very well. I mean. in order to have better livelihoods and to support the children to go to school,

we need [a] little help. And I want solar energy panels in the village because in B--- village, there is a plan by the government for the hydro power but the money that was delivered by the government did not reach the elders [leaders] hand [was not received]. They came with their own people and did [installed] the hydro power for the electricity but it did not work. The country government knows that our village is included in the [list of villages] that they planned to provide the electricity [to] so that we do not get solar energy panels. We neither got electricity from the government side nor KNU side. The government do not support but we want to get [solar energy panels] for our Karen side [provide by KNU]. Because there are some children who study with little candle light when they come back from school.

How did you know that the money for electricity was supported by the country [Myanmar] government?

If you ask the administrator, they know all about it. We heard that they give money but it did not reach into our hand.

When did you hear about it?

In 2014.

How much money that you heard that they gave?

45,000,000 [kyat].

Did they do anything [for the electricity]?

They did but the hydro power could not produce electricity [as water power is low]. And if it works, it work for only ten houses. But not always, especially in dry season. In dry season, there is not water but in rainy season, [the electricity] is only enough only for ten houses.

So now that hydro power still produce electricity?

Yes.

For how many houses?

For 13 or 14 houses, only for rainy season not in dry season.

Like you said earlier, you did not get solar energy panels, could you tell me why? For what reason?

For the government side, they have already planned about providing electricity so they did not give [electricity].for other village that got it [electricity]. I don't know for Karen side [KNU] why they do not provide [these services in my village].

Do you know the group that came and set up the electricity [in the village]?

Na Ta La [group name].

Do you know the name of the person that led the group?

U Win Gyi.

Where does he live?

In Yangon.

What is his position title?

Company.

What company do you mean?

Na Ta La handed over the responsibility to the company and the company came and did it, like that.

There are many companies and they have their own names. Which company you mean? Do you know the name?

[Interviewee asks someone beside her and he answers 'No'] He said he does not know.

So thank you. So from my questions do you have any recommendation to our organisation?

In Karen ok?

Yes.

All our people are Karen. Buddhist or Christian, they are still Karen. Work jointly so that we are not parted by religion and work for the improvement. We will work together.

So now after the interview, I will take photo. Are you OK with it? I will take your picture and put [submit] complete information. Can you allow me that?

Yes.

What do you want your picture to be? You can tell me. We update the civilian's voice every six months [via newsletter] and we distribute it. Do you just want the information to be published or you want to include your picture as well? [tell me] how, if you do.

Tell them [the reader] that we are the land victims. But for solar energy panels, please help us because we do not have light for the children to study.

So thank you.

Thank you.

Source #89

Log #	15-86-S2
Title / type of report	Situation Update

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Date Received: September 21st 2015

Preface
The report details the situations and events which occurred over a 5 month period in Northern Lu Thaw Township in 5 village tracts. These 5 tracts are Hhay Poo village tract, Naw Yoh Hta village tract, Ler Mu Plaw village tract, Saw Mu Plaw village tract and Kaw Loh Der village tract. Members of the village tracts have talked about the ceasefire but they have not dared to meet with the government yet.

Situation of the civilians and their livelihoods
In these 5 village tracts, the villages have been damaged [by conflict] and the villagers cannot live in their homes. They have to leave their farms and villages, and there is not enough land that is available for cultivation in order for the villagers' [to secure their] livelihoods. People who own farms do not dare to work [on them] as they are near the Tatmadaw [army bases] and the villagers are therefore faced with an inadequate supply of food. If there are 15 houses in the village, only 9 houses have enough food [as an estimate example] and they have to share their food [with other villagers]. Some people have to borrow [food], some sell their livestock, others weave and sell [their products], and some do a little foraging [for food]. The villagers are not engaged in commercial work. There are no [commercial] avenues for income that will benefit the villagers. They only exchange items such as rice that they get from their limited work [on farms] between the people who have [food] and those who need food. There is no particular avenue for helping the civilians. If there is a change in the country [in the political situation] and if the villagers can go back to their homes [where they have been originally displaced from] and work for their livelihood, the civilians can live happily and without worry.

This year, on July 16th 2015, there was heavy rainfall and flooding for 1 week. During this period farms were damaged, paddies were flooded and the excess water damaged 3 village tracts. The village tracts that were flooded are 1. Ler Mu Plaw village tract, [flooding in] 102 places 2. Saw Mu Plaw village tract, [flooding in] 15 places, 3. Kay Pu village tract, [flooding in] 42 places, in total 159 farms were flooded. To survive 2016, the farmers have faced problems relating to rice cultivation, which is their staple diet.

Civilians' emotion
Civilians are facing difficulties because the government [Tatmadaw] attacks villages; the villages are destroyed and the villagers can no longer live in their homes. The Tatmadaw stays in these villages and constructs roads [and camps]. As a result the villagers are separated and cannot live together. The villages that are separated due to the road construction face difficulties related to travelling. Village guards have to accompany people across the road to keep them safe. The Tatmadaw go around in secret and look for the villagers, in order to find [vacant] land. If they [Tatmadaw] see the villagers, they run [away] to avoid being seen by the villagers. They want to persuade the villagers to work with the [Myanmar] government, but the villagers do not want to work with the government. The villagers co-operate together, by increasing the number of village guards in order to protect themselves, and they ask advice from their leaders. They need more advice and more guards in the village in order to protect themselves. In the village guard community, if they [guards] have money, they [make] sacrifices and buy important things [which they need for

security] and share with each other.

Health

In 2015, common diseases and ailments that the civilians have to face include malaria, spleen disease, prolonged coughing, cholera, and dysentery. This year, women's health issues and cases of arthritis are increasing. There are dispensaries [in some villages] but there is not enough medicine [for everyone who requires it] and some villages do not even have a dispensary. Therefore the health conditions of villagers are not good and this affects their livelihood [ability to work]. In some villages, people who have money can buy [medicine] and treat themselves according to their own knowledge, while others have knowledge about herbal medicines and [are able to] heal themselves.

Education

There are a number of difficulties related to the development of education. This year between July 22nd and August 1st, schools [in the area] were closed. Teh Boh Hta primary school and Htee Moo Kee No.2 Government high school were not able to open as there was flooding, difficultly travelling and the students had to cross the river [to reach school]. But there are no disturbances relating to attacks by the Tatmadaw.

The situation of the government army

In the northern area of Lu Thaw Township, the government armies created army camps in a total of 20 places in 5 village tracts.

- (1) Saw Muh Plaw village tract: Paw Khay Koh, Der Kyoo Kyoh, Par Gaw Loh, and Wa Klay Tu.
- (2) Hpla Koh village tract: Hpgha Gaw, Ker Der Kyoh, Hter Ner Kyoh, Kuh Day, and Pla Koh.
- (3) Kaw Lu Der village tract: Kaw Way Kyoh, Moh Loh Day, Ler Say Daw Koh, Plaw Ka Mu Lu, Yay Oo Khoh Ni Koh.
- (4) Ler Mu Plaw village tract: Htaw Mu Pler Mel.
- (5) Hkay Pu village tract: Hsa Law Kyoh, Ta May Hta, Khaw Daw Koh, and Htee Htaw Per.

The government armies that are located in Kaw Lu Der village tract are: *Ka Ma Ya* (Light Infantry Battalion - LIB) #599 which is under *Sa Ka Hka* (Military Operations Command - MOC) #10 commanded by Ta Pa Ka (Southern Command Headquarters) Battalion Permanent Camp.

Ler Muh Plaw village tract: Taw Muh Pleh Mel – Sa Ka Kha MOC #20 Subordinate Kha Ma Ya LIB #594.

Saw Muh Plaw village tract: Sa Ka Kha MOC #10, Subordinate Kha Ma Ya LIB #363 and Kha Ma Ya LIB #364 follow the place where the cars go.

Pla Koh village tract: Kha Ma Ya LIB #365, Sa Ka Kha MOC #10 and Ka Ma Ya LIB #370, Kha Ma Ya LIB #368.

Kay Pu village tract: Sa Ka Kha MOC #20, Ka Ma Ya LIB #584 and LIB #594. Tee Taw Per is Sa Ka Kha MOC #10 and Ka Ma Ya LIB #599.

Kaw Lu Der village tract: Sa Ka Kha MOC #10 and Kha Ma Ya LIB #599.

The Tatmadaw engages in military activities in the area. They are staying and [attempting to] persuade the civilians to cooperate with them [build trust and pacify], and putting food and supplies such as rice, salt, sugar, milk, yellow beans, alcohol, medicine, and petrol on the road for the villagers to use but none of the villagers care about them [unwilling to accept these resources]. After that, they [Tatmadaw] observe the situation of civilians and the land. And sometimes they transport [supplies] and move at night time so that nobody sees what they are carrying. Their awareness of the local situation has improved. When they are travelling, if the villagers see them, they [Tatmadaw] try to run away so that nobody knows them and [they are able] to go to the places where they are ordered to go.

Land mines

In Lu Thaw Township, northern area, the KNU army [KNLA] and the village guards still use land mines in many places. This is because the government armies [Tatmadaw] go through their [KNU] areas by traveling on roads and through the places where they are staying. [Villagers perceive that Tatmadaw travel] in order to observe the livelihoods of the civilians, including the situation of the land. The civilians distrust [the Tatmadaw] and worry as there are not security for them [they do not feel safe]. As a result they place land mines for protection and when they explode, it is like a warning signal [the villagers will hear the sound of the landmine and can know that the Tatmadaw are in the area]. Wherever the land mines are placed [by KNLA and the village guards], the civilians are informed to not go to those places. The landmines are set up in important places such as working places. In each place where the landmines are set, they have been planted in order to protect the civilians' villages and livelihoods.

The villagers really need advice from leaders on how to solve the important case of [problems growing] rice, the most important problem in 2016.

Source #90

Log #	15-87-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Date Received: September 21st 2015

The human rights violations that happened in the period between June 9th and August 15th 2015

Regarding human rights violations we have found that numbers have decreased in 2015.

The place that human right violations have occurred was in Mu T'Raw [Hpapun] District, Bu Tho Township, Meh Pree village tract in A--- village, B--- village, C--- village, D--- village and E--- village. The types of human rights violations were land confiscation and forced labour. The Hpapun District officer and the Hpapun Township administration officer forcibly confiscated the lands of A--- villagers in A--- village, Meh K'law village tract, Bu Tho

Township in order to construct a vehicular road. The BGF [Border Guard Force] also committed abuses such as forcibly asking villagers from C--- village, D--- village, E--- and F--- village to serve as porters and sentries [guards].

The fact [reason] that the perpetrators who committed these human rights violations are continuing [to commit] the abuses is because they do not understand what exactly human rights mean or they thought that no one knows that they are committing the human rights abuses [so they could continue committing them].

The human rights abuses that the BGF, District leaders, Township leaders, and administration officers committed are; the restriction of freedom of movement, forced land confiscation and forced labour. Regarding forced labour it also included the forced recruitment of temporary policemen without [the recruits] consent.

Restriction of freedom of movement

The restriction of the freedom of movement started on July 13th, 2015 in Mu T'Raw District, Bu Tho Township, Meh Pree village tract, D--- village and is still happening now [September 2015]. Starting on April 9th, 2015 around 15 to 20 BGF [Border Guard Force] members came and encamped into D--- village and they [BGF] are still living in the camp. The BGF camp is led by Commander Maung Than who is 40 years old and commands BGF Battalion #1014. He and his subordinate, Commander Maung Chit who summoned the village heads of four villages; C--- village head Saw G--- or Saw H---, 32 years old, D--- village head Saw I---, 48 years old, E--- village head Saw J---, 38 years old and F--- village head Saw K---, 40 years old. He [Commander Maung Than] summoned those village heads once a day and asked them to sign and he also asked them for any special news [information on what was happening] in the community.

Therefore, the four village heads mentioned above have to go to the BGF camp, based in D--- village, every day. As they have to sign and give information; this causes a disturbance on their freedom of movement as they cannot go wherever they want to go. Therefore they feel like they are in internment in the village.

Forcible land confiscation

The land confiscation started on July 14th, 2015 in A--- village, Meh K'law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu T'Raw District. One of the victims of that human rights violation [victim of land confiscation] was Ko L--- 39 years old from A--- village, other victims include the villagers of A---.The perpetrators that committed the abuses are Hpapun District Administration Officer U San Oo who is 51 years old and Hpapun Township Administration Officer U Aung Than Zaw who is 40 years old. The problem started by expanding the vehicular road by 150 yards. A--- village was recognised as an ideal village, therefore the land and houses beside the road were confiscated for [land] use as a road.

In 2015, U San Oo and U Aung Than Zaw, the administration officers of Hpapun District and Township, drew up the village planning and road expansion project of A--- village. They held a meeting in the village monastery's rest-house on July 14th, 2015 and explained about the village planning and vehicular road expansion. They also explained about the confiscation of houses and land along the vehicular road.

In the meeting Ko L---, a villager of A---, questioned the district and township administration officers, "*will there be any support and how can the victims get this support?*" The administrator responded him, "*What can we do about that, we also have only two cows*"

which meant that there was no consideration for compensation of the confiscated lands [because the administration officers did not have money].

Therefore Hway Mone villagers did not dare to submit a complaint to get compensation for the land that was confiscated for the road expansion project. The villagers also do not know how or where to complain for the compensation. So A--- villagers were worrying about the land that they are going to lose.

Forced Labour

Incidents of forced labour reduced in the past year, and we have found that this year it decreased again. The victims of human rights violations [forced labour] are located in C--- village, D--- village, E--- village. Other victims are the village head and villagers of F--- village.

The perpetrators that committed these human rights violations belong to BGF Battalion #1014, and they are Commander Maung Chit's subordinate, whose name is Commander Maung Than and his soldiers. They [BGF Commander Maung Than and his soldiers] do not know that they are committing the human rights abuse and they also do not fully understand what human rights means. Furthermore they thought that nobody knew that they were committing the human rights abuses. That is why they just kept committing the human rights violations.

Commander Maung Than summoned the villagers from the villages on April 9th, 2015 and on that day he asked the villagers to carry water, cut firewood, find vegetables and cook for their camp. And on the day when the soldier travelled he asked villagers to carry their [BGF's] cooking materials [pots and dishes] and ordnance equipment. On the day when they did not have to travel they asked the villager to work as general labourers and when the BGF travelled they asked the villagers to serve as a porter for them.

One villager from D--- village, C--- village, E--- village and F--- village has to go to the BGF camp everyday so there are 4 villagers that go to the BGF camp each day. They [villagers] have to rotate after every three days and those villagers who are not able to come have to hire people [to take their place] at a cost of 5000 kyat per day.

The period that villagers have to rotate going to the BGF camp started in July 9th, 2015 when Commander Maung Than and his soldiers encamped in D--- village and has lasted to date. As no organisations [authorities] are aware that these BGF soldiers are committing the abuses there are no organisations or authorities which stand up for, or help the local community. The local communities also do not know how to find a resolution [for the abuses] and they have suffer whatever action the BGF takes.

As long as the current Myanmar government rules the country, these kinds of human rights violations will still exist.

Forced service in the Special Police

In Hpapun District, Hpapun Township a special police force was formed to guard the voting ballot box for the security of the 2015 election. Due to the arrangement of forming the police, under the supervision of the regional police, Hpapun Township officer Hay Man Aung forcibly demanded at least two people amongst the administration of Hpapun Township to serve in the special police [for the security of the election] on behalf of the head of the township on June 27th 2015.

The demand for villagers to serve as police stretched from Hpapun City until the western part of Hpapun District. This included all village tracts, at least two young people from each village tract were forced to serve and in some village tracts five young people were forcedly demanded [to serve] without them wanting to. The people who were the victims of forced recruitment for the temporary police without their willingness were the local youths of Hpapun District and Township in the area under the control of Myanmar police.

Regional police officer Hay Man Aung from Hpapun District or Township and his soldiers are the perpetrators [those who forcedly demanded people to serve]. They were able to commit the human right abuses due to the habit of Myanmar people to follow orders from their superiors. People also do not understand about the meaning and implication of human rights.

On June 27th, 2015 Hpapun Township's Regional police officer Yeh Hay Man summoned the village tract leaders and demanded [them to provide] at least two temporary policemen from each village tract. This was due to the need to increase the number of police members to guard the ballot boxes used in the 2015 election. The length of time they are required to serve as a member of the temporary police is 3 months and the payment for one month is 150,000 kyat. The temporary police will be assigned one month before the election starts and their duty will finish a month after the election.

The problem does not relate to the formation of the temporary police group but the problem is that many young villagers do not even know that they were included in the list for the temporary police group. By this point we found out that the youth were forcedly recruited as temporary or special police without asking their prior permission, so this may lead to an increasing number of human rights violations in the future. It is because the Myanmar police pressure civil servants to break the rules and commit human right abuses when social problems or any kind of problem occurs.

Source #91

Log #	15-96-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpa-an Township and Thaton Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Date Received: October 12th 2015

Situation Update for three month period from July to September 2015, Hpa-an and Thaton townships

The Situation Update is about:

- 1) Situation of armed groups
- 2) Situation of parties' activities
- 3) Situation of civilians' livelihoods
- 4) Entrance of companies and the creation of conflicts

Situation of armed groups

There are five armed groups in Hpa-an Township which are:

- 1) KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army]
- 2) DKBA [Democratic of Karen Benevolent Army]
- 3) BGF [Tatmadaw Border Guard Force]
- 4) Tatmadaw
- 5) And *Tha Ka Sa Pa*

A member of the KNLA who is in charge of the region said,

“In August [2015], Tatmadaw soldiers from Battalion # (---) under the control of Division #22 which were active in Hpa-an Township, drove through the area controlled by KNLA Company #3 based at Ta Raw Ka Ploh [village] and Company #2 who were based at Meh Leh Hkee [village] who are under Battalion #1. They said that since the KNLA soldiers and leaders were travelling, they [the Tatmadaw] were worried that this will cause problems for their leaders and [army] column. However, the KNLA soldiers did not want to move. The KNLA soldiers moved when the [KNU] leaders went for discussions with the government [regarding the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement]⁷¹ and [KNLA worried that] there would be problems for their [KNU] leaders if fighting occurred [with the Tatmadaw]. As soon as the KNLA soldiers moved, the Tatmadaw engaged in more military activity including sending rations and soldiers.”

Situation of political parties

In Hpa-an Township, there were many [political] parties entering into the region which include the NLD [National League for Democracy] Party, KPP [Karen People’s Party] and USDP [Union Solidarity and Development Party]. There are also many small parties which the villagers do not know the names of. Since the parties entered into the area, this has caused doubt amongst the villagers regarding the decision of who to vote for. The USDP party came and persuaded villagers to vote for them by providing solar panels. However, they did not explain about the process of voting to the villagers, therefore the villagers did not know how to vote. Some villagers want to vote but they do not have identification cards. [Some of] those who have identification did not have their name included in the voting list, so when they went to check their name in the voting list they could not vote. Some villagers in the mountainous area wanted to vote but since there was no voter list there and there are transportation problems, no party went to campaign in their area. Therefore they just were able to listen [and not participate in the election and voting]. When I visited the villagers, most of them want to vote for the NLD party. Some of the civilians said that they were worried that even if the NLD party wins, the [USDP] government will still take control of power.

⁷¹ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see [“Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups,”](#) Reuters, October 15th 2015. Despite the signing of the NCA prompting a positive response from the international community, see [“Myanmar: UN chief welcomes ‘milestone’ signing of ceasefire agreement,”](#) *UN News Centre*, October 15th 2015, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe’s decision to sign has been met with strong opposition from other members of the Karen armed resistance and civil society groups alike, who believe the decision to be undemocratic and the NCA itself to be a superficial agreement that risks undermining a genuine peace process, see [“Without Real Political Roadmap, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Leads Nowhere...,”](#) *Karen News*, September 1st 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG’s analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014.

Situation of villagers' livelihoods

In Hpa-an Township, villagers are mainly engaged in working on farms on the plains and hills. This year between August and September the township suffered from flooding and landslides. Therefore the farmers suffered a lot of damage [to their property and farms]. Although it stopped raining and the water receded, there was a huge problem [for the villagers to grow] rice as there was no paddy seed left [on the fields] and there was no time [to plant the seeds again]. In Hpa-an Township, villagers mostly support [their livelihoods] by working on farms and taping rubber trees. As the price of rubber decreased this year, there will be a huge problem for the villagers' livelihoods.

Entrance of companies and the creation of conflicts

In Thaton Township, starting from 2014, Phyu Min Tun Company lead by U Thein Tun and his business supporters, arrived into the villages of Maw Lay village tract, Thaton Township for a development project. They tried to meet with the regional leader [KNU Township leader] and some village leaders in order to persuade them [leaders] to get [give permission to access] Maw Lay [cliff] for their business [cement factory/stone mining]. They first went to meet with the [KNU] District leader and presented their plans. However, the [KNU] District leader said, *"We cannot promise anything [to you] that is related to the civilians. We have to see what the villagers want; if they agree [with the project], we will agree."* At the same time, they also met with the government administrator and requested the administrator to persuade the villagers to agree with the company's business project [regarding] the cliff. The company bribed the village leader and some village elders so that the villagers would agree with their project. Most of the villagers have not agreed; the few villagers who agreed [with the project] were bribed by the company. On August 26th 2015, in order for the company to get the signatures [permission and support] from the villagers, they [company employees] came and gave money to a village located nearby the cliff. They gave 300,000 kyat per household to a total of 200 houses. When giving the money to the villagers, the [company employees] who previously met with the village leaders threatened the villagers, *"The above leaders had already agreed [with the project]. If you don't agree, what can you do?"* The villagers had doubts and they accepted the money given by the company. Therefore, the villagers signed [the agreement] and smiled for a photo [taken by the company].

Moreover, the villagers said that for the company working together with the regional soldiers [of KNLA], [the villagers] unwillingly signed [their permission]. On September 23rd 2015, the company, some of the KNU's regional leaders, and some villagers had a meeting in Htee Nya Luh [village] monastery, Maw Lay village tract, Thaton Township. The villagers who live in Maw Lay village tract reported that they were against the company's project, including the KNU Township leader and regional soldier's leaders [KNLA]. A grandfather in Maw Lay village said,

"Since our grandparents' time, we have valued this cliff as a cliff with religious importance. Every year, the villagers who live near the cliff go to offer food. Moreover, if the villagers need wood and bamboo to build their houses, they go and get them at the cliff. They also go hunting and get vegetables from the cliff. Therefore, the cliff is [similar to] a big shop for the villagers."

Source #92

Log #	15-103-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Situation Update</p> <p>The road construction [project] has been taking place in Htaw T'Htoo Township [Htantabin], Taw Oo [Toungoo] District from 2014 to 2015. A road was constructed from A--- village to B-- village [by an unknown company] in 2014 and was funded by the Burma/Myanmar government. The road construction destroyed [a lot of] land in A--- village, C--- village and B-- village. In A---, villagers' oak, cardamom and bamboo plantations were destroyed [by the road construction]. The villagers asked for compensation but no compensation was provided. In C---, [the road construction] destroyed villagers' oak plantations, cardamom plantations, durian and mangosteen plantations. The villagers complained and were very upset about this destruction of land. Moreover it [the land destruction] created many problems and conflicts within families and caused many people to quarrel with one another.</p> <p>Livelihood</p> <p>Villagers in D--- village, E--- village, F--- [village], and G--- village located in Htaw T'Htoo Township, Taw OO District face livelihood difficulties because they have to carry rice over a long distance to get from their [working fields] to their village. Villagers from H--- are afraid because they live near Maung Taing Gyi army camp and do not feel secure [to travel around the village] due to constant Tatmadaw patrols.</p> <p>These three villages (G--- village, E--- and F--- village) are all located nearby each other and are all old villages. The villagers who were living in these three villages [fled] to their own plantations [during the conflict]. After the ceasefire was signed, the villagers were able to travel more freely [but] they did not feel confident enough to work on their plantations which are located near the road because they felt insecure as the Tatmadaw remained active [around there]. Regarding military activity, an E--- villager reported that the Tatmadaw are still patrolling [those areas].</p>	

Source #93

Log #	15-105-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on October 17th 2015 in Shin Jaw Jet church, Thandaunggyi Town, Toungoo District. The photo shows 125 representatives from Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District who attended a Peace Forum meeting regarding the signing of the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement]. The meeting was led by Saya Saw Klo Htoo Gyi who is the chair person from Hsa Muh Htaw Social Group. They discussed about what rules both armies have to follow for the villagers to know more about the duties that the armed groups have to protect the civilians. The villagers know more about the rights that they should get now after the NCA has been signed. 2. This photo was taken in Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Toungoo District on October 23rd 2015. It shows the head of Thandaunggyi Township Forest Department, U Zaw Min, 	

from Toungoo District, who sent his followers, which included forest administrator U Bo Thein, to Bu Ya Chay Yin camp in Toungoo Township, Bago Region, on October 19th and 20th 2015 to collect taxation on cardamom plantations. Merchants from Toungoo Township had explained to the tax collectors that they had been exempted from taxation by the Myanmar government and therefore the forest administrator group was not allowed to collect the tax. However, they still collected the tax of 250 kyat (US\$ 0.21) per viss of cardamom from the civilians who were trading cardamom fruits at the intersections in Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Toungoo Township. In previous years, even large amounts of cardamom were taxed at 250 kyat per viss (US\$ 0.21).

3. The photos were taken in B---- village, Taw Pya Gyi village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, on October 29, 2015. The photos are taken by me [KHRG researcher]. The construction of the development [project] was started in December 2014, in between Shwe Nyaung Pin village and Maung Nwe Gyi village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. Hla Thitsa Pan Kha Mining Company conducted the project. Since it was assumed that it is not a qualified [well regulated] construction, they were asked to stop [the process] by the rural development department [from Myanmar government]. KNU's Thandaunggyi Township chairperson Saw Theh Del in Toungoo District had a meeting with the Township committees and discussed not to start the development [project] until 2015, since they are not ready to conduct the development project. However, in September 25th, 2015, the responsible persons in Toungoo District in KNU [controlled area] allowed the development projects to be carried out, Chan Mya Wai Si company took over responsibility for construction. In order for the project to start, they had to get the villagers' consents [which they did not] plus there was no discussion with the villagers [but the Chan Mya Wai Si company re-started the project anyway]. It [development project] is conducted by the company and the regional authorities.
4. The photos were taken in A--- village, Leik Tho Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District on October 21, 2015. In Leik Tho Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, KPP (Karen People Party) Township representative U Gyi Win Myint applied for the road construction [permission] in his constituency area which is from Leik Tho Town to Mya Tha Kon [village]. The government offered the grant of 70,000,000 kyat for seven miles of road construction. The project was carried out by Ayeyarwady Company. As machines [bulldozers] were used for road construction, the villagers' plantations such as cardamom and coffee plantations were destroyed and the villagers also did not receive compensation. When the road was constructed in the upper part of Let Phet In village, the soil spread into the villagers' house's compound. If they construct the road while avoiding the houses, the road will be longer. The company does it [constructs the road] as per their own wishes without having discussion with the villagers.
5. The photos are of the card for the company taken in Bu--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District on October 7, 2015. In Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, Ngwe Sin Phyo Company apply for [responsibility for construction]. The Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Race and Development Affairs [Ministry of Border Affairs] allowed the Ngwe Sin Phyo Company to conduct development in Thandaunggyi Township. Chan Mya Wai Si Company and regional authorities work together in order to implement the development. They discussed with Ngwe Sin Phyo Company and share the road and bridge construction by

constructing on a half by half basis. However they did not get permission from the KNU regarding security issues. The villagers do not know how they have an agreement when they discussed with lower ranked officials. As a result of the road construction, the villagers' land and plantations were destroyed and they did not receive compensation. The company representatives said that they have only money for the construction; they do not have money for compensation.

6. The photos are taken in Shwe Nyaung Pin village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District on October 14, 2015. In Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, the companies entered into the area in a rush and conducted the development [project]. The villagers do not know anything [about the development projects]; machines such as bulldozers have been sent into the area. Some villagers accept the development project while some villagers do not accept it. The reason they do not accept it is because they worried that the company will cooperate with regional authorities and in the future extract the natural resource on their lands. They [companies] also do not pay compensation for lands that have been destroyed by the development project. [In this case] There are more disadvantages compared to advantages.

7. The photos are of the bridge in-between Nan Chein Khwin and Maung Nwe Gyi villages, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. In Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, Hla Thitsa Pan Kha Company took responsibility for road and bridge construction between the two villages on December 2014. The bridge that they have constructed is not for the villagers [not based on the villagers' needs]. They needed to get the villagers' opinion in order to construct roads and bridges. However, they did not get the villagers' consent.

Source #94

Log #	15-105-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Date Received: November 11th 2015

Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi Township, (August to November 2015)

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District between August and November 2015, including education, healthcare, social, religion, livelihoods, development [projects], and military activity.

Education

Land in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District is divided between government controlled areas and [mixed controlled areas]. There are some schools that are already in the mixed controlled areas, and there are some schools being built in the villages and towns controlled by the government which mostly teach students from the [minority] ethnic groups. Although the teachers have been asked to teach Karen language [at school], they have not started

teaching it yet. At school in the past, the [Burmese] national anthem was sung in the morning and the Karen national anthem was sung in the afternoon. However, after 2008, the Karen national anthem was forbidden from being sung in school. In addition, although the government provides essential school materials such as notebooks, pens and textbooks for free, they demand delivery fees [for the school materials] from the students' parents. Depending on the students, the teachers [may] ask for up to 1,500 kyat per student. In addition, the students' parents are asked to pay for the broom, drinking water pots, and annual meeting at school. Since the schools in the mountain area are government schools it is difficult for the government teachers to travel far distances. Every month, they [the teachers] have to collect their salary at the township education officer office, which takes a long time to travel to. In September and October, the residents (and some of the teachers) in the mountain areas work on the cardamom plantation, so they prioritise the harvest of cardamom and close down the school. In KNU [Karen National Union] controlled areas, [the villagers] build self-funded schools and hire teachers to teach. The KNU has only built middle schools and high schools. Since the villagers cannot afford to send their children to study primary education, they have built self-funded schools and hired teachers. The resident villagers report that especially in Internally Displaced Persons areas, although [the villagers] know that education is valuable, their children have no chance to study. The villagers are unable to do anything [regarding their children's education] since there is no rehabilitation [for IDPs]. They are unable to send their children to the town [to study] because they have not earned enough money.

Healthcare

In Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, the most prevalent diseases are malaria and dengue. Dengue was reported in almost every house in the three villages in Kon Taing village tract, Thandaunggyi Township. The village administrator reported in the government monthly meeting that only one or two people are still healthy. The other [unhealthy] family members have to pay nurse assistants to receive medical treatment because healthcare officers are not serving in the villages they were assigned [to work in]. Villagers who live near KNLA army camps also seek medical treatment from KNU healthcare workers, as they provide treatment for free with the medicine that they have available. However, since there is not enough medicine, [the KNU healthcare workers] have reported [their healthcare difficulties] to the Myanmar government village administrator. The village administrator also reported [their healthcare difficulties] at the monthly meeting in the township administration office. Although the Township administrator sends a doctor from Thandaunggyi Township [to the villages], the doctor does not go to the villages since there is problem for the car to travel there. The road which goes to the villages that the doctor has to take for treating the [villagers'] illnesses takes three hours by motorcycle. The road is also rough since it was constructed by the villagers. The doctor said, "*I cannot sacrifice myself,*" and he turned back at the half way [point]. The villagers were upset because they had prepared food for the doctor's arrival but the doctor did not come.

In KNU controlled areas, which are mountain areas, there are not enough KNU healthcare workers or medicines available, so [the villagers] have to treat diseases [by themselves] with herbal medicine. Serious diseases cannot be treated so many have suffered from otherwise preventable deaths. In the past, these villages were IDP villages so they have not been built up well and these villages have had difficulty gathering everyone together in order to send patients to the hospital or clinic in town.

Those who live near the clinic in the town have to pay the fees for the medicine if they go to the hospital for medical treatment. Therefore, they seek medical treatment at the clinic

instead. Those who do not have enough money and do not want to go to the hospital or clinic seek medical treatment from those who have attended healthcare training. Some pregnant women in the town gave birth with traditional midwives instead of formally educated midwives due to financial difficulties. However, if [it is discovered] that they gave birth with traditional midwives, they are summoned by formally educated-midwives from healthcare department; not only are they then fined at least 5,000 kyats but they also were required to swear that they were ashamed [of using a traditional midwife]. If a pregnant women gave birth at the hospital, they would only be taken care of if they bribed responsible formally educated midwives with money or property. If the formally educated midwives are not given money due to financial difficulties, the patients are discharged from the hospital even if they have not fully recovered. Nevertheless, when the party members run election campaigns, they often make use of the healthcare department. On October 24th 2015, five doctors and KPP [Karen People's Party] members provided medical treatment in Thandaunggyi Town for one day and they then went to Leik Tho Town the next day to provide medical treatment to civilians. Since they only went to each town for a day, [many] villagers did not have a chance to be treated because they did not arrive in time. Some people arrived in time in the opening hours for medical treatment but since there were too many people, they had to return without having received treatment. Not enough time was allotted to treat all the villagers who needed medical attention; they only provided medical treatment [in order] to improve their reputation.

Social

There is racial discrimination in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. Maung A---, who lives in Section #4, Thandaung Myo Thit Town, is Muslim. He repairs motorcycles and sells motorcycle parts to earn his living. Thandaung Myo Thit Town elder [leader] U Myo Tint and U Saw Ma Gay have been using various tactics to damage his [Maung A---'s] business. As Maung A---'s shop is near the Union Solidarity and Development Party's [USDP] office, he was asked to close one of his shop apartments in 2015. He was summoned and told that since his shop apartment is close to the USDP office, it would cause problems for their party. Later, Immigration Officer U Myo Tin became involved [in this case] and threateningly summoned and reminded Maung A--- of the Immigration laws; he was threatened and forced to get Form #10. The Toungoo District Immigration [officer] also summoned him.

Religion

Most of the Karen who live in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, are Christian. There are also other Buddhist ethnic groups [in the Township]. Religious leaders [Christian and Buddhist] work together to resolve any [religious problems] that emerge, and jointly celebrate religious festivals.

Livelihood issue

Most of the civilians in Thandaunggyi Township work on plantations to earn their livings. Those who live in mountain areas work on cardamom, betel nut, rubber and durian plantations. Those who live near Thandaung Myo Thit Town also work on rubber plantations. Currently, since the price of rubber is only 600 kyats per pound of rubber, it is very difficult for these civilians to meet their livelihood needs. Additionally, due to abnormal weather there has been a lower yield of fruits this year and rubber plants have not produced as much rubber liquid. As the price of rubber is low in 2015, [rubber owners] have cut down their rubber plantations for firewood and sold them to supplement their livings. The villagers also do casual labour. Those who work as day labourers earn 3,500 kyats per day, so it is very difficult for them to earn enough money to meet their family's livelihood needs. Civilians who live in mountain areas mainly work on cardamom plantations in order to earn their livings.

However, because of the weather, the cardamom plants are dry in hot season and fall [down] during rainy season due to the wind. Also, in some areas the [cardamom] plantations have been destroyed due to development projects. This has also made it increasingly difficult [for these civilians] to meet their education, healthcare and social needs. There are also some villagers who have to confront land problems. The head of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company, U Khin Maung Aye, confiscated villagers' lands; other civilians are jobless [as their lands are confiscated]. The villagers also are being sued.⁷² There are [censored for security] in B--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District; in the past, this village built a self-funded school. In 2015, the government provided 6,000,000 kyats for the school to build a concrete roof with zinc. As the amount of money provided is insufficient, villagers were asked to do forced labour without any pay. Moreover, with regards to the water supply project that was recently initiated, B--- village elder and ecclesiastic Saw C--- said, "*Since it is for the village, the villagers have to do the labour.*" Therefore, as villagers have to do labour almost every day for development [projects], it is difficult for them to provide for their families. The villagers said that as they were unable to provide for their families' needs, they are very worried [for their livelihood].

Development Project

Regional development is very popular in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. [Shortly] before the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]⁷³ was signed, development [project] were pushed forward as much as possible. During the month that the NCA was signed and during the month of the election campaign, the company and Karen People's Party [KPP] parliament member U Saw Christopher cooperated to construct the road in Thandaunggyi Township. In order to implement the project in October [2015] as quickly as possible, they worked together with KNU regional leaders and Township leaders. The development [project] is initiated from above [by leaders] without prior consultation with the villagers. They only told the villagers how to implement their project. When the project was implemented, many of the villagers' plantations were destroyed and no compensation was given. The

⁷² Kaung Myanmar Aung Company (KMAC) or Kaung Myanmar Aung Group of Companies is a Myanmar-owned business group with investments in teak plantations in Toungoo District, and mining, agriculture, shipping, construction and real estate development within Myanmar. Their chairman is Mr Khin Maung Aye. KMAC have been implicated in land confiscation cases in southeast Myanmar which have included threats to villagers who were customary owners of the lands, see "[Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi and Htantabin townships, November 2014 to February 2015](#)," July 2015. Affected villagers held protests against the company in 2015 and early 2016 in order to demand the return of their lands, see "[Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi and Htantabin townships, November 2015 to January 2016](#)," July 2016. For information on a similar case with KMAC in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Division, see "[Presidential adviser sues 13 farmers for trespassing](#)," Myanmar Times, September 2nd, 2013.

⁷³ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see "[Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups](#)," Reuters, October 15th 2015. Despite the signing of the NCA prompting a positive response from the international community, see "[Myanmar: UN chief welcomes 'milestone' signing of ceasefire agreement](#)," *UN News Centre*, October 15th 2015, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe's decision to sign has been met with strong opposition from other members of the Karen armed resistance and civil society groups alike, who believe the decision to be undemocratic and the NCA itself to be a superficial agreement that risks undermining a genuine peace process, see "[Without Real Political Roadmap, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Leads Nowhere...](#)," *Karen News*, September 1st 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see "[Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#)," KHRG, May 2014

villagers report that when they requested compensation, the company said, *"We do not have money for compensation. We can [only] pay for the cost of the road construction. We cannot pay for the compensation. As the government has planned the project, we have to conduct it. The money for compensation is not related to us."* In addition, there are projects to build roads and bridges that have been initiated on which construction has not yet begun. A road is also planned to be constructed from Thandaunggyi Town to D--- [village]. Villagers said that implementing this project will have significant consequences.

Military Activity

Military activity in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District is the same as before. The [Tatmadaw] military training school in Bu Yint Naung Tat Myo [Town], Toungoo District practices shooting artillery once or twice a month. When they practice shooting artillery, they shoot into the villagers' plantations, which not only destroys villagers' plantations but also makes it dangerous [for the villagers] to harvest fruits like cardamom. Regarding the frontline soldiers, some of them wear civilians' clothes and visit public places such as the tea shop in order to keep an eye on civilian activity.

The soldiers of Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #563, under the control of Military Operations Command [MOC] #5, are situated in E--- village to keep an eye on civilian activity as well as the activity of KNLA soldiers. Therefore, it has increased the concern and fear of villagers. In August 2015, KNLA soldiers went to meet with E--- villagers to discuss the signing of the NCA and gather the villagers' opinions. [Before the KNLA arrived into the village], the villagers reported to them that LIB #563 is active on the road that they were going to use. Therefore, the KNLA soldiers have to use the other road. A villager said, *"If the KNLA soldiers did not use the other road, fighting could have broken out."*

After LIB #563's fence was destroyed by villagers' cows, the unknown temporary Battalion commander asked the Maung F--- village head to call all of the cows' owners on October 10th 2015 and told them *"Because your cows have destroyed our Battalion's fence, you must cut down bamboo for us."* On October 19th and 20th 2015, four of the cow owners cut down 15 big bamboos of 18 feet in length and kept them outside of the camp. *"As we were afraid of them, we had to do what they ordered us to do,"* said one of the cow owners.

Tatmadaw soldiers in the town also patrolled along the road every day after the signing of the NCA. Furthermore, rations were sent to the store of Support and Transportation Unit #930, in the frontline army camp, once a month by using at least 15 trucks. Regarding KNLA military activity, during the ceasefire period in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, KNU Township leaders conducted regional development, but some civilians submitted opposition letters [to KNU Township leaders] because they did not approve of [the development projects]. The road was constructed from G--- village to H--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, and caused the villagers' plantations to be destroyed. Therefore, the villagers opposed the project. Furthermore, regarding tax demanded by KNU [KNLA], car drivers argued [with KNLA] on October 27th 2015 that [the tax] would be a concern [financial problem] for car drivers in the future.

Conclusion

The human rights abuses that occurred in Toungoo District are committed by wealthy people and authorities. Therefore, both the Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU need to take care of and protect civilians' rights. The KNU has only just recently signed the NCA. According to this KHRG community member, in order to ensure that civilians' lands [would be protected], they [the KNU] should have protected [the civilians] and solved the civilians'

livelihoods concerns [first]. Then, they should conduct development projects. As the transition period is currently unstable, they [the KNU] should wait and identify the pros and cons [of the current situation] and then act accordingly. Nowadays, rich companies who want to conduct projects mostly approach [request permission from] the Burma/Myanmar government, the KNU and the armies [KNLA and Tatmadaw] who control the project areas. Both governments [Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU] should consider the desires of the civilians before granting permission to the rich companies [to do development projects].

Source #95

Log #	15-106-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
Date Received: November 11th 2015	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These pictures show villagers around Ler Doh (Kyaukkyi) Town and some villagers in rural areas who did not accept the dam construction project and stone mining project. They gathered together to demonstrate against these projects and in the hope that these projects would stop. Some <i>Thara</i>⁷⁴ environment workers from KESAN [Karen Environmental and Social Action Network] explained to the villagers more [about the environment]. The photos were taken on June 5th 2015, in Bp--- village, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District. 	

Source #96

Log #	15-106-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
Land Confiscation	
<p>Land is continuing to be confiscated in Mone Township. According to villagers, LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #351 and IB [Infantry Battalion] #60 have confiscated their [villagers'] lands after they [LIB #351 and IB #60] decided to base their battalions in [Mone Township]. They [villagers] estimated that approximately 20 villagers' lands were confiscated by them [the Tatmadaw]. The exact date of the incident or the exact location of the lands that were confiscated was not recorded. Nevertheless, most villagers agreed that their lands were confiscated in 1992. After consulting with local authorities and submitting complaint letters to the Burma/Myanmar government, some villagers were able to regain their lands [gained permission to work on their own lands]. Some villagers got permission [from the Tatmadaw] to resume work on their lands but they were not able to regain all of the land that was</p>	

⁷⁴ *Thara* (male) or *tharamu* (female) is a Karen term used for any teacher, pastor, or any person to whom one wishes to show respect.

confiscated. Furthermore, eight villagers are unable to work on the 63.79 acres of lands that they own because these lands remain confiscated. The names of the affected villagers and the amount of acres they own are as follows:

1. Saw A--- → 16.66 acres
2. Saw B--- → 11.86 acres
3. Saw C--- → 7.05 acres
4. Saw D--- → 4.09 acres
5. Saw E--- → 8.62 acres
6. Naw F--- → 4.61 acres
7. Saw G--- → 5.31 acres
8. Saw H--- → 5.59 acres

Burma/Myanmar government military leader which is the Battalion Commander of LIB #351 Thet Zaw has strictly prohibited these eight owners from working on their lands. This land was originally confiscated by Bo Mu Kyaw Kyaw, who is also from #351.

In response, they [the affected villagers] gathered together and wrote a letter to the head villagers. Only three of the eight villagers signed the letter, however. To conclude, support from the responsible authorities is urgently required in order to reduce the amount of human rights violations that affect the villagers.

Development Projects and Indigenous Land Rights

After the ceasefire, it was reported that new economic activities – specifically stone and emerald mining – will begin in Hkler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District. [In order to implement these projects] the KNU and the Ya Ta Na Se Kaung Mya Aung Company will be involved. KHRG researchers can also report that coal mining will be conducted in Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Township, I--- area, in northeast Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Town. Villagers have also informed KHRG that they believe that a thousand acres of land in Mone Township will be included in the [coal mining project].

Therefore villagers living in Ler Doh Town and other local villages (J---, K---, L---, M---, and N--- villages) gathered together and held a villagers' prayer service [a non-violent public assembly] on June 5th 2015 in Ler Doh Township.

The villagers said that they are not against the KNU in general and that they are not trying to stop the KNU from taking action. They were only holding a villagers' prayer service in order to not lose indigenous land and villages. They [the villagers who gathered] include Karen Animists, Christians and Buddhists. During the service, villagers stacked stones that they signed and arranged leaves [to symbolically emphasise their indigenous claim to the land]. Villagers also emphasised that these economic [projects] will require 20,700 acres of land and will continue for 30 more years [causing significant disruption to the community in the future].

When KHRG researchers asked the KNU leaders (who requested anonymity) about the situation, they said that mining had become an issue because of a weakness in leadership and a failure to inform villagers [about the project]. They also said that they [the KNU] had been fighting for 60 years to protect the Karen people and that after the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire the KNU has continued to try and protect the villagers, their lands and their natural resources. However, some KNU leaders said that if they were to directly inform the villagers about it [the new economic activities] in front of the Burma/Myanmar government they would

reveal [KNU] plans and objectives [to the Burma/Myanmar government]. Regarding the dam [project], however, KNU authorities said that [the project] will not be implemented at the present time. Research about how much damage it [the mining site] would cause to the [the lands] will need to happen first and will take [a few years] to complete.

Source #97

Log #	15-107-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
Date Received: November 11th 2015	
<p>1. This photo was taken on October 14th 2014 in Aung Blah ground, Thein Tan Zone, Kyaukkyi Town, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District. The photo shows an event attended by more than 4000 villagers of different ethnicities from Mone Township, Kyaukkyi Township and Shwegyin Township. Villagers came together to celebrate the [upcoming] peace process and to welcome the [arriving] peace. They want to show their support to the people who will sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Villagers requested permission for this celebration from the Burma/Myanmar government, who allowed the celebration to take place. The villagers came to together without force, and showed [their desire for] genuine peace for the country.</p>	

Source #98

Log #	15-110-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously published ⁷⁵ in June 2017: http://khrhg.org/2017/06/15-110-s1/mergui-tavoy-situation-update-dawei-township-february-may-2015
Location	Dawei Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
Full Text	
Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Dawei Township (February to May 2015)	
Logging	
<p>In May 2015, Aung Myit Gar conducted logging near A--- village [Dawei Township]. The villagers and the village head told him not to do logging, but it did not work because he said that he has already asked for permission to do logging from both the Burma/Myanmar government and Karen National Union [KNU]. Even though [Aung Myit Gar] said he asked for permission, the villagers could not ask to see the permission letter [because he would not show it to them]. The logging he did took place near A--- village. In response, the villagers marked the trees and tied them with local forest's string as they wanted to maintain their forest. The local people tried to ask for support from other villagers, but there was no one to help them.</p>	

⁷⁵ This report was initially categorized during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

Education

At this time, we saw that the Burma/Myanmar government said they were going to give the local Karen school the right to teach Karen language in class instead of having to teach it during the extra class time. In spite of saying this, we clearly saw that school teachers did not teach Karen language in class. Therefore, some teachers are teaching Karen language in the extra time [before and after school hours]. This practice makes students have to go to school early in the morning to learn Karen language and they also have to learn Karen language after school in the evening. Students stay after class to learn Karen language, which results in them returning home to take a bath and have dinner very late. After dinner, they have to study more with the help of tutors. They do not have much time to relax because they have to follow this time schedule. The Burma/Myanmar government said that teachers have to teach Karen language. Teachers have to give the students the Burmese [curriculum] textbook which is written in Karen language, but they do not have the time to learn Karen language. We saw this situation in the rural area of our [Dawei] Township, which is situated in Mergui-Tavoy District.

Land Confiscation

Maw Lar Thar [one wealthy individual] established a rubber plantation company, through the help and support of the Burma/Myanmar government. It [the company] confiscated land from three villages, which are B--- village, C--- village and D--- village. The leaders from those three villages reported that the employees from this [rubber plantation] company constructed the building and planted a rubber plantation, which took up 2,000 acres of [villagers'] land. The villages' leaders went to meet the company in *Thit Taw Youn* [forest's office], and found out the company actually took 3,000 acres of land for the rubber plantation. The local people did not want them to do that. The villagers were strongly against it, but they [the company] continued to make the land wider and grow the rubber plantation until they took 700 more acres of land. In May 2015, they [the company] started to make their lands bigger and wider because they said they had to make a fence to protect the rubber plantation from fire. The people from these three villages protect their forest because they know that there is the water [in the centre of the forest]. They worried that their water supply will disappear [due to the company destroying their land], so they did not want the company to continue taking their lands. All the people from these three villages use this water, which comes from two rivers. One river is called Lay Law K'Htee and is situated in between D--- village and C--- village. The other river is called Thar Lar Min and is situated in between B--- village and D--- village. U⁷⁶ Su Su did all of these things [confiscation, destruction, rubber planting] because he is a reliable employee [following orders] of Maw Lar Thar [the owner of the rubber plantation company].

Source #99

Log #	15-116-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpa-an Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
Date Received: November 11th 2015	

⁷⁶ U is a Burmese honorific title used before a man's name.

1. The above photo was taken on September 16th 2015, in HHI--- village, We Pyan village tract, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District. The photo shows a Buddhist pagoda (right, white building) which was constructed on a Christian church compound, directly adjacent to the Christian church (left). It was constructed by Sayadaw U Thuzana⁷⁷ and his followers.

Source #100

Log #	15-116-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District, and Hpa-an District
Full Text	
<p>Situation Update from July 29th 2015 to September 15th 2015</p> <p>The human rights violations that I [KHRG researcher] submitted are issues that happened from July 29th to September 15th 2015. The places where the human rights violations occurred are in Myawaddy Town in Hpa-an District, Mel Ka Law and Mel Nyu village tracts in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District, and Wel Pyan village tract in Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District. Among these village tracts, human rights violations occurred in Western Hpapun village - Hpapun Mar Kar Hel Section, Mel Tha Lwut village, Whay Naung village, Ta Khon Tai village, Whay Mhone village, Whay Hsan village, Ngar Eain Su village, and Ku Hsate village – the villages in Ka Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District, and Oo Saw Hta place in Mel Thu village tract, and Wel Pyan village tract in Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District, and Myawaddy Town in Hpa-an District.</p> <p>These incidents particularly involved the government army leaders [Tatmadaw] from Nay Pyi Taw⁷⁸ and the Myaing Gyi Ngu Chief Monk U Thuzana,⁷⁹ aged 60 who has close relations</p>	

⁷⁷ U Thuzana is an influential ethnic Karen Buddhist monk based in Myaing Gyi Ngu who was instrumental in the formation of the DKBA in 1994; see "[Inside the DKBA](#)," KHRG, March 1996. In 1995, KHRG reported that U Thuzana had collaborated with the Tatmadaw, and met with then-Southeastern Commander Major General Maung Hla to obtain weapons and supplies for 4,000 soldiers in his monastery. As a result of the agreement, U Thuzana's headquarters and main monastery in Myaing Gyi Ngu, in northern Hpa-an District, reportedly developed a reputation as a mystical safe haven for villagers avoiding Tatmadaw abuses. See "[Karen Human Rights Group commentary](#)," KHRG, February 1995. More recently monk U Thuzana has been implicated in forced labour demands and of stoking religious conflict by confiscating land to build Buddhist stupas. See "[Hpapun Field Report, January to December 2013](#)," March 2016, and "[Myanmar Religious Officials Decry Buddhist Monk's Pagoda-Building Spree](#)," Radio Free Asia, May 2016.

⁷⁸ Naypyidaw (also spelled Nay Pyi Taw) is the capital city of Burma/Myanmar. In 2005 the military regime moved the capital from Rangoon to a greenfield at its present location, 320 kilometers (200 miles) north of the city. See "[Nay Pyi Taw now less of a ghost town](#)," *Bangkok Post*, December 11th 2013.

⁷⁹ U Thuzana is an influential ethnic Karen Buddhist monk based in Myaing Gyi Ngu who was instrumental in the formation of the DKBA in 1994; see "[Inside the DKBA](#)," KHRG, March 1996. In 1995, KHRG reported that U Thuzana had collaborated with the Tatmadaw, and met with then-Southeastern Commander Major General Maung Hla to obtain weapons and supplies for 4,000 soldiers in his monastery. As a result of the agreement, U Thuzana's headquarters and main monastery in Myaing Gyi Ngu, in northern Hpa-an District, reportedly developed a reputation as a mystical safe haven for villagers avoiding Tatmadaw abuses. See "[Karen Human Rights Group commentary](#)," KHRG, February 1995. More recently monk U Thuzana has been implicated in forced labour

with the Tatmadaw and the government. Also village administrator U Aung Shwe violated human rights. The people who had suffered from these violations are the local civilians. The human rights violations which happened include land confiscation by the Tatmadaw, the prohibition of the rights of local poor people, and the forced construction of [Buddhist] pagodas. Humanitarian aid was issued to flood victims.

Why they committed the human rights violations is because firstly, the [Burma/Myanmar] government staff has a habit of greed. The more they get, the more they want. Secondly, when many kinds of problems or difficulties occur for the civilians, civilians could not stay informed about the [political] situation of the country. Therefore [communities perceived that] they create problems for the civilians to ensure that the civilians do not know or understand the situation of the country. That's why they [Burma/Myanmar government] commit the human rights violations [as perceived by the community].

Land confiscation

In 1992 and 1993, U Than Shwe's government [State Peace and Development Council, 1992-2011]⁸⁰ extended the strength of his [U Than Shwe's] army significantly and increased the number of light battalions. He placed the extended battalions in every place where the Myanmar Government ruled. The battalions have been placed like this and every battalion from U Thein Sein's Government [Union Solidarity and Development Party, 2011-2015]⁸¹ has been confiscating the land from local civilians and until now they have not given back the lands to the owners.

Regarding the civilians' lands that they have confiscated, on June 26th 2014, the Commander of South-Eastern Military Headquarters sent the order letter to the brigades and battalions in his South-Eastern area. The order letter is letter no. 3054/275/Htout 5(A). In the order letter, it stated that amongst the lands that have been confiscated, [the Tatmadaw needed] to take [retain] some lands for the military as required and they would give back the other lands to the land's original owners. However, none of the battalions under the South-Eastern Military Headquarter (especially, Light [Infantry] Battalion #275 lead by Battalion Commander Win Htun, which is based in Myawaddy Town) gave back the lands that they have confiscated to the original owners. According to unconfirmed reports, Lieutenant Colonel Win Htun sold the land which should be given back to the original owners, at the price of 100,000,000 (one hundred million) kyat per acre. Amongst the people whose lands were confiscated, Myawaddy resident U A---'s land was included. Light Infantry Battalion #275, led by Battalion Commander Win Htun, has not given back the lands that they have confiscated to the original owners, and it is obvious that from June 26th, 2015 to date, he [Win Htun] has committed the land confiscation a second time [firstly by taking the land and secondly by not returning it now].

Building the pagoda with force; religious violation

demands and of stoking religious conflict by confiscating land to build Buddhist stupas. See "[Hpapun Field Report, January to December 2013](#)," March 2016, and "[Myanmar Religious Officials Decry Buddhist Monk's Pagoda-Building Spree](#)," Radio Free Asia, May 2016.

⁸⁰ State Peace and Development Council of the military junta ruling Burma/Myanmar at the time. The SPDC was officially dissolved March 30th 2011 by Senior General Than Shwe following the election of a quasi-civilian government in Burma/Myanmar in November 2010.

⁸¹ The Union Solidarity and Development Party (*Pyi Khaing Pyo* in Burmese, *Pa Ka Hpa* in Karen) is the successor of the Union Solidarity and Development Association. It was officially registered as a political party on June 2nd 2010 and is headed by Burmese President Thein Sein. In November 2015, the National League for Democracy (NLD) ousted the USDP in a landslide election, winning a majority of seats in parliament.

Another human rights [issue] is a religious violation that happened on August 21st, 2015 and was related to building a [Buddhist] pagoda on [Christian] church land using force. This happened at Gm--- village, Wel Pyan village tract, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District. The perpetrator is U Thuzana (Monk U Thuzana), aged 60, who is the Region's Head Monk of Myaing Gyi Ngu special region,⁸² and the Chief Monk of Myaing Gyi Ngu's vegetarian gang. The victims who have suffered from U Thuzana's human rights violations are Saw Gn---, aged 47, and church members from Gm--- village church. The reason that Myaing Gyi Ngu Monk U Thuzana build the pagoda with force without permission from the owner, in the seminary school compound, is because he was utilised by the government to create divisions between religions. Because the Buddhist chapel and Christian Church are too close [to the newly built Buddhist pagoda], there is no freedom between each religion and they cannot live freely. The main annoying thing was during the period that they were building the pagoda, they were broadcasting the Pa Htan [Buddhist prayer] sermons loudly with the loudspeakers continuously and it caused a disturbance for the neighbours.

Prohibiting the rights of the local civilians on August 10th, 2015

A human rights violation happened in A--- village. It happened on August 10th, 2015. The place where it happened was A--- village, Mel Ka Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The human rights violation is the prohibition of the rights of the local civilians.

How it happened is the Nay Pyi Taw [Myanmar] government set up a cheap housing project that built houses for poor people with government money, and two houses in each village were ordered to be constructed. But the houses that they built now are not for poor people, they were built in the compound of the village primary school and are for the education workers (teachers). Therefore the poor people who should get the houses did not receive them but the staff who receive a salary get the houses instead. As village tract Administrator U Aung Shwe had given the command that these houses be built for the teachers, U Aung Shwe prohibited and violated the rights of the local poor people [to adequate housing]

Aid for water refugees, July 29th, 2015

In the region there were human rights violation issues, and there was rarely any distribution of humanitarian aid distributed following to natural disasters. Yet this occurred on July 29th, 2015, at Hpapun District, Mel Ka Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun's Mar Kar Hel section, Mel Tha Lwut village, Ka Lar Kai village, Whay Naung village, Ta Khon Tai village, Whay Mhone village, Whay Hsan village, Ngar Eain Su village, Ku Sate village. What happened started from July 29th, 2015, for a week, was that the Yuzalin River flooded and went into the houses which were close with the river. Some houses were washed away and some people had to leave their houses. So, they faced difficulties relating to [immediate access to] food and the NLD (National League for Democracy) went to the flood victims and gave them humanitarian assistance. The Daw Khin Kyi Foundation supports the NLD party members. There were around 100 households which were flooded. There were no people who died or disappeared, but the house of Ko Thein Zaw, aged 41, from Ta Kon Tai village, Mel Ka Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, was washed away into the Yuzalin River. He lost about 1,000,000 kyat. After the flooding on July 29th, 2015, starting from August 11th, 2015, NLD party members started [distributing] humanitarian aid. The group led by NLD party member Ko Myo Nyunt, aged 45, distributed water, rice, clothes and instant noodles, and donated 2,000,000 kyat to the flooded victims. This is a rare act of humanitarian aid in the

⁸² The "special region" refers to a strict religious Buddhist zone with strong prohibitions on consuming alcohol and meat.

region.

Source #101

Log #	15-125-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District

Full Text

Interview Date: November 8th 2015

Naw A---, 50 years old, B--- village, interviewed at the polling station at B--- School, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District.

“No officials from the government came to talk to us about the [2015] election, but candidates from Kayin People Party (KPP) came and told us to maintain Karen culture and language.

They [Myanmar government] chose one person from each village to work at the polling station. Everyone had a chance to vote. At the polling station, they gave us a card with our name. Then they called out our name to vote. First, you have to sign your name [on the paper they had prepared], then they [officials] will give you a paper that includes the candidates’ photos. We can tick a box for which party we want [to vote for].

We believe our leaders who came and spoke about what they will do for development and for their people. For them, we hope they will do their best.

I hung a Karen national flag in front of my house, so one [person] came and offered me money and things if I voted for their party. In my village I saw that National League for Democracy (NLD), Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and National Unity Congress Party (NUCP) all came and told us they would stand and do [what is best] for the people.

No one followed me into the polling station. I felt satisfied and comfortable enough to vote for who I wanted.

I went early this morning [of November 8th 2015], and I didn’t notice any election observers and journalists at the polling station.

Most young people from this village have gone to Thailand for work, and so they did not have a chance to vote.

Two or three groups came and spoke about the election. I went and listened to some groups’ campaign, such as the NLD and USDP.

We found out that our children who were eligible to vote were not on the list. However, we did not say anything to complain about their names not being included on the list.

I was not informed of any information about where the polling station was to be located. It

was only just last night that I discovered it is at the school.

I feel this election is relevant not only to me, but also to everyone in order to support our community leaders.

I did not see any discrimination on the day of the election.

Over 600 people are eligible to vote in this village, but some are not here and are still in Thailand. In total over 400 or 500 people voted and there was not much of a difference between the number of women and men who voted.

I believe and hope that our leaders will act to help their people.

I did not hear about or see any violence taking place because of the election.

They [Immigration Department] said that people who do not have an ID card and are under 18 can't vote. However, I saw them giving a voting card to a villager who did not have an ID card. One month before the election, they came to that villager's house, took her photo and information. But she still has not received the ID card. They also came and took our photo and asked for 2500 kyat (\$2.12 USD)⁸³ for each, but they did not say what the photos were for and they also took our ID cards. They still have not returned them to us yet.

Some political parties came and distributed booklets that included information about their party's history, the names of their candidates and their background.

I expect [the election to bring] peace and will allow our ethnic people to have their rights. Our leaders have been trying hard to achieve these goals, so I believe this election can bring peace for us."

Source #102

Log #	15-125-A5-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
What are the roles of women [in the community]?	
Women are responsible for everything we do from morning until night.	
What do you mean by that?	
Women are very important at home because they have to cook for their families when they wake up in the morning and they also have to keep their house clean. Then, they have to take their children to school. They [women] have to know about finances and know how to plan and spend their family's budget wisely. Women have to learn how to manage personal resources in	

⁸³ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 2015 official average market rate of 1182.10 kyats to US \$1.

order to grow more mature. They also have to develop strategies about how to improve their families. In a village or community, women have a duty to build good relationships among people. Therefore, women are vital within a family because they must work all the time.

Do you think that women can change and have different responsibilities [if they want to]?

We can change.

In what ways can their responsibilities change?

There are many things women could do [in the past] that men were not able to do. There are also several things that men could do [in the past] that women were not able to do. In the past, people thought that women did not need an education if they were planning to marry, but men did [need an education]. Women were once required to stay in the kitchen, but they no longer face that situation. There are numerous women who have become leaders. So, we can change.

Nowadays, what are the challenges that women face?

First, women are not able to access all of their rights. The few rights women have only exist on paper, but we do not have women's rights in Burma. If there is anything we need to do [prioritise], it is women's rights. The second challenge for women is that people undervalue them [because they are women]. For example, in Burma's educational system, women have to get a higher score than the average score for men when they take their exams. If women do not get it [a higher score], they fail and cannot continue pursuing their higher education and cannot, for example, take engineering and medical courses. These are the challenges women face: people underestimate them and they do not have access to equal opportunities.

What important steps need to take place in order to improve the lives of women, especially Karen women?

Women need to learn as much as they can. We have to work together. We should be confident enough to do anything. We are Karen and from the same nation, so we must work together whether we are educated or not. We truly believe that we will be stronger and more successful if we are living in unity.

Do you think that there have been any visible changes for women since the [preliminary] ceasefire in 2012?

Since the 2012 ceasefire, women can now travel freely. They have had more opportunities to speak their opinions and study politics. Also, if they want to travel they no longer have to be fearful like they were before. Moreover, we have also seen that more women are participating in activities and trainings [workshops]. They have had more chances to work with men. These are the changes for women we have witnessed since the [preliminary] ceasefire.

What advantages are there for women since the National Ceasefire Agreement [NCA] in 2015?

Even after the 2012 [preliminary] ceasefire, we were able to gain access to many [more] rights and opportunities [than before]. After the 2015 NCA, we have also gained more rights and opportunities. We can now travel safely wherever we want to go. We know more about our duties to participate and take leading roles in our communities. We have more freedom to work

and express our opinions. We also have the same rights as men. In the past, we were afraid if we had to travel, but now we do not have to feel scared. As a woman, I can now be brave and stand up to make positive changes.

In the 2015 general election, did women have the right to vote?

Of course we had the right to vote.

What about the right to run for office and be voted in as a representative?

We also had the right to run for office and be voted in as a representative in the general election. I think women can do it [run for office] because they have just as much experience and ability to manage and lead people as men. They [women] are just as skilled and trained as men. That is why I think women can be elected as leaders.

Are elected representatives willing to [take a] stand for women?

They [elected representatives] do [stand for women]; this is not just a theory we have. We know for certain that they will take a stand for women. They will protect women's rights as they know who they are [they understand their own responsibilities].

What challenges do women face when they are elected to lead people?

The first challenge women face is that they are female. The second challenge is that they have not received enough education. The third challenge is that their knowledge about political issues is limited because previously they did not have opportunities to study politics.

Before the election, did women [running for office] organise and try to convince people in the villages to vote for them?

Yes, they did.

When they tried to convince people, did they talk about women's rights?

Yes, they did, but not all of them.

What issues did they speak about regarding women's rights?

They spoke about the rights of women. Women's rights are very important. In Burma, we do not actually have women's rights. The rights of women are only written on paper. So they [the authorities] have a responsibility to take actions [to promote women's rights].

Do women currently have the right to be involved in the peace process?

Yes, they have [the right].

How are they able to get involved?

As I told you before, we now have many women who are brave and can handle problems when men are afraid. Therefore, women can also be voted in as representatives and leaders, just like men.

What about healthcare for women? Who takes care of them when they are sick?

For women's health issues, their husbands have the main responsibility to take care of them. Their husbands have to take them to the hospital when they need medicine. Here, we have a clinic running a project called 'Protection of Mothers and Children'. It is not only their husbands who take care of women when they have health problems, but their siblings, uncles and relatives also take care of them.

Can women access medical treatment as well?

It depends on the situation. In some places, we do not have doctors or hospitals, so we cannot get medical treatment. Sometimes, women are too shy to go to a doctor when they have health problems. Some women do not get adequate treatment because they are too afraid to go to the hospital.

Are you saying that the healthcare [situation for women] is good?

No, it is not very good.

Can you explain the differences between the Burmese/Myanmar government's health care system and the KNU [Karen National Union]'s health care system?

The Burmese government's health care system only cares about money. For example, if you go to the hospital when you are sick but are unable to pay they will not give you any medicine or care about your sickness. On the other hand, money is not the first priority in the KNU's health care system. They only care about people's suffering. This is what I have experienced.

How does the lack of healthcare affect women?

In some cases women die because of the [lack of healthcare] even though they should not have to die. For example, if a mother is suffering from disease and the doctor does not come [in time] the mother may pass away because we cannot afford to pay the doctor. She should not have to die [in this situation]. The [lack of healthcare] is also an obstacle for the women who live far away from hospitals or clinics.

How are women affected by the education system in Burma/Myanmar?

In the tenth grade final exam, boys are eligible to apply and further their education at university if their score is over 400 but girls are not eligible unless they score above 500. Both boys and girls are students. They are the same. So why are they different [held to different standards] in school [within the education system]? This is a problem that girls have to face.

Does the number of male students outnumber the amount of female students?

Generally, there are more female students than male students.

Why?

Most of the girls want to continue their studies. They do not want to stop studying until their dreams become reality. Boys are smart and love education, but most boys lose their desire to

study after tenth grade. That is why there are more female [students].

Can you explain the differences between the Burma/Myanmar government's education system and the KNU's education system?

In the Burma/Myanmar government's education system, students need to have private tutors at home if they want to get higher scores. If parents cannot afford to pay [for additional tutoring], their children may not pass their tests. Also, they [students] do not have much time to learn about the world [outside of the classroom] because they must attend private tutoring sessions at home in the evenings. This makes them [students] very tired. Schoolteachers have to work every day, even on Saturday and Sunday, but they earn a high salary nevertheless. Some of the teachers are Christian and they are not able to go to church [because] they are busy [working] over the weekend. If we look at the KNU's education system, there is a school committee responsible for making school rules. Students have to abide by them. Teachers do not teach over the weekend. They also do not make additional time to teach children [after school] as Burmese teachers make extra time for. They volunteer to teach children even though they do not earn a high salary. They are willing to help their students.

How do you think this affects students?

Sometimes we see many students in our area. Money is critical. If students want to continue and further their studies, they have to pay a lot of money. If they can't, they will not be able to study anymore. So there are many students who do not have a job after they finish tenth grade. If students are bright and intelligent, the government should support them to continue their education in Burma/Myanmar, but that is not what happens.

You said previously that students are still attending private tutoring sessions at home. I heard that these have disappeared. Have they [disappeared]?

No, they [students] are still studying at home. This practice continues almost everywhere. Sometimes they [students] even study on Sundays [all weekend].

The Burma/Myanmar government recently ruled that schoolteachers cannot teach privately at home anymore. Is this correct?

Some schoolteachers are still teaching students at home despite the government ruling. That rule is only on paper [not enforced].

What do women do if they are forced to work due to family problems or political issues?

Some husbands think that they are the master of their families and that they can do whatever they want. As a result, they treat their wives like servants. I have not seen any women forced to work due to political issues. However, some women are strong political figures and are eager to be involved [in politics] so they keep working and working even if they sometimes feel that they are pressured to keep working. I do not know, but I think that if someone demands that you do something that you do not want to it would be considered forced labour but I don't see many cases like that in Burma/Myanmar right now.

Do men get injured by landmines more often than women?

Men get injured by landmines more often than women. For every five or six men who step on landmines in a village, there is only one woman [who steps on a landmine].

How do women end up stepping on landmines?

Some women step on it [landmines] when they go and find food in the forest. Some women get injured from landmines because they do not follow the rules that military leaders make [to not access certain areas].

How do women feel after they step on landmines?

Due to injuries from landmines, they [women] lost their legs. Afterwards, they felt self-conscious and lost their confidence because they feel that other people do not care about them [anymore]. So it [their injuries from landmines] weakens them physically and mentally. They are suffering because of this.

If children step on landmines, how do their parents feel?

Parents feel very sad and hurt if their children step on landmines, but they try to help and make their children better [by taking care of them]. Whatever happens to their children, parents are the best people to take care of them.

What challenges do women face when their land is confiscated?

The confiscation of their [women's] land is serious and causes risk. They [women] do not attempt to solve the [land confiscation] problem even if they want to. Furthermore, they do not fully understand the process of land [acquisition] and the land policy. In cases like this, our leaders are responsible to figure out [how to solve the issues relating to] land confiscation.

In this area, are women raped?

No, they are not. I have not heard about this.

For example, if they [women] are raped, do they talk about it in public?

No, they do not talk about it.

Why?

People will look down on them [women] if they talk about it. People will gossip about them if they are raped. People will point their fingers at them. That is why they [women] do not talk about getting raped. Also, their parents will not like them if they are raped.

If women are suffering in those situations, does their family and society help them?

Of course, people help them.

How do people help them [women who were raped]?

If she is unwilling to speak about her experience [of getting raped], her parents will talk to the village head and pastor about their daughter's case. They will discuss how to protect the victim in the future and will also try and form a committee to work with villagers directly to protect other women and try to prevent these kinds of problems [from happening again]. The parents, the

village head and the pastor are responsible for deciding what to do. Currently, I am working with the Thel Lon Centre [rehabilitation centre] that is located in Maw Be Township in Yangon. In the Thel Lon Centre, I saw many women who were raped in many different ways. They are encouraged to stay in the centre. The purpose of this centre is to improve the lives of the victims and help them recover physically and mentally. In addition, they are given vocational training to find a job. Victims who are still studying are sent to school to continue their education. Therefore I want to say something to the women who are suffering from being raped: *'Please do not be shy; try to overcome your shyness. Talk to your neighbours about your case frankly and communicate with others to work out [how to get better] step by step'*.

How do women legally protect themselves against rape and other human rights abuses?

It is against the law and a crime to take revenge on them [the perpetrators] and condemn them for what they have committed. It is also against the law for them [the perpetrators] to try and hide their mistakes. Actually, they [the perpetrators] do not know exactly how women are protected within the law and that they are breaking the law. If they knew [about women's rights], they would not do these things [violate women's rights].

How do women legally protect themselves?

One thing women can do to legally protect themselves is to fight back against the perpetrator, but not by killing [the perpetrator]. They can shout and yell out for help. Moreover, they can call their parents and talk to their village head. If possible, it would be better if each village had one committee for women rights.

Have you ever seen women using the rule of law to protect themselves?

In the past, I did not know about that [women using the law to protect themselves]. Since I started working at the Thel Lon Centre, I began to see some women who have used the rule of law. One of them went to work as a cleaner at other people's houses and some people tried to abuse her. Because she submitted her case to be investigated, she has received compensation. Additionally, the person who tried to abuse her was sent to jail.

So are you saying the rule of law exists?

Yes, it exists.

How are the laws protecting women different between the Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU government?

For the time being, I think the Burmese government is practising their laws. I have already told you previously that women's rights are only written on paper, but if they follow the law, they have to build a network to protect women. They have to build a network step by step, which will take a long time. Our government, the KNU, is not so different. I think both [governments] have the same rights for women.

Are you saying that there is not much difference regarding the laws protecting women for the Burma/Myanmar government and the laws protecting women for the KNU government?

Yes, they are not very different, but only slightly different.

Are women treated differently compared to men?

Yes, they are treated differently.

How?

People treat women differently than men because of their body structure and the way they speak.

Do you think that the influence of women will increase if they are involved in politics? How else [will the influence of women increase]?

I think that [their influence] will get stronger and stronger if they become involved in politics. If they participate in politics they will learn more about the situation across the country [Burma/Myanmar], and as a result female communities will unite together and become bigger [more influential].

Currently, are female communities increasing?

Of course they are increasing.

How [are they increasing]?

As they learn about politics, they become able to express their opinions and feelings. That is why women participate in the communities and their influence is increasing.

What do you think that women want in order to change their lives? How [do they want to change their lives]?

I think that everyone wants to change their lives for the better. We, as women, have to change our attitudes. We have to change from thinking that we cannot do anything in our lives to thinking that we should always be able to do it [change our lives for the better]. This is all.

That is all [that they want]?

Yes.

Do you have any questions?

No.

Thank you.

Source #103

Log #	15-125-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District

Full Text
<p>Date Received: November 17th 2015</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on November 10th 2015, in HHj--- section, Kyaukkyi Town, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District. The photo shows the construction of a Myanmar government Cooperative Department building⁸⁴ on land claimed by the Shwegyin Karen Baptist Association. Construction began on November 5th 2015 led by Myanmar government Kyaukkyi Township administrator U Tin Myo, and Myit Zi Ma Thit Sa Company. The leaders of the church have written complaint letters and opposed the construction, but the Myanmar government officials have not responded to their concerns and the construction has continued. 2. This photo was taken on November 11th 2015, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District. It shows <i>Tharamu Naw L---</i> who was interviewed by a KHRG researcher about her family's Christian missionary land in HHj--- section, Kyaukkyi Township. The missionary land, including one Bible school, was taken over by Tatmadaw in the 1960s and <i>Tharamu Naw L---</i> has been active in writing to the Myanmar government to reclaim the land, without success.

Source #104

Log #	15-132-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: December 8th 2015</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos are the photos of buildings that were built for refugees in Myaing Thar Yar and are located in Waw Raw [Win Yay] Township. There were 100 buildings which have been constructed and people have already stayed in them. The people who come and live in this area are people who had fled from fighting and the people who face serious difficulty for their livelihood. These buildings cost 5,000,000 kyats for one building. These buildings are very beneficial for the people who are facing difficulties for their livelihoods. However, people who are rich and who have a better standard of living said that they cannot live comfortably in these houses because they are a little bit smaller. So, if the houses were bigger, it is good for the people who come and live in these houses. 2. These photos are the photos of Mel Ka Tha and Noh Ta Kaw, areas where buildings have been built for refugees who do not have houses to live in. There are 50 houses that were built in Meh Ka Tha. Now we can see that people have already lived in all of the houses. The households that come and live here are those who did not [previously] have houses. Therefore, this provided-housing is very beneficial for them. These people have been living along the border line which is outside of a refugee camp for many years. 	

⁸⁴ It is likely the researcher was referring to the Ministry of Cooperatives (Myanmar).

3. These are photos of buildings which have been built for refugees [residing] in Lay Ghaw.
4. These photos are of the buildings in Lay Kay Kaw which are built for the refugees. There are a lot of good quality houses. But the houses are not so big. It does not matter for families with only a few family members. But they are quite small for families with many family members.

Source #105

Log #	15-133-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published ⁸⁵ in June 2017: http://khrhg.org/2017/06/15-133-a2-i1/toungoo-interview-htantabin-township-november-2015
Location	Htantabin Township , Toungoo District
Full Text	<p>Toungoo Interview: Htantabin Township (November 2015)</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is Saw A---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I am 46 years old.</p> <p>What is your ethnicity?</p> <p>I am Karen.</p> <p>What is your religion?</p> <p>I am a Christian.</p> <p>Are you married?</p> <p>Yes, I am. I have four children.</p> <p>How old is your eldest child?</p> <p>My eldest child is 12 years old.</p> <p>How old is your youngest child?</p> <p>My youngest child is one year old.</p>

⁸⁵ This report was initially categorized during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

Which village and Township do you live in?

I live in Hton Bo village, Na Ga Mauk village tract, Htantabin Township.

What is your occupation?

I am working on garden land and hill farming.

How many houses are there in your village?

There are [censored] houses in my village.

Do you have a school in your village?

We have a school in Na Ga Mauk village [new village]. We do not have a school anymore in the old village where we lived, because the Tatmadaw moved the village when the Shwe Swan In⁸⁶ Company entered the village. Then, the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company⁸⁷ arrived in the village. Finally, the land in the village was damaged.⁸⁸

What year did Shwe Swan In Company enter your old village?

Asia World [Shwe Swan In] Company⁸⁹ arrived in the village in 2006 or 2007.

Which company arrived in the village in 2006? Shwe Swan In or Asia World?

Shwe Swan In is Asia World. Asia World is Shwe Swan In. They are the same company but different names.

⁸⁶ KHRG reports have implicated Shwe Shan In in human rights abuses against villagers in Toungoo District, see [“Toungoo Field Report: Slow transitions towards real change, January to December 2015,”](#) KHRF, January 2017 and [“Toungoo Interview: Naw A---,”](#) November 2015,” KHRG, November 2015.

⁸⁷ Kaung Myanmar Aung Company (KMAC) or Kaung Myanmar Aung Group of Companies is a Myanmar-owned business group with investments in teak plantations in Toungoo District, and mining, agriculture, shipping, construction and real estate development within Myanmar. Their chairman is Mr Khin Maung Aye. KMAC have been implicated in land confiscation cases in southeast Myanmar which have included threats to villagers who were customary owners of the lands, see [“Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi and Htantabin townships, November 2014 to February 2015,”](#) July 2015. Affected villagers held protests against the company in 2015 and early 2016 in order to demand the return of their lands, see [“Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi and Htantabin townships, November 2015 to January 2016,”](#) July 2016. For information on a similar case with KMAC in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Division, see [“Presidential adviser sues 13 farmers for trespassing,”](#) Myanmar Times, September 2nd, 2013.

⁸⁸ To see other examples of how Kaung Myanmar Aung Company has used confiscated land, please see [Toungoo Interview: Naw A---, November 2015](#) (KHRG, February 2017) and [Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi Township, November 2015 to February 2016,](#) (KHRG, November 2016).

⁸⁹ Asia World is a Burma/Myanmar company with significant investments in the shipping industry, infrastructure, and plantations in Myanmar. Asia World and its additional companies owned by Myanmar national Stephen Law were added to the US Sanctions list in July 2016 due to their historic and continued links to the Burma/Myanmar military regime, see [“US extends sanctions, further targets Asia World,”](#) Myanmar Times, May 17th 2016. In KHRG’s operation area of Toungoo District, Asia World constructed a hydroelectric dam resulting in damage to villagers’ land and the relocation of villagers, see [“Toungoo Interview: Saw H---, April 2011,”](#) KHRG, September 2012. Additionally, in Mergui-Tavoy District, Asia World confiscated villagers’ land for plantations, see [“Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Ler Muh Lah and Ta Naw Tree Townships, January to June 2015,”](#) KHRG, October 2015.

When they [Shwe Swan In Company] came to the village, did you have a school in your village at that time?

Yes, we had a school.

Why did it happen like this [school relocation]? Can you tell me about it in detail?

At first the Shwe Swan In Company made a partnership with the Tatmadaw, because the Tatmadaw had the power at that time. That's why the villagers were removed from the village. They [villagers] were stuck [they did not have a choice] so they had to move to Na Ga Muak village or Kauk Ko Htoo village. Finally, no one remained in the village, so the school was also destroyed. Now they [Shwe Swan In Company] are constructing their buildings in the area of the school.

They destroyed the village. Is that right?

Yes, they destroyed the village. However, we planned to come back and live in the village. When we tried to come back, the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company had arrived in the village. Then, the land was damaged. They confiscated the garden land.

After your village was destroyed, where did you move to?

Some people moved to stay in their relative's houses in other villages, such as Na Ga Mauk village and Kauk Ko Htoo village. Some people moved to stay on new lands or gardens. This is how we moved.

How did you know that the company [Shwe Swan In] would come to the village?

At first, before Shwe Swan In Company arrived at the village, they sent the Electric Power Corporation to the village in 2003. This group monitored the situation of the village, such as land and water. Afterwards, the Shwe Swan In Company came to the village. I did not know what kind of strategy they used [to confiscate the land]. Then the Tatmadaw demanded the villagers to relocate. In the past that was their [Tatmadaw] time and no dog dared to bark [villagers lived in fear]. If the villagers came back to their village from the outside [relocated village] they had to bring a ticket [permission letter] and show the Tatmadaw. They had different kinds of permission letters, such as a one day permission letter and a one week permission letter. Even if a villager wanted to bring rice to support their livelihood, they were just able to bring one week's worth of rice rations. Things happened like this.

Which battalion of the Tatmadaw entered the village?

They are always changing. They rotate every six months. Infantry Battalion⁹⁰ #73, Battalion #26, Battalion #53, Battalion #35 from Tharyarwaddy [Bago Division] and Light Infantry Battalion⁹¹ #20.

⁹⁰ An Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

Are they [battalions] all on the frontline?

Yes.

Do you know the name of the battalion leaders?

We do not know the name of the battalion leaders, we only know the battalion. In the past, how to say, it was difficult to communicate with them [Tatmadaw]. It was also hard for us even if we wanted to meet up with them. If something was wrong with us all they would do was beat and hit us.

After your village was destroyed, did they give you any resettlement land?

Shwe Swan In said they would give 100 acres of land for our resettlement, but they have not given it yet. In Na Ga Mauk village they built the church and they contributed towards the electricity needs of the villagers, but they did not give them land. They just sold one plot of land for between 200,000 kyats [US \$ 145.22]⁹² and 500,000 kyats [US \$ 363.06] [current price], but the villagers could not afford it. How could the villagers survive without land? So the villagers just went back to stay in their farms or gardens. Some people just decided to stay in the village although the company entered their lands. They [Shwe Swan In Company] cut off the electricity in the houses that people did not stay in. They said they would give the land to the villagers in Na Ga Mauk village, but in reality they did not give any land. Now the villagers have to live in the cemetery area of Na Ga Mauk village. The villagers in Hton Bo village are dead people [they feel like they have no hope]. The company makes the villagers stay in the dead people area [cemetery]. How can the villagers feel happy about it?

You mean they [Shwe Swan In Company] promised that they would give the land to the villagers, but in fact they did not carry out their words. Is it right?

Yes. Even the school is very near to the cemetery.

Did the company move the school near to the cemetery, or did the [Na Ga Mauk] villagers discuss with each other and plan to move it near the cemetery?

No, as a village, the villagers in Na Ga Mauk village did not agree with it because they did not want anyone to stay in their lands for free. The company forced Hton Bo villagers to stay in the cemetery area. That's why they had to stay there, despite their wishes. Also, they [villagers] did not have any firewood for cooking, so they went back to stay in their lands again. Some people just stayed in Hton Bo village, in spite of the forced relocation [by the company], because they were stubborn. So the company asked them to pay money [as a bribe]. Some people can stay if they pay. People who could not pay just went to stay in old Hton Bo village.

Do you still have old Hton Bo village?

⁹¹ A Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

⁹² All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 19th May 2017 official market rate of 1,377 kyat to US \$1.

Old Hton Bo village is the place where we rebuild our houses because our home village [Hton Bo] was destroyed. Look at our houses now; they are just built with bamboo. We could not build them with wood because we have to watch how the company acts, whether they will oppress us [destroyed villagers' houses], and also we could not afford to build it with hard wood.

Did the company give you compensation when they confiscated your lands?

As I told you before, at first they tried to threaten us. The compensation looks like, for example, if somebody rapes your daughter, and then says he will marry her. It is like he must marry her even though you do not want to lose your daughter.⁹³ Now the issue is like that. If they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] give 50,000 kyats [US \$ 36.31] to each villager as compensation, we have to take it even though we are not satisfied with it. It is not that we want to take their compensation, but it is because we are afraid of them. They used police officers and soldiers to threaten the villagers into taking their money. It is not because we were afraid to lose our lands, but it was because we were afraid of them. Where can we buy new land with only 50,000 kyats [US \$ 36.31]? We were afraid of their dictatorship [Kaung Myanmar Aung] so we took their money. In fact, we just want our lands back.

How much compensation did they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] give to the villagers for one acre of land?

At that time, they gave 50,000 kyats [US \$ 36.31] for one acre of land. Then they forced the villagers to take it. The villagers would lose their lands whether they took the money or not. They had to take the compensation, although they did not want to, because they were afraid.⁹⁴ What they were afraid of was the dictatorship [of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company]. In fact, they want their lands back. They did not want to sell their lands. How do I say? Look at my parents-in-law. They were determined to stay in the village, although they have been forced to move, but they did not take the compensation that the company offered because they had grown a lot of teak trees. The company did not negotiate with them about the compensation. Also, the company did not make them satisfied. Now there are many teak trees that have been left.

So based on what you have mentioned above, the villagers did not want to take their compensation. Is that right?

Yes, the company intimidated the villagers to take the compensation with their power.

Villager #2: My father has not taken their money until now.

Even though they [villagers] did not take the compensation, the company [Kaung Myanmar Aung] continued to expand their plantation. Is that right?

Yes, they expanded their plantation on the villagers' land whether the villagers agreed to it or not.

⁹³ Although a problematic comparison, here the villager is voicing his perspective on the compensation issue.

⁹⁴ The interviewee demonstrates that this development project was carried out without free, prior and informed consent. For more information on the problems of land confiscation and consent, please see "[With only our voices, what can we do?: Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar](#)," KHRG, June 2015.

So they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] came to give the compensation to the villagers after they implemented their projects [plantation]?

Yes.

Which company came to give the compensation to the villagers?

A chairperson of Co-operative Bank LTD,⁹⁵ U Khin Maung Aye and his group [employees] from the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company destroyed the village, and afterwards they gave compensation to the villagers. The villagers had to take the compensation despite their wishes. Local villagers from Hton Bo village, Na Ga Mauk village, Yay Owe Sin village and Kyat Kyauk village, did not want to take their compensation, but they took it because they were afraid of the company. The company forced the villagers [who did not take the compensation] to leave the village. If the villagers did not leave the village, the company called the police or village administrator for help, in order to teach the villagers a lesson. They pressurised and threatened the villagers to leave in different ways. Some people took the compensation because they were afraid of the company. Some people were stubborn and did not leave. The company forced them to leave their homes, but they moved to another place in the village. It happened like this for some people. Recently, many villagers have been sued for trespassing on the land.

Villager #2: For example, a father and son have to build their hut every year. If the company forces them to leave their place, they move to another place. These are their lands but they do not have the right to stay. If the [Kaung Myanmar Aung] company comes to their place they move to another place again. They move from place to place if the company arrives. So how can they make money [business]? How can they build their house with wood? They can only build their house with bamboo.

Villager #3: You will know it [the living situation] if you go there.

Villager #4: Because the company drives the villagers out if they do not take the compensation. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] only have the right to do their projects in a limited area here. Now they know that they could grow teak, so they want to expand their plantation. So they try to make the villagers move out of their lands. How can I say? They want to have the entire plantation in the village.

So you mean the company wants to have the opportunity to expand their plantation, beyond what the government has given them?

Yes. That is right. The government gave them permission to make a plantation. The permission number is OSS #1. There are 2,400 acres of empty land that they could have used for the plantation, but we did not have any empty land in our area because these lands belonged to the peasants. The peasants had farms or gardens on these lands. However, the company abused the right [the government gave them] to make the plantation. They were given the permission to make a plantation of 2,400 acres, but perhaps they made a plantation of 4,000 acres. The peasants did not want all of their lands to be destroyed. When the company arrived in 2013 they destroyed the lands that the villagers possessed, which was mostly in Hton Bo Village. Now they have sued the villagers three times.

⁹⁵ U Khin Maung Aye is the chairman of both Kaung Myanmar Aung Company and the Co-Operative Bank LTD.

Villager #2: These lands were ours in the past, before the British people went back to their country. We, the Karen, helped the British people to fight the Japanese coloniser. So the Karen people were asked what they wanted. The British would give whatever we, the Karen, wanted. We are Karen. We like to work on farms. As you know, in the past, most of the Karen people on the mountain used these lands for hill plantations, to support their livelihoods. There is a traditional belief that short-term plantations cause the paddy to grow badly, and more recently more wild grass has been appearing around the paddy.

Villager #3: How to say, they now have to farm from place to place. If they can do farming in a place, they do. If they can do gardening in a place, they do. If they can produce seasonal fruits, they do. To grow seasonal fruits on the farm we have to use fertiliser, but the local residents cannot afford to use fertiliser. So they have to change the place where they do their plantation every three years or every four years. Some people make short term plantations but some people make long term plantations. Even one person could do three different kinds of plantations. That is how they are making their farms or plantations.

Did the company help you to build the school after they confiscated the land?

Don't talk about the school. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] did not even build a water pot for the villagers.

They confiscated your lands and you lost your lands, but did you get any benefit from them?

No, we did not get any advantage, we only got disadvantage. We just had a problem with our families' livelihoods. If possible, they want to put us in jail.

Villager #2: Now they sue us.

How many times did Kaung Myanmar Aung Company sue the villagers?

They sued the villagers so many times. As for me, they have sued me three times. On one occasion they sued some of the girls. The company sued five villagers at a time, then six villagers on another occasion and then also another 12 villagers. Once, they only sued one villager. It is only me who has been sued three times.

I did not understand clearly how the company sued you. Let me ask you. Why did the company sue the villagers separately?

Yes. They sued different villagers separately. Sometimes five people. Sometimes six people. Now they sue 12 people.

When they sued you, you responded that you wanted to get back your land. Did you remain in your homes when you responded?

Yes. We responded that we wanted to get back our ancestral lands, but they forced us to leave our homes. When we did not leave, they called the Na Ga Mauk village tract administrator to make us leave, but we did not leave. Then they called the police for help. We have not left yet. So now they are trying to sue us like this.

When they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] sued the villagers separately, did they want to threaten the villagers, or did they want to make people afraid so they [villagers] would not do it [remain in their lands] again?

Sometimes they threatened people. Sometimes they pressured people. They thought that if they sued these people, then other people would not dare to do anything. It is like they can do whatever they want to do. They can destroy whatever they want to. Now they sue the people who are clever. If they can control those people, they think they can do anything to other people. It is like the villagers are just water in their hands.

Villager #2: Some of the rubber plantations were burned, so they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] called the police and the police came to take a picture, and then they went back. There was no answer for that. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] burned [the villager's plantations] and then they called the police, but nothing happened.

Villager #3: Regarding these kinds of cases, nobody solves our problems. For example, if our garden or farms are destroyed we inform the police to try and find out who did it, but the police do not help us. When we inform the [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] company about that, they just inform the police again. They said that the villagers did not have a chance to report it to the police.

I want to ask a question. When you reported it [land issue] to the police, did you pay any money to the police?

How can we afford to pay money to the [Myanmar] police? Here we have to struggle with our livelihoods. We just report it to the police in person, but the police do not come and solve our problems.

You told me before that you reported it to the police in person, so did you write a letter to the police when you reported it?

We reported it to the police both in person and by letter.

Did they take any legal action for what you reported?

No, they did not. They did not do anything for the peasants.

What about the company? What did the police do for them?

I do not know exactly. The [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] company pays money to the police for their help. They wanted us to sign an agreement letter but we did not want to sign it. So they called the police and immediately the police arrived and arrested the peasants.

I do not understand clearly. Let me ask you a question. The police asked you to sign the agreement letter. So did you have to sign it at the police station or at your home?

We have to sign it at the police station. They sent a letter informing us to go to the police station.

What would happen if you had not gone to the police station?

If so, they would have come to us. Then they would have taken a picture of us and recorded the information about us. They then would have arrested us. The peasants were afraid of them so they went to sign the agreement letter.

What kind of agreement letter was that?

The agreement letter says that the villagers cannot go and stay within their lands. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] got permission for the plantation. If the villagers stay on their lands it becomes a problem for them. So they set that rule, and they arrest the villagers to make them sign the agreement letter and not stay on their lands.⁹⁶

Did they [police officers] report this agreement letter to their leaders?

We do not know whether they [police officers] reported it to their leaders or not, but we have to go to the police station so many times, back and forth. Sometimes we were sued and we had to go to the court at the Township level. Sometimes the Township administrator called us to come and meet him. Nobody helped us. We just confront the difficulties on our own.

Did you have to pay money when you signed the agreement letter?

No, we did not need to pay. We just signed.

Did you pay money to the police to help you, so you would be able to stay on your lands and in your village?

We did not pay like that. We also do not have a plan to pay like that. We could not pay them even if we had the money. If they try to arrest us here we move to stay over there. If they go to arrest us over there we move to another place, because we have very wide lands where we can move from place to place. For example, only one villager owns one hundred acres of land. This is how we move if the police come to arrest us. Some people lost all of their lands. As for me, some of my family lost some plots of land. We do not know when we will lose all of our land.

I was a bit confused. Let me ask you. Now, they cannot confiscate all of your lands so you can move from place to place, but if they could confiscate all of your lands one day, what would you do?

If they could confiscate all of our lands, we would not have any more land to live on, but we try to report this case to the relevant people who have the authority to let us stay on our lands. We are also still trying to find people who are able to solve our problems. We are still asking people who want to help us to get back our lands.

I do not understand clearly. I want to ask one more question. How many times did you report it to the relevant responsible people, in order to get back your lands?

I have reported it to the relevant [Myanmar] government department seven times, so that

⁹⁶ According to other sources the police charged seven farmers under Section 26 and 27 of the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law. Please see, "[Taungoo farmers deny rumours of negotiations for seized land](#)," Eleven Myanmar, July 2015 and "[Taungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi Township, November 2015 to February 2016](#)," KHRG, November 2016.

they might solve our problems, take an action and give us the rights to get back our lands, but they have not done anything for us. Besides, we were sued when we tried to get back our lands. I have reported it to them [the Burma/Myanmar government], in order to hold a demonstration for the first time, but they said it is time for an election and they did not give us the rights to hold a demonstration. After the 2015 election, I, again, reported it to police station #2 for a second time on November 18th 2015, in order to get the rights to hold a demonstration, and we planned to hold a demonstration on December 3rd 2015. The police officer in charge of police station #2⁹⁷ told me *“However, bring back your report letter, I promise that you can demonstrate on December 3rd 2015 for sure. So you have to report it again on November 27th 2015. If you could negotiate with Khin Maung Aye, from Kaung Myanmar Aung Company, between November 18th 2015 and November 27th 2015, then you will not need to hold a demonstration”*. Today is November 22nd 2015 and we have an appointment to meet the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company owner, Khin Maung Aye, at 12 pm today, but we have not gathered our people who want to be involved and help us. That is why I told the police officer who is in charge of police station #2 that we would not go to meet with Khin Maung Aye, because we were not ready yet. Then, he [police officer] told me on the phone *“So ask me whatever you want to know if you go to report it on November 27th 2015, but I will make sure that you can hold a demonstration on December 3rd 2015”*. The police just promised me it verbally.

So did you get any legal letter from the police that you can hold a demonstration on December 3rd 2015?

They did not give us any legal letter, but they verbally promised us that we can hold a demonstration on December 3rd 2015, but I am going to report it to them on November 27th 2015. They just promised verbally, but they did not give us any legal permission letter for holding a demonstration. I do not know what they will tell me if I go to report it to them on November 27th 2015.

Who gave you permission to hold a demonstration?

The police officer in charge of police station #2 has allowed us to hold a demonstration, but he promised it to us verbally. Yet, he said if we could negotiate with Khin Maung Aye we would not need to hold a demonstration.

What is the name of the police officer in charge of police station #2?

I do not know it but I have his phone number.

It is not clear for me. Let me ask you. When you had an appointment with Khin Maung Aye, did you get an appointment letter, like an invitation letter?

No, the police did not give us that. The police told us verbally that we had to go to meet with Khin Maung Aye. Khin Maung Aye, himself, did not directly tell us anything.

So Khin Maung Aye did not say that he would like to meet you. Is that right?

⁹⁷ In another KHRG interview, a villager from Toungoo District, detailed how he was sued by the Chief of Police, Aye Zaw from No. 2 Police Station, because he had organised a protest against land confiscation by Kaung Myanmar Aung Company. Please see, [“Toungoo Interview: Saw A---,”](#) January 2016, February 2017.

Yes, he did not say anything. The police just called me on the phone and told me to meet with him.

Let me ask you. Regarding the land issue, I think there is a Land Management Department in the government, which you could negotiate with to solve the land issue. Is that right?

Yes, maybe.

Is there an organisation for solving the land issue? Did they call you to involve you?

No, they did not call us.

Did they call you to go to the police station?

Yes, I have been called to go to police station many times. The Land Records Department also called me to meet with them. They asked me *“Do you work on your lands properly? If so, I will go and check your lands”*. But they never do anything [solve the problem] for us. The Toungoo Township General Administrator called me to meet with him too. We went to meet him but nothing changed. We could only express what we suffered. No problem was solved.

I did not understand one thing. Let me ask you. The police have a responsibility to solve the case [problem]. Is that right? How can I say? Does Khin Maung Aye or the Land Records Department have a duty to solve the problem regarding the land issue? Or do the police have to solve it?

I do not know about that. I have no idea what they have the responsibility for. If I go to the general administration office, the police officer knows it. If I go to the police station, people from Land Records Department know it. They all know each other and they all know about this land issue.

Who is Khin Maung Aye?

Some people said he is the adviser of the President, Then Sein, but we do not know exactly. Some people said he is the face of Toungoo town because he is rich. He owns the hotel near to KanDawGyi Lake [in Yangon].

I want to know something. If you are going to demonstrate against the company on December 3rd 2015, how many people in Toungoo Town will be there?

I guess about 200 people will go to demonstrate, but some people will not able to go there because of different reasons, such as family issues. However, there are a lot of peasants who suffered from land confiscation in the four villages [who will attend].

I want to know more. What is the best way, or solution, that you have, in order to be able to get back your lands?

How do we say? We are trying to look for people who want to help us, and land organisations that are able to help us. We can say that we have found them. He [one helper] is U C---, from a social group. However, he was also sued.

Where does he come from?

His address is in Yangon. You can find it in the letter that you took and it includes his phone number. He was also sued for helping us. We also reported the case [land conflict] to all relevant responsible people from the KNU, in order to get help from them.

If you are not successful this time, what about next time?

We have plans to demonstrate against the company. We will ask for our lands until we get them back. We will fight for our lands until we die because our families are going to die of hunger if we do not have these lands, so we must get our lands back.

Have you heard about *Lal Tha Mar Tun Tone Taik Pwe* [an activity where farmers fence in their lands]?

We have heard about it.

So how does it relate to you?

I do not know if it is from our organisation or outside [organisation]. We did it outside too but we do not remember the incident date. We need to look at it in our books.

When did you do that [activity where farmers fence in their lands]?

We did it on July 9th.

Where did you do that?

We started to do that in Hton Bo village.

How many people were there?

More than 200 people [peasants]

What is *Lal Tha Mar Tun Tone Taik Pwe*? Did you demonstrate against the company?

It means we tried to get back our lands. It is when we made a fence around our lands.

When you made a fence, did anyone give you trouble?

Yes. The police came and they took us to the police station. Then, they asked us to sign an agreement letter not do it again. It [agreement letter] continues until now.

Who is in charge of the police station near Hton Bo village?

He is Ye Ko Ko.

How did they [the police] pressure you?

They pressured us not to do this again. Then they asked us to sign an agreement letter.

What kind of agreement letter is that?

I do not know exactly about it because I did not read the information in the agreement letter. It is similar to a section of an Act [of government], such as section #26, #27 and #28. We could not make a fence on our land. It is as if they came to threaten us, stating that we could be arrested and that we may have to go to jail. Then, they asked questions like who led it and who was involved. Those kinds of things [the agreement letter] are like that.

Who was asking those things?

The police.

Did they [the police] do something else to you after they asked you to sign the agreement letter?

After they asked us to sign the agreement letter, we had to sign another agreement letter. For me, I had to sign twice. Then, we took those agreement letters and we reported it to the court. On October 14th 2015 we had to go to the court for an appointment.

So you did *Lal Tha Mar Tun Tone Taik Pwe* on July 9th, and after a few days you were sued. Is that right?

Yes.

Who was the complainant in the court?

U Thoug Kyout was the complainant and he reported the case to the court. He is the general manager of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company, owned by U Khin Maung Aye. Then, he [U Thoug Kyout] tried to sue the villagers.

You move from place to place because of land confiscation, so did anyone become unemployed?

Some villagers became jobless. Some villagers still work on the farms that they saved because the company could not confiscate all of their lands.

Villager #1: Finally, how to say, they even lost their buffalo house and their cow house.

Villager #2: If their lands were destroyed, they lost not only their buffalo house and cow house but also their homes. If the villagers go to stay on their confiscated lands, the company always tries to sue them and make them go to the police station.

Even the animal houses were destroyed?

Yes. They set up many sign posts. It says "*Buffalo and cattle cannot pass the grassland [grazing ground]. Do not fish and hunt animals. Do not burn anything here*". The other sign post says "*Do not trespass on the land and do not live in the houses, if you live and trespass you will be arrested because of the existing law*".

Did women also face these problems?

Yes. They also suffered.

As you mentioned above, was that Daw⁹⁸ H--- who suffered like that?

Yes, it was Daw H---.

Was she also sued?

Yes, in Hton Bo village. Actually, she was not sued. U I---'s wife. Who is that? Tell me her name. I do not know. The time the company sued five villagers all together for the first time.⁹⁹

Villager #2: J---, K--- and L---. Yes. Three of them are women.

Only three women?

No, four women. In Hton Bo village five people were sued for the first time. Four of them were women and one man. Now many people are sued for the second time. There are 12 people, including myself and my son.

Ok thank you for telling me about it. So you can ask me whatever you want to ask. Maybe I did not ask you things that you want to share. Now you can ask me.

Yes, we have. Before British people went back to their country, they shared the different lands out amongst the villagers in Hton Bo village.

Villager #2: We kept our lands and we cleared the bushes in that land for three years, because we wanted to use that land for our agriculture, but the company came and they confiscated our lands.

Villager #3: Actually, we have a temporary hill plantation. In our area we have farms, gardens and hill farms. In some areas we raise seasonable fruits.

Villager #4: That is why we did not make a rubber plantation until now, as we have continued the British style of farming.

Villager #5: There are many betel trees and different kinds of trees in these lands. We do not have empty lands. Everywhere we have permanent gardens and seasonable fruits.

Villager #6: Some villagers have land titles. Some people work on the land that they inherited from their grandparents.

OK thank you so much for sharing. Can I share this information with my organisation, KHRG?

Yes, we permit you to use it.

⁹⁸ Daw is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

⁹⁹ At this point of the answer the interviewee appears to be attempting to remember who exactly was sued by talking to himself.

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Source #106

Log #	16-1-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: January 6th 2016</p> <p>1. These 3 photos are taken on December 15th 2015. A villager found the landmine in the corn field between Htee Ka Pler village and Noh Hpa Doh village on the border with Thailand. Htee Ka Pler is a village where there are many armed groups which are the Tatmadaw, DKBA, and KNU [KNLA]. They set the gates [check points] there to take tax on the corn, green beans and sesame that the villagers bring and sell in Thailand. The village is situated on the [Thai/Myanmar] border in Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District.</p>	

Source #107

Log #	16-4-A3-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in August 2016: http://khrq.org/2016/08/hidden-strengths-hidden-struggles-women%E2%80%99s-testimonies-southeast-myanmar
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Good morning</p> <p>Good morning.</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is Naw N---.</p> <p>Where do you live?</p> <p>I live in G--- village.</p> <p>In which township is G--- village located?</p> <p>It is located in Kyainseikgyi Township.</p> <p>Do you have family?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>How many children do you have?</p>	

I have three children.

How many female and male children?

Two female children and one male child.

What do you do for a living?

I work on a hill farm and a plain farm.

Is there any Tatmadaw army camp based near your village in Kyainseikgyi Township?

Yes. They usually come to our village.

As you are a woman, how do you feel when they come to your village?

When they come to our village we are afraid of them and we do not even dare to let our female children go around in the village. We asked our female children to hide indoors.

Why do you not want them to be seen when the Tatmadaw soldiers are coming into the village? Do you have any reason for this?

If the Tatmadaw soldiers see pretty girls they name the parents [of those girls] “parents-in-law,” and some of them are very sleazy.

So you do not want them to call you “parent-in-law?”

Yes [correct].

Do you feel safe when the Tatmadaw are based near your village?

No, we do not feel safe and they sometimes go around in the village asking for chickens and pigs. We do not feel safe.

So it is causing problems?

Yes.

How do you think that women’s lives have changed since the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire?¹⁰⁰

Traders can travel more freely, but they still have to pay tax [at check points].

¹⁰⁰ The KHRG community member is referring to the preliminary ceasefire agreement that was signed on January 12th 2012 between the KNU and the Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014. On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see [“Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups,”](#) Reuters, October 15th 2015.

Do they have to pay [tax to] the Tatmadaw?

Yes, they pay the Tatmadaw military. They demand 2,000 kyats [at each check point].

Do they demand tax because their leaders order them to, or do they do it for their own benefit?

I do not know about that, because I have never fully investigated it.

Seeing as you live in Kyainseikgyi [Township], and you said that the Tatmadaw are based near your village, and it is causing problems for you, is there anything you want to say or request [in order to improve your situation]? What opportunities do you need in order to [increase] participation [for example in various organisations]?

We need many things. We cannot even list all that we need.

Can you give me one example?

We need safety. We also need social organisations to provide local development [and trainings] to the villagers in order for us to be safe.

The ceasefire is already signed but the Tatmadaw have not withdrawn from any of their army camps. Does this cause any concerns for the future?

Yes, we are concerned about it. They should relocate all army camps and if it is possible, there should be no [Tatmadaw] military [presence in Karen National Union (KNU) areas]. They should relocate and build their camps in the [Myanmar government-controlled areas]. We want the Tatmadaw to relocate all their army camps from Karen State.

Why do you want them to relocate? How is it causing problems and what are your concerns?

They are male and they also carry weapons. We are afraid of them when we travel because we are women. As you know, they killed and raped villagers as they wanted in the past.

Is it still happening these days?

We do not know because we are not able to see their intentions. People say that they have seven fish hooks in their hearts.¹⁰¹

Do you need any suggestions or support in order for women to participate more?

As we are women, we need [high] education in order to compare our shoulders [rise to the same level] with men and to be able to work with different organisations because many

¹⁰¹ To have seven fish hooks in one's heart refers to a Karen saying which means that one is evil.

NGOs [non-governmental organisations] are present in Myanmar now but I do not know their names. And also, in my village there is no high school, they only teach up to Standard¹⁰² 4 in the school.

So you feel like there is a lack of women's involvement these days?

Some women are able to work [in qualified sectors such as education, healthcare or management] but some, if they do not have certificates [of secondary education], they are not allowed to participate in those roles.

So you mean that they have to finish school with certificates from the Myanmar government to be able to work?

Yes.

So in your village, where the school is up to Standard 4, do those who finish get Myanmar government certificates or certificates from the KNU?

In our village the school is not supported by the Myanmar government so they only get KNU certificates.

So the students who finish KNU schools and government schools, are they all treated equally as women? Do they get the same opportunities?

They are not treated equally. Even though they have already finished [their education] in KNU schools, they have to take a government examination in Yangon or Mawlamyine towns in order to get a Myanmar government certificate. They need the government certificate in order to be allowed to work with them [Myanmar government organisations].

So as you are woman, how do you feel about that?

Even if our children passed [the KNU] schools they still have to take government examination in order to get certificate. We have to spend a lot of money so it caused problems for the [villagers] who do not have enough money. So even if they passed [the KNU] school they can only do ordinary jobs. They only gave [job] opportunities to the people who passed the Myanmar government schools [not the KNU schools]. For the people who passed government school they have a government certificate with them and if they are required to show their certificate, they can show it.

You told us about the situation in your area, so we got to know more the situation for women. So, you need more support in terms of education?

Yes.

And you also want other organisations to collaborate with your village?

We really need their collaboration and help in order for us to improve our village.

¹⁰² A standard refers to a school year in the education system of Myanmar. The basic education system has a 5-4-2 structure. Primary school runs from Standard 1 to Standard 5, lower secondary school is Standards 6-9, and upper secondary school is Standards 10-11.

So you mean that they do not provide opportunities to the villagers who live in your village?

They [the Myanmar government] only provide opportunities to the people who have finished Myanmar government schools. People who have finished government schools have government certificates and if they are required to show their certificates they can show them.

So, if people finish KNU schools, that have a high quality of education, it does not match the requirements?

Yes [correct], they [the Myanmar government] say that they [are not qualified because they] do not have Myanmar government certificates.

So they [the Myanmar government] do not provide equal opportunities?

Yes [correct], they do not provide equal opportunities. Thus, we are not able to compare our shoulders.

So, as women, in order to be able to compare your shoulders [with men], what opportunities do you need?

Yes [I want opportunities]. For example, when the people [KNU leaders] ask about peace [negotiate in the peace process] there are also women involved [in giving their recommendations] but I think no one pays attention to the women even if they claim [speak out] because if they pay attention to the women's concerns then there will be equality [and we do not have equality]. In terms of certificates [of secondary education], we asked for it but they did not pay attention to us.

Now we have got to know more [about the situation for women] from you. Would you like to ask me any questions?

As you are coming to our village and asking for information, I want to ask you what organisation you are working with.

[The KHRG researcher explains to the villager about the purpose of conducting the interview.]

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Source #108

Log #	16-8-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
Date Received: February 2nd 2016	

What is your name?

I am Naw Ej--- and I live in Ek--- section, Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Township, Bago region. I am 38 years old.

What do you do?

I do not do anything now. I am staying at home and doing family business. That is all.

Which roles do the women in your family or village usually do?

In families, women are mostly involved in the education and health [of their children]. At the village level [of government work], there are less women involved.

Do you think that the role of Karen women has changed or is [currently] changing?

Regarding the role of women in our township, there has been less change; I would say that.

What roles are women less involved in?

For example, I have not seen women given the opportunity to work at the township [level government]. I would like to say that there are less roles for women because most of the women in our country have been oppressed by the [Burma/Myanmar] government for many generations, so [it is not easy for] women to lead from the front [have roles in the government]. I also have not seen much change for women.

What is the main challenge faced by women in Karen State?

One of the main challenges faced by women in Karen State is that women want to be involved [in government roles], but the government departments [officials] in the township do not give them a position. They are not allowed to be involved in some places [roles]. That is the challenge.

What are the different challenges that men and women [have]?

In the township, the important jobs are mostly assigned to men; women are not assigned [to these roles]. This is the current situation.

Why are they not assigned [to the important work]? Can you give me an example?

Sometimes the works requires staff to travel and stay there [away] for a few nights. They do not want women to be at the front [leading]. They [government staff] want the women to stay behind. This is the challenge for women.

What do women in Kayin [Karen] State require to develop their living?

Firstly, women [need] education. The second thing [that is needed] is healthcare. They also need handicrafts [training]. For example, although they are not educated they need handicraft [training] for their livelihoods, especially in the long term.

How do you think the livelihood of women in Kayin [Karen] State has changed since the 2012 preliminary ceasefire?

After the 2012 [preliminary ceasefire] and the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, women have had more confidence. They hope [more] women's roles will be opened for them, so they can lead [the work]. They want to have more women's rights. They are also confident. They are willing to serve [in government work].

Do you think there has been a positive change for women living in Kayin [Karen] State after the 2012 [preliminary] ceasefire? What [needs] to be developed [for them]?

Based on their current activities, I think there has been a positive change for women living in Kayin [Karen] State, since the 2012 [preliminary] ceasefire. The main thing that has been developed is that they feel safer. They are willing to get involved in every role in the township in the future and they want to have that right.

What are the main challenges faced by women in Kayin [Karen] State regarding the election? For example, did women get involved in voting?

They can be involved [in voting] and they are allowed to be involved.

Regarding the election, did they vote, show [their] identification and understand the [election] information?

Yes, they did. For example, they were allowed to ask about the [election] information if [they did] not understand. What I want to talk a little bit about is identification, as the section administrator submitted Form #66, which meant that those who were 18 [and above] were checked by the immigration office. It was then sent to the commission office. For example, one [person's] name may not have been included on the voting list but his/her name was included on Form #66. If he/she was at the age of 18, then he/she could go and report to the commission office, which was okay. He/she needed to bring his/her identification card and Form #66 [to report to the commission office]. He/she could then vote.

Can women be candidates for election? Can they have an election campaign?

Yes, they can. We have seen women candidates and they can also vote.

When women participate as party candidates [for election], what challenges do they face?

Regarding women candidates campaigning for a party, I do not see that they face many challenges. They are allowed to campaign and travel freely. It is motivating to see women participate in that role.

What are women's opinions on the 2012 [preliminary] ceasefire and the 2015 ceasefire?

We cannot recognise it [2015 ceasefire] as a nationwide ceasefire as not all ethnic armed groups were involved in signing it. When KNU signed the ceasefire, people in southeast Myanmar were able live peacefully and have no problem. However, [Tatmadaw] launched an offensive in Shan and Kachin states. To say frankly, they are trying to divide the ethnic

groups.

Are women safer [since the NCA has been signed]?

Since the NCA, women in Kayin State are able to live, work and travel safely.

Are the women informed about the ceasefire [NCA] process and are they involved [in the ceasefire process]?

Yes, they are.

Can you give an example?

For example, when the [government's] top leaders held discussions, some responsible Karen women leaders from our area also attended the meeting. They know about the ceasefire process and they are also allowed to get involved. The NCA awareness [training] has been given to them, but some were not interested in attending. [The leaders] were going to provide awareness of what women should know [regarding women's rights]. Women were invited to attend the training but [only] a few women [attended the training].

What are women's opinions on the increase of troops? Can women travel as freely as men can?

Women have concerns about the increase of troops. They worry that fighting will happen. Since the troops have increased, women cannot travel freely like men.

What are women's opinions on healthcare?

Regarding healthcare, healthcare awareness is weak. Women are faced [with healthcare challenges]. If there was healthcare awareness, we could protect [ourselves] at home [from poor health]. Therefore, we need healthcare awareness.

What is your opinion on women accessing reproductive health and maternal health [awareness]?

Regarding women's reproductive [health], some women have pregnancies close [together]. Some women have some knowledge [on reproductive health] so they use contraception. If a woman gets pregnant she needs healthcare. I have found out that they have their baby with their own time management [without leaving a safe amount of time between pregnancies].

Does this happen to every woman?

[There is a] lack of health awareness at the Township level. [Birth spacing] is a weak point for women, as some women get pregnant and then give birth to [another] child a year and a half after giving birth. I think women should have another child after two years of giving birth to their child. The children will only be looked after well if the mother is healthy. Therefore, they need awareness [of reproductive health]. In rural areas, women do not want to use contraceptive pills because they are afraid to use them. There is no effective awareness [conducted]. If there is effective awareness, there would be no big concern [for them to use contraceptive pills]. In Kyaukkyi Town, many women had not given birth to their child successfully [they have faced birth complications] because they lack access to [health]

awareness. They do [not] have knowledge on what to do and what not to do [when getting pregnant and giving birth]. Moreover, there are few health workers. In Karen State [southeast Myanmar], [pregnant] women in the villages are not well taken care by the [health workers]. Because women have a lack of knowledge about reproductive health, about what to do and what they should not do, about one third of women who got married after [they turned] 18 years old have lost their baby [in childbirth or infancy].

Can women properly access healthcare services?

Yes, they can. I mean, I know my own health situation; I can access [a clinic]. Some people are not interested in their own health. Regarding health services, everyone can go to a healthcare department to inquire about their health and access health awareness.

Can every woman access health awareness?

Yes, they can.

Does every woman go [to a health department to access health awareness]?

No, they do not go.

What kind of support do women affected by abuse receive from their family?

In our area, there is no woman who has been abused. If there was an abused woman, they would be encouraged by their neighbors in order not to feel weak in their lives. There are many ways women can be abused. For example, a woman can be raped. However, we do not look down on her in our environment. Her neighbors will always encourage her about how to survive.

What strategies do women in Kayin [Karen] State use in order to protect themselves and to respond to the challenges of being abused? Can you give me an example?

In our area, people mostly use the law to solve problems, protect themselves from danger and respond to abuse. Although women's organisations exist, the organisations do not stand [work] effectively [for women]

Are there any legal strategies that women in Kayin [Karen] State normally [use] to respond to abuse and the challenges [it causes]?

If a woman has been abused and faces challenges, they mostly use the law to solve their problems. For example, if a woman gets pregnant and the man does not want to take responsibility, the woman must be frank and must not be shy at that time. Based on her [rights], it will be legally [solved] under the law.

Is there any difference between how human rights abuses are solved by the KNU and the [Burma/Myanmar] government?

We live in the [Burma/Myanmar] government controlled area. We have only seen [and not lived under] the KNU government. Very few people in our area know exactly the laws of the KNU, therefore, it is difficult for us to give comment on their laws. [Women] face a lot of human rights abuses committed by the [Burma/Myanmar] government. We also have lost

opportunities; [we have lost] the chance to access to education and healthcare compared to other countries. We have to pay when we give birth to our children. We also have been shouted at by hospital staff. I have also seen both mother and child die [during childbirth]. Some pregnant women do not have money and cannot afford to have their babies delivered in hospital. There are also many mothers who die when they deliver their babies in their village with midwives. Some babies also die in the womb. Regarding human right abuses, for example, when women request to do anything to the section leader it is not accepted. When they have a meeting it is [mostly] men. The section leader and the secretary are men. The ten household and one hundred household leaders are men. This abuses our women's rights. In the past, people have to do sentry [forced labour as guards] and pay monthly money [to the Tatmadaw for porter/recruitment fees]. There were a lot of human rights abuses happening in the past. We have lost our opportunities in many different ways. We have lost the chance for education and healthcare. Although we want to make a change to our standard of living, we are not given opportunity to do so. For example, although we want to give awareness regarding the law, the [Burma/Myanmar] government forbids us to do so. Regarding education, school parents have to support everything [for their children]. I do not want to blame the teachers who are serving in education. The parents do not fully receive support from the government for their children's education. Since the parents really want their children to access education, they support their children with what they have. This is not related to the teachers. The government does not provide enough education facilities. Therefore, we have lost chances in education.

Does the [legal] system treat women's abuse [GBV] equally in Kayin [Karen] State?

I have heard that women in the mountain area of the Burma/Myanmar government controlled area have been raped. For example, if a male villager raped a female villager, this case can go under the law. The case will be solved under the law and the punishment will be given. However, if there is rape case committed by the Tatmadaw, there is no one who is going to solve the problem [provide a punishment].

Why is there no one to solve the case? Is it because they are afraid of [the Tatmadaw] or cannot solve it?

To say it clearly, it is because they are afraid [of the Tatmadaw]. For example, if a judge has to implement the case, he/she will also be threatened.

Has the number of women in Kayin [Karen] State participating in or influencing politics increased?

There are a few women in Kayin [Karen] State who participate in politics. I do not think women influence politics. There are more men than women in committees and organisations, and they are leading. I have seen that women take second place.

What kind of changes do women in Kayin [Karen] State want?

Women in Kayin [Karen] State want changes. They want change in education; they want adequate education. They also really want vocational education for their livelihoods, because we have had a very low quality of education in our country. Moreover, they want awareness of women's rights. If we look at the current young women, they are willing to access education. We also need to promote their minds, so that they will not be afraid and have more confidence.

Finally, I would like to ask you one more question. What more do you want to add regarding women's role?

We need organisations that provide [the awareness of] women's rights, which women should have. We are in need of an organisation to promote the lives of women. They need awareness of what women should do and what they have the rights to do. There are a lot of rights that women need to ask for; they need the right to health, education, and to have equal rights to men. For these rights an organisation is needed to promote, help and give awareness.

Thank you for the interview.

Source #109

Log #	16-8-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Interview Date: November 12th 2015

So what is your name?

My name is Naw Bk--- and I'm working as a [censored for security] for a Christian education [group] and the East Light Development Group.

How old are you?

I'm 42 years old.

Do you have family?

I have family and I have four children. Three of them are boys and one of them is a girl.

Can you tell me a little bit of land history?

Yes, I can.

So please tell me?

The fighting happened at Bl--- Section. At first, Thara Saw Htoo led villagers to Bl--- Section to clear the land and he built many buildings including a church, primary school and missionary association office. In 1960 he built a school and other buildings, and we named the place Bl--- Section. Later the military asked our permission to base [themselves] there. They told us that if they were based in another place there would be no safety for them, but if they stayed among the Karen people it would be safer for them. They asked to base themselves there temporarily. The grandpa [Saw Htoo] said that if it was just temporary then we would allow them. Step by step [year after year] the military [Tatmadaw] has been

rotating group by group and they have not given the land back to us.

They confiscated it [the land] step by step since [after] the military government took the position of President. They took down the roof and planks from the missionary association office, and it was destroyed alongside one house that was in front of the office. We planned to rebuild them but the military did not allow us to. We had to take down the office and some of the teachers' houses. We want to rebuild them but it very difficult for us, and we have even had arguments with the military leaders. Later, in the transition period [after the preliminary ceasefire], we decided to take the lands back and rebuild the church. We planned to place the villagers, who did not have land to build their houses, on that land.

Since the 2012 ceasefire agreement was signed, we have been informing and submitting complaint letters to many [relevant] leaders from generation to generation, but no one takes action or arranges anything for us. At the end of 2012 we submitted a complaint letter to the Burma/Myanmar government [staff member] U Nya Win. He told us that he had received our complaint letter already and asked what we wanted to do with our case. We told him that currently the situation had changed, because we wanted to place the villagers [IDPs] who don't have a place to live on that land, as they had always had to run from the Tatmadaw in the past [conflict period]. He told us he would ask people to review whether it was our land or not, and would go and send the [response] letter to the general administrator. He sent the letter to the general administrator, who made an appointment with us to get information [regarding the land] in June, and it has been eight months since then. We do not know whether we will get back our land or not, because it was confiscated by the military and he [general administrator] did not respond to us. While we are waiting for a response from him, they [Burma/Myanmar government] have started to build a cooperative department building, Kyai Let [Rural Development building] and commission offices.

Those buildings are being built in that place [on your land]?

Yes, they are and in total there are three buildings. We went directly to meet with the operation commander, land department office, and general administrators after we knew they were constructing the buildings on [our] land, but they avoided meeting with us. We were able to meet with the deputy operation commander [vice general administrator] and he told us that he was not able to say anything because the person who could take action on this case was senior leader U Tin Myat Aung.

Who is U Tin Myat Aung?

U Tin Myat Aung is presently the general administrator and U Nyi Nyi Htwon is the vice general administrator. We met U Nyi Nyi Htwon and he told us that he was not able to say anything based on his role, because he [U Tin Myat Aung] did everything on his own. For me, I do not know anything. It seems to me that he did everything on his own without letting anyone else know. We asked and questioned him [U Nyi Nyi Htwon, about the land issue] but he was not able to answer us. We also met with vice Secretary Kyaw Thet Lwin, who told us that he had processed the case step by step but he had not received any response.

So, we, the villagers, held a meeting to elect [found] a land headquarter committee [group]. REV. Dr Wah [Wah] Day is Chairperson and REV. Dr Htee Hpoee Neey is [Vice] Chairperson. Naw Ju Ju is also [vice] general secretary, and the general secretary is [censored for security]. The [Shwegyin Karen Baptist Association] missionary, Thara Ka Aye, is a Chairperson and Thara Ner Ta Lay is Vice Chairperson. While, Thara Eh Nay Moo is Joint secretary and [censored for security] is the general Secretary. [They] all have to work

together. So, if we cleared the land with a few people then the Tatmadaw would not pay attention to us, because we were not very strong. I said that we want to get more participants in order to be stronger. Today we went to clear the land with over 20 participants and they seemed very shocked at us. They asked who cleared the land. After we finished cleaning they called us for questioning. We asked them why they would want to know, as the land is ours. [We said] You are chief of [military] training, why do you need to know? He said that he did not know anything and that the general administrator had complained to him about why he did not know that people were clearing the land in his base compound. We told him that we cleared our own land and asked why he has to forbid it. I said that Aww U Thaw did not know anything and asked how he could know, because the general administrator knows everything but he pretends to be abnormal [not to know anything]. Because we submitted land protection letters and many [different] letters, but he did not accept them and did not let us know.

We strongly forbid them [the Burma/Myanmar government] from constructing the buildings and we complained [submitted complaint letters], but no response came back to us. They do not make appointments to meet with us, so we went to ask permission to meet with them but they avoided us and would not meet with us. It seems to us that it is our land, but they do not respect or listen to us

When did they clear the land?

Actually they never cleared the land. We cleared it ourselves.

Did you or the people here know that they would build those buildings and then clear the land?

They have started building the constructions already.

They build the constructions [buildings]?

Yes. As I mentioned before three buildings are being built, such as a cooperative department building, rural department building and commercial offices.

Did they give you prior notice?

No, they did not give us prior notice.

Who took action to [submit] the land issue, in order to get back the land?

Missionaries, regional missionaries and villagers' representatives are included in the land headquarter committee [group]. We, the committee, submitted a land protection letter and after the submission we planned to clear the land and fence, and concrete the land. After that we will divide a plot of land for them [IDPs] to build their houses.

Who will you allow to construct the houses?

The villagers who do not have any land are allowed to build their houses [on the land].

What do you think about your struggles to get your land back and the current construction of buildings?

We will say that the past is past and let it go.

What about if you do not get the land back?

The past is past and we will let it go, but for the empty lands that we have left behind we will place the villagers who do not have land to live on.

What kind of land?

It is missionary land.

Is it missionary land?

Yes, it has been missionary land since Puh Saw Htoo's generation.

What responsibility did Puh Saw Htoo have?

He did not have any responsibility, but he loved his people and he built the school. In the past the Karen National Union (KNU) school was built in Myet Yain and it was moved to BI---

Then?

He built the church and founded a missionary group.

What do you think about the past?

After the 2012 ceasefire agreement was signed, we thought that our leaders would come down here and we could speak with them.

What do you mean by our leaders?

Our leaders from the KNU, and we suggested to them to come and base [themselves] close to us because [in 2012] [the Tatmadaw] operation had relocated from [BI--- section] and were based in their own headquarters. We thought that if they [KNU] were based close to us we could depend on them and we could try to get our lands back, but they did not work with us. So it has not happened as we expected.

Have you ever talked to the KNU [leaders] related to this issue?

Yes, we told the KNU and they also went to check the land and saw the constructions with their own eyes.

So we can say that the KNU did not help?

If we are going to talk like that they will be offended.

That is no problem because [if] we are telling the truth?

Yes, if the KNU grabbed an opportunity then we, the villagers, would also follow them, so we could have our rights and get our land back. It is what we thought but we do not know what

they [KNU] think.

Are they avoiding taking action?

I do not know, maybe they worry that the fighting will be broken down [fighting will start] during the ceasefire period.

Are you protesting about the land on behalf of the villagers or the East Light group?

The land that [the Tatmadaw operation has been] based on is BI--- missionary land. The villagers also wanted to [protest] against it [the land confiscation] but they dared not to speak out. We have been active for many years already on the land issue, but nothing has changed. We held meetings many times but there was no improvement. We later founded the land committee and there has been some improvement. We cooperate with other [missionary] departments in other activities. East Light is not doing work alone. In other land [title] issues we do not use the East Light name, we use Kyaukkyi Development Watch.

What name did you use [in the land title] for the land that I have asked you [about]?

We used the land missionary committee.

What about the people [group] who are actively [trying] to get back the land?

All people are participating in the land activity, [including the] missionary departments, BI--- villagers and believers.

Can you tell me about the land use policy?

Yes I will tell you it as I know it, because on May 12th to 13th we held a meeting about the Land Use Policy, in order to finalise how it would be used. [In the Land Use Policy] it includes the rights for citizens to use their land. Whether residents have a land title or not doesn't matter. They still have the right to use the land that was passed down from their great grandparents and [it is their] indigenous land. They have the right to own their property. Those rights should be possessed by the civilian. The last one is customary land rights. Our land case is related to the land rights because our land title, #105, was created in 1960. After the Land Use Policy was developed our land became vacant land, and some plots of land became rural development land. So our land has been divided into two parts, one is vacant land and the other part is rural development land. If we look at the Land Use Policy, we are resident and the land is owned by us. But if we look at the updated new Land Policy, we have to re-measure the land.

Can you tell me what the Tatmadaw leaders [Burma/Myanmar government staff] told you when you met with them?

We did not meet with the Tatmadaw leaders; instead we met with CBOs and foreign people about the Land Use Policy. We discussed [reviewed] the Land Use Policy. In the Land Use Policy there are very few rights for the villagers.

Regarding your land issue have you ever met with the Tatmadaw leaders [Burma/Myanmar government staff]?

Yes, I had a conversation with U Nya Win and U Soe Tha about the suffering of the residents. After that I submitted a letter to them. They asked the township general administrator to take action and find out more information about the land. The Township general administrator came back to our land committee to find out whether the land was ours or not. Our land is our land, but we [have to] process the land issue step by step and we have not got any response from them.

How will they do that?

If we say like the President, U Thein Sein, all land that has been confiscated by the Tatmadaw since 2012 has to be returned to the owners. But the Tatmadaw has not told us anything, whether they will return our land or not. In 2013 an operation [commander] told us that after they move from the land, we could use our land again.

Is it [the land] in the KNU controlled area or the Burma/Myanmar government controlled area?

It is in the KNU section, but if you look at the map it is located in the Burma/Myanmar government controlled area.

Has the KNU given you any advice or [made any] suggestions to you?

One of the KNU leaders told me that they don't ever think about the operation land [Tatmadaw operation bases]. We have tried very hard to get our land back for many years already, but we have not gotten back our land, even [though] they have not built anything on the land.

So everything has gone?

Yes. He said that they [KNU] have tried to take action to get the land that they [Tatmadaw] have not used, but until now we have not gotten it. I told him that they [KNU] had told us that we have to own the land, so they [KNU] should do as they said. In the Land Use Policy one person can own 20 acres of land.

How do you think they [KNU] can take action?

As you know, if these two governments [KNU and Burma/Myanmar] really work for the civilians then some changes should be taking place.

Regarding the land issue, what do you think of these two governments [how are they doing their job]?

After the ceasefire took place, I think the two governments no longer had any more land to manage [take over] in the urban areas, therefore, they come to the rural areas to take over land. They have very little concern for civilians.

So [they] only [think about] their personal [benefit]?

Yes, they only think about their personal benefit.

Can you tell me how you feel about the land problem?

Yes, during the conflict period the villagers had to porter, but now the situation has changed a little bit and the Tatmadaw have started to confiscate their land. Each [piece of] land belongs to [the Tatmadaw], so they [villagers] now have no land to work on. At present, the land that is situated beside the road is all owned [confiscated] by the Tatmadaw. Our leaders [KNU] provided land titles for the villagers but how will they arrange [solve the problem] for them?

How do the Karen leaders work for Karen people? I think the people who live here will know best?

Yes we know, but if we speak out it seems like we beat our own calf [we cause harm to ourselves].

However, you should speak out when your time has come?

We are concerned for the villagers who live beside there, [because] their working places are very limited. After the ceasefire, the outside people came to take over the land starting from the area to the crossroads. Now the villagers have no land. The people who took over that land are mostly Tatmadaw and Burmese, and they all have a close relationship with our leaders [KNU].

Are they all Burmese?

Yes.

What kind of people took over the land?

They are mostly rich people, who have a very good relationship with the KNU leaders.

Do you have anything to say regarding the Burma/Myanmar government construction of buildings on the missionary land?

The government said that they are democratic, but their controlling system is not in the way of democracy. They use it as a dictatorship system. So, the villagers have to know their own rights and claim their rights. If we do not do that then they will step on us because there is no transparency. We need transparency and equality, therefore, we voted for change in the election. Everyone [villagers] are trying to get change. If improvements take place, then the villagers will get to use their full rights. In order to get their full rights, villagers also have to know their rights. To get our lands back we also have to work together and try very hard.

Thank you very much. Thara Mu can you tell me your full address?

Yes. My name is Naw Bk---. I live in Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Town at Bl--- Section.

What about Division?

Bago Division.

And what about Township?

Kyaukkyi Township.

Thank you.

Source #110

Log #	16-9-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpa-an District
Full Text	

What is your name?

U Bi---

Where do you live?

Bj--- village.

In which township?

Hpa-an Township.

So Karen State, Hpa-an township?

Yes.

Are you married?

Yes. [I have] Two children.

How old are you?

33 years old.

What is your occupation?

Farming.

Are there any human rights violations in your village?

There are issues like human rights violations here.

What kind of human rights violations?

[They are] about the land issue.

What kind of land issue?

Our lands are the land that we have owned for generations and generations. We do not know anything [about what has happened to the land]. We left our lands just like this [without taking care of it] when we went to work [and live] in Thailand. According to their [Myanmar government] laws, they will confiscate the lands which have not been used by the owner for 3 years.

So you have land?

Yes.

How do you own the land? Did you buy it or get it from someone?

I got it from my parents-in-law.

You mean your parents-in-law bought it and gave it to you?

Yes.

What happened to your land?

We planted the teak trees on the land. After they (Burma/Myanmar government staff) surveyed the land, they cleared the land with a bulldozer.

How many acres of land [do you have]?

36.3 acres.

Who cleared your land with the bulldozers?

The people who cleared the land with the bulldozers said that they would establish a company on the land. But those people do not tell [me] their company's name.

Did you enquire about the name of the company?

The one who did [the clearing of the land] is [called] U Han Soe.

What company is U Han Soe from?

Mya Htay Kywel Lan company.

When did the company start clearing your land?

On the 24th they came to clear [the land].

Which month?

January.

So on January 24th. Why did they come to clear the land?

Because, as their company's plan, they were going to divide the land into plots to make a

new section, and construct a road.

Did they inform you before they cleared the land?

They submitted the objection report to the authorities through the administrator.

Who submitted the objection report?

U Han Soe.

Who did U Han Soe report [to]?

Someone who owns the land can submit the objection report on their (U Han Soe company's) land application form.

Where did he submit the objection report?

To the administration office.

Which administration office?

Mai Ghan administration office.

Where is the Mai Ghan administration office? In your village?

Our village is in the Mai Ghan village tract. We are in Mai Ghan village tract, Bj---village. The administrator is from Mai Ghan village tract.

Where did they stick [place] the objection report?

They did not stick [place] it anywhere. They just kept it in the office.

So did you know about the objection report?

No I did not. I did not know anything.

When did you know that they would come and clear your land?

I knew from January 24th.

How did you know?

I asked them. They said that my land was confiscated by the Burma/Myanmar government.

Do they give you compensation?

No.

What did they say to you?

I took photos to record [the land confiscation] and they told me that they would arrest me. It

was like they threatened me.

Who threatened you?

The bulldozer driver.

How many bulldozers came to clear the land?

Two.

How many people?

About five or six people.

What difficulties have you faced, as they cleared the land that you were earning your living from?

Many kinds of difficulties. They said that it would be okay if I negotiated with the administrator.

Who said this?

The people who cleared the land with the bulldozer.

Did you negotiate with the administrator?

Yes.

Who is the administrator?

The administrators are - Secretary U Thar Lin from our village, Bj--- and the chairman U A'Kyaw from Mai Ghan.

After you negotiated [with them], what was the situation?

They said that they could not do anything, because the land had already been confiscated. They said it had been three years since the authorities had confiscated the land. We did not know anything.

Who confiscated [the land]?

The [Burma/Myanmar] government.

So the government confiscated [the land]? Which government?

They said only that it was the government. They did not say anything.

Which government? For example, the Karen National Union? Peace Council? Or Burma/Myanmar government?

The Burma/Myanmar government.

So, it has been three years since the Burma/Myanmar government confiscated the land?

Yes. We did not know anything.

So the government is the Burma/Myanmar government, [not the] Karen State government?

Yes.

Which department? Land department or economic department?

They did not say exactly.

So you did not know that your land had been confiscated until the 24th, the day that people came and cleared your land?

Yes.

So, because of this [road construction], what kind of livelihood problems or difficulties do you face?

We planted the teak trees on our land and we had spent our money on it. We do not have the money anymore to start that kind of business [again].

How many acres of your land have they cleared?

Now, they are constructing the road. They pave the way with rocks.

What will they do on the land?

They said that they will make a new section/village. They said that it was for regional development.

So, is there any compensation?

No.

Did you report this issue to the Burma/Myanmar government?

No.

How about other people? Did they report it?

No.

What do you want to say about this issue? What do you want to happen?

We want to get back our land.

When they came to clear the land, did they only clear your [land] or were other people's lands also included?

I do not know the owners, but all of the lands have an owner.

What kind of land is there? Farm or farmland?

Both.

How about the land without owners?

I do not know. But they said that all of the lands were plantation lands. Actually those lands have owners.

Do you have a land voucher for your land?

We went and asked for the voucher, but they did not give us one. We went to the administrator but they did not do it for us. They had made the record and we had given the money.

How much money did you have to pay?

About 50,000 kyat or 60,000 kyat. They did not care about anything. They said that they would do it for us and after one, two, three or four years, [but] nothing happened.

How many teak trees did you plant on your land?

I think over 3,000 trees.

Were they quite big? How many years has it been since you planted them?

Over two years. We planted the trees long ago, but we did not care about the trees because we had moved to work in Thailand. So only that much was left.

So as I said, do you want to say anything about this issue? For example – what do you want to say to the company or the Burma/Myanmar government? What do you want to happen?

I want my land back.

Did the company say that they would give you something?

No.

How about negotiations?

We cannot negotiate with the people who come to clear the land with a bulldozer. They said that they would stop if their superiors told them to stop.

Is there anything else do you want to say?

No.

Thank you for answering my questions and giving me information.

Source #111

Log #	16-9-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpa-an District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: February 3rd 2016</p> <p>1. These photos were taken on March 1st 2015 by a villager in southern Pa Tok area, Hpa-an Township. The first photo shows a Myanmar police officer monitoring a company's development site in Pa Tok area at the industrial zone. The second photo shows villagers' lands that have been confiscated by Mya Htay Kywe Lin Company in cooperation with the Myanmar government for the industrial zone. The government authorities and the company said the lands are uncultivated lands [vacant, fallow or virgin]. The Mya Htay Kywe Lin Company started clearing the lands and constructed a road on February 24th 2015 to implement the project. The company destroyed teak trees that villagers had planted on the land.</p>	

Source #112

Log #	16-10-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Interview Date: December 5th 2015</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>Daw A---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>50. The land title is [under the name of] U K---, as it was given the name of the breadwinner [Daw A---'s husband].</p> <p>What is your ethnicity?</p> <p>I am Buddhist, Bamar.</p> <p>So you are Bamar ethnicity?</p> <p>Yes</p>	

What religion do you believe in?

Buddhism.

What do you do for your living?

Farming.

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many children do you have?

I have only one child.

How old is your child?

Six years old

Where do you live?

I live in Bago Division, Toungoo Township, Nga Gar Mout village tract, B--- village tract nearby Thout Yay Khat vehicle road.

As a farmer, when you are working for your livelihood do you face any problems such as land confiscation?

Of course, we face [land confiscation problems]. A man called U Khin Maung Aye [chairman of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] confiscated land, more than 2,400 acres according to the measurements. My land was about seven acres, as I measured it myself, but when they came and measured it they said that it only about 6.30 acres.

Who came and measured your land?

People from the Land Records Department at the Township level.

Which Township do you mean?

Toungoo Township. Last week, in November, I don't remember the exact date; the people from Division level came and measured the land that had been previously measured [by the people from the Township level].

Do you mean November in 2015?

Yes, the land was measured in November, not even a month ago, just a few days ago.

How did they measure the land?

They measured the land with a machine [land measuring tools], so we did not understand the measurement process. So I asked them why they were measuring the land, as it had

already been measured last week and they replied that they were re-measuring it because the measurement had not been precise. They told us to believe them, that they would measure it for us. Village head, U D---, and Chairperson of the Land Records Department, U Maung Zaw, had told me to let them measure the land so that I could get a Land Form #7. The last time the land was measured by the people from division level the result of land measurement was not out [available]. After they measured the land I asked them, *'are you done measuring the land? And how many acres of my land exists?'* and they just replied to me that, *'we don't know how many acres it will be, but please keep in the mind the first point [original measurements] because we may only know when we review the measurements with a computer'*. But up until now I haven't known the result or whether they have reviewed the measurements with the computer or not.

I am not clear about the land measurements, do you mean that the land was measured by a company of [connected to] the Burma/Myanmar government?

It included people from a company and also people from the Township level of the Land Records Department, which was the first time that the land was measured. The last time the land was measured there was also a man called U Maung Zaw, who was from the division level.

The company that measured the land, which company was that?

Kaung Myanmar Aung Company.

For what purpose did they measure the land? Did they measure the land to buy it or to confiscate it? Can you explain to me what the aim of the land measurement was?

U Khin Maung Aye said that he would provide a Land Form #7 for 2,400 acres of land. It meant that the people whose land was measured would be provided with a Land Form #7.

It meant that they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] would provide a Land Form #7 for the farmers?

Yes

How could the Land Form #7's be provided by them [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company]? How did they consult you?

He [U Khin Maung Aye] confiscated 2,400 acres of land. But if we let our land be measured then he would return the land to us by providing [us with a] Land Form #7.

When they came to measure your land how did they convince you [to get your land measured]?

He suggested [that I should] let my land get measured, if not it would be included in the confiscated list. Yesterday, I was invited by the peasant party to attend their press conference which was held in the hall of the doctors' association. They invited me by an invitation letter. And I asked them *'Why did they invite us to attend the press conference?'* they replied that *'People whose land had been measured will be included in the confiscated list if they do not attend the press conference, but if they attend [the press conference] their land will not be included in the confiscated list'*. Then I realised that there would be

something, so I went to attend the press conference. In the press conference they just discussed the campaign of the peasant party and what they had done for the farmers; nothing special was discussed at the meeting, only those subjects.

How long ago did the peasant party invite you to attend their press conference?

It was yesterday, they told us that they would pick [me] up by car at 1pm, so I followed them when they came to pick me up in a car.

So the meeting was arranged by the company [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company]?

No, it was arranged by the peasant party.¹⁰³

So it was not arranged by the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company, which is owned by U Khin Maung Aye?

No, it was not arranged by that company, it was arranged by the peasant party.

Did you have enough time [to decide to accept] their invitation?

Not enough actually, we got the invitation in the morning and at 1pm we had to go, so we were in hurry to attend the meeting. However, there was no special update at the meeting; they just talked about what their party was doing.

So how and what do they do for the benefit of the farmers, as a peasant party?

They [peasant party] tried to convince U Khin Maung Aye to return the 2,400 acres of land he had confiscated from the farmers. We have got our lands back, but to prove that we own the lands we have to have a Land Form #7 as evidence. However, the Land Form #7 is not in our hands yet. They said that U Khin Maung Aye had already given it [Land Form #7] but there has been no agreement paper or signature. So, by saying things like this [only returning the land by word] everyone can do anything by words [no action].

So how many famers participated in the peasant party press conference?

There were 22 farmers at the meeting. All of those 22 farmers were the people whose land had been measured.

Among those 22 farmers, were any of them unable to attend the meeting because of various reasons?

Yes

So how many farmers attended the meeting yesterday?

Just 22 farmers, but there was over one hundred farmers whose lands had been measured.

Regarding the land measurement issue, are you the only person who talked to the

¹⁰³ The interviewee is likely referring to the Myanmar Farmers Development Party. For more information about this meeting see also, [Farmers protest KMA Group project in Taungoo](#), Myanmar Times, 9th December 2015.

people who came and measured your land? Did your husband talk to them?

He does talk to them if he is at home when they come, but if he is not [there] or when he is not available then I talk to them. My husband has not felt well for the whole rainy season, so I am the person who is leading and handling what happens.

What did you plant on your land?

We planted rubber trees; it was also full of banana trees.

So you have a plantation on your land, which was grown by yourself?

Yes.

So since you have plants on your land how could Kaung Myanmar Aung Company confiscate it?

They have not confiscated it yet. But as my land is close to the vehicle road they said that it would be included in the area that will be confiscated and they have not planted any teak trees yet.

So your land is included in the area that they will confiscate, but they have not implemented it yet?

Yes.

So we cannot say that they will not confiscate your land?

Yes, because the land was already included in the 2,400 acres that will be confiscated.

So, before they implement the land confiscation and whilst you are [still] working on your land, what kind of problems have you faced? Have they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] threatened you or have they summoned you to go to court?

I have not been summoned to court yet, but they did summon the people from my neighbour [hood] who failed to attend the peasant press conference. They also have not come and planted anything on my land yet.

He [U Khin Maung Aye] has not planted anything on your land yet; does that mean he doesn't have enough people yet?

Yes.

What I want to know clearly is, in order to get you to agree to the measurement of your land, how did they persuade you? How did they convince you to let them measure your land?

U Soe Win, who is the village chairman, recommended that we attend the peasant press conference. He also said that he had been officially informed by U Khin Maung Aye [owner/chairman of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] at Kay Tu Hall that he [U Khin Maung Aye] would return the land so we should get our lands measured. After you get your lands

measured then they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] will provide you with a Land Form #1 and then they plan to let you get a Land Form #7. So according to what the village chairman said we hoped and believed that, but [we did] not totally trust [it], just 50%, however, he is the head of village and we didn't think that he would trick the villagers so we agreed to let them measure our land.

So on what date was the land measured?

I did not remember the exact date, it was this November [2015].

So it was just a short time ago?

Yes, it was a few days ago, not even a month ago.

As they confiscated the land, did they also confiscate land in your neighbour [hood]?

Of course. L--- Village, M--- Village, N--- and O---Village, these four villages are where the most prevalent land confiscation happened.

What did he [U Khin Maung Aye] plant on the land that he confiscated [from the villagers]?

He planted teak trees.

Only teak trees?

Yes, only teak trees. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] planted eucalyptus trees as well, but they mostly planted teak trees.

Did they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] also sue the villagers because of this land confiscation?

Yes, they have. Now, we have a court hearing on the 7th [no month or year were mentioned]. They have summoned us twice to the court.

How many people [villagers] were sued by [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company]?

Ten people.

How many women were included among the ten people?

Only I was included in the ten people.

For what reason were you sued by them [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company]?

For trespassing, according to Article 26 and 27; because we built a house.¹⁰⁴

Did the land belong to you in the past, as you built a house on it?

¹⁰⁴ According to additional KHRG information, Kaung Myanmar Aung Group of Companies is suing villagers for Criminal Trespass under Article 447 of the Myanmar Penal Code.

Yes, we owned the land in the past. We also planted beans and paddy on the land, but they destroyed them and planted the teak trees. Moreover, three members of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company photographed me so I asked them *'why are you guys taking a photo of me?'* and they just replied that *'we just came and took a photo'*. And they asked *'how many people sleep in the house'* and I replied *'it is not your business how many people sleep in the house, why are you asking me? Will you come and kill me?'* I just replied to them like that. Then they told me that their superiors had asked them to come and take photos. And then I replied *'who told you that? We do not steal the land and we are not thieves, we just built a house on our own land'*. I spoke to them while I was cleaning in my garden, so I was holding a machete in my hand and then they ran back.

This is the way you protested, is that right?

There are three people and I am only one, I responded to them in that way because they photographed my house.

Did they also provoke you, because you responded to them like that?

Nope, they just went back, they were just two young men. They were the workers of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company. They replied to me that *'for us personally we don't want to come and take a photo of your house, it is just the order from our superiors.'* Then I replied to them that *'well, if your superiors ordered you to do it then do it, it is fine for me because I built the house on my own land.'* They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] are an opposition group to me. In my plot of land I have lemon trees, mango trees, a dog fruit tree, a jack fruit tree, and a drum stick tree. I have my plants on my land. But they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company workers] cut all of them and now the new shoots have come out. Then they come back and cut it again. Since then, they have not dared to cut it.

So they destroyed your entire plantation?

That's right; they cut down the entire plantation. Now the new shoots came out and I tied them, and I told them that if they dared to come and cut it again then go ahead.

Five local villagers from M---village were first summoned to the court, and among those five villagers four women and one man were included in that group, and all of them were from M-- village. Because they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company workers] cut the trees that the villagers planted, they long for it back so they had an argument with them. But when they had the argument, as in a women's nature [when they get angry], we did not only speak about the problem but also we swore at them. Because they [villagers] were over-emotional while having the argument with [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company workers] they were summoned to the court. So five of them were sued and they had to go to the court. There was a man who came and handled that case. However, after the case was over, they came back and cleared the land again. Moreover, they also destroyed the long-term plantation, such as the dog fruit tree and lemon tree that was planted by our ancestors. They also burnt down our toilets as well. Then we went to the police station and reported their actions. But, the police replied that the farmers cannot sue the company workers, however, the company can sue the farmers. Therefore, we went back to Ko Soe Win [the village chairman] and told him about what the police told us. And then he [Ko Soe Win] said *'that's right, only U Khin Maung Aye [owner of Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] has the right to work on the 2,400*

acres of the land, and the farmers cannot work on it. So, we have to ignore [all the incidents related the land issues].

On June 10th [no mention of a year], before they came and planted the [teak] plantation on it [the land], and we planted paddy. On June 17th they came in with bulldozers and took our land. When they came and did that we did not dare to say anything. They came with a lot of people. Whenever they came they came with a huge number of people, once they came with at least 30 people, up to about 50 people. That is why we have to suffer whatever they do without responding to them. [A consequence] of the situation, my sisters-in-law have no land to stay on, but I have a plot of land to live on and I planted some plantation on it, but now it is under water because it is close to the river. Then I let them [sister-in-law] stay on my plot of land.

The plants that I planted on my land, including dog fruit trees, betel nut trees and lemon trees, were ready to consume. All together there were 65 trees on the land. In the past it was a banana plantation. They destroyed all of those 65 trees and my sister-in-law had no place to live, so I let her live on that land. Then, my sister in law built a hut on that plot of land. [Later on], the lawyer of the company came and complained about the hut on that land on August 6th [2015], but we did not listen to him and we kept building the hut. On that date, in the evening, the Chief of Police, U Aung Ko Ko, ordered the police to come and arrest them [my sister-in-law and her husband]. But at that time my brother was not at home and only my sister-in-law was at home. So they failed to arrest them on that date [August 6th 2015]. They did not come on 7th August either. So we thought that there would be no need to worry. In the early morning of August 8th three police officers came and arrested them. Then, I told the police officers *'alright, if you arrest my brother and sister-in-law handcuff them or show your permission letter that you guys are authorised to arrest them.'* And then they replied that *'we don't have that, just look on our shoulders [for insignia patches]; the stars are the authority that we have to arrest them. What else do we need as proof?'* So then, I replied to them *'ok, so show my your personal ID number and tell me your name, and take a photograph of my brother and his wife as proof.'* They only told me their names but they did not give me their personal ID numbers.

What are their names?

I forgot their names; I recorded it in the book. Than Zaw Oo and his two subordinates.

Let me interrupt you to ask what I am not clear about. You have mentioned about the police, so which police officer are you talking about?

Police officers from #3 police station in M--- Village.

Do you know the name of their commander?

Their commander's name is U Aung Ko Ko.

What is the position of their commander?

He is the Chief of the Police Station with the rank of three stars, and Thein Zaw Oo is second with the rank of two stars.

What happened next?

After having a conversation they arrested my brother and his wife. But they did not handcuff them. They just took them to the police station without handcuffs and by motorbike. So they [my brother and sister-in-law] went with them [the police]. After my brother and sister-in-law were arrested I didn't know what to do, so I went to see Maung G---. There was a group of [people in] L--- village and I asked for help from them. After I asked for help from a group of [people in] Nga Gar Mout, who were led by Saw D---, then I got a phone call telling me that to find a person who would guarantee [vouch for] my brother and his wife. Therefore, I tried to look for people [to guarantee my brother and his wife]. Saw D---, Maung E---, Ko F---, Maung G--- and Saw H---, these five people guaranteed my brother and his wife, and finally they were released from the police.

After they were released, I thought that they would not be sued anymore. I also told the Chief of Police that *'if you still want to sue, go ahead, I will await you at the court'*. At that time, when I spoke to him [Chief of Police], they had not sued [them] yet, but later on they submitted the case to the court. There were ten people from M--- and one from N---, so all together 11 people were sued in the case that they submitted to the court. There were three local villagers of M---, three local villagers of L--- who were Maung G---, Maung E--- and Maung I---, one from Yangon, Saw D--- from O---, and Maung J---. So, all together 11 people were sued. First of all, when the case was submitted to the court, we, the farmers, went to the court and that day was lost to that process. In the next week, they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] did not go to the court and we got repeated court notices that we have to go court again. So only their side failed to go to the court, and we, the farmers, did not fail to go to the court. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] just came the last time.

The peasant party removed two of their people from among the farmers who were sued by the company. Palae Say and Saw Eh Moo were removed from the farmers who were sued by the company. These two guys are actually members of the peasant party. Also, these two guys were not included in the case, they just intentionally put them into the group of farmers who were sued, but when they realised that these two men were not farmers then they removed them. So now in the group only 9 people remain.

So how many times have you had to go to court?

Already five times.

So what was the result from going to court five times?

The case has not been reviewed yet because they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] failed to come to the court. Kaung Myanmar Aung Company sued the farmers and they failed to come to the court.

So, how have the police solved that situation?

The police do not solve the case. The police told us that they [peasant party] took back U Saw Maung's son. U Saw Maung is a manager in the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company. After the peasant party removed U Saw Maung's son from the group of farmers who were sued, he [son of U Saw Maung] said that he didn't want to go to the court as it was not his concern. He thought it was his father's issue, which his father should deal with. So he rejected the case and no one followed that case. The case was submitted by the company and there was nobody to follow the case. The peasant party and U Saw Maung did it.

So when the case happened like this, as the farmers have been facing land problems, how do the farmers try to respond in order to get their lands back?

We have not responded with anything to them. We just act in accordance to the law. However, we have no one to help us. So we have to find the place where we can get help from people. We will act according to the justice system.

As you have said previously '*don't come into my land if you come, I will cut you with a knife*'. So this is one of your responses to protect your land. Likewise, have you responded to them by organising people and holding a demonstration?

We used to do *Hton Done Tike Bwe* [farmers harvest their paddy early because of land confiscation]. That was organised by the farmers only. At the time both the media and the police came [to the event]. They just came to the event and did not do anything against us. But, recently, we have been sued because of the *Hton Done Tike Bwe* and because we built a hut on the land. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company workers] came when we were cleaning [in our land]. So as we were cleaning, of course it [the job] included a knife. So I was holding a knife and asking them what they were doing here. They replied that they came to take a photograph. '*Why did you come to take a photo*' I asked, and they also asked me how many people stayed in the house and I replied that it is not their business how many people lived in my house. '*What are you coming here for?*' I asked. '*Are you coming to kill me?*' I just asked them like that. '*You don't have to question me about how many people sleep in my house*'. They were just young men.

As part of protecting [the land], have you gathered villagers to hold a demonstration? Or what kind of response do you do to get your land back?

We have never done any demonstrations, particularly [not] for my plot of land. Once, in 2014, the peasant party convinced us, by gathering the farmers [together], to hold a demonstration for the farmers. So we held one demonstration in 2014, but that demonstration was not successful and it has stopped. In 2015 the peasant party came back again. They [peasant party] told us that although the lands were previously owned by our ancestors, only U Khin Maung Aye has the right to work on the 2,400 acres of land. It means that he [U Khin Maung Aye] will buy the 2,400 acres of land from us, or they asked us to plant teak trees on the land or else we would have to pay money. If we don't agree with this and we don't plant the teak trees then they will sue us. They threatened us like that. Since then, we have not dared to plant anything on the land. In the past, we planted paddy and beans on the land and we had to look after our plantation a lot. On the other hand, we have to work on the land for the future of our generation.

We were summoned to the administration office on November 24th to have our land measured. We went to the administration office. When we arrived to the office they recorded the names of who had come to the office. They [people of the administration office] explained to us that they did not want to meet with U Saw Maung [any man], not with anybody. They [people of the administration office] just wanted to meet with U Khin Maung Aye. Therefore, through the township office they were invited to meet with U Khin Maung Aye. They held a meeting with U Khin Maung Aye at a hall and also told the farmers that if we wanted to know more about land issue, then a responsible person from the land department would attend the meeting and we could ask [them] what we wanted to know. We did not attend the meeting, only the administrator who told the farmers to measure the land

attended the meeting.

That administrator already said that he would measure the land to get the Land Form #7. After that where did he take the farmers to?

He took us to the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company office.

So what happened next, after the farmers went to the office?

They just shouted at us, asking what we went there for. [They said] that we didn't need to go there and to get out of the office. We were afraid of them when they shouted at us like that. We just replied to them that we had heard from responsible people at the land department, so we came to ask them what we wanted to know. But they just shouted at us and told us to go back, that they didn't want to see anyone. Therefore, we had to go back without getting any of the information that we wanted to know. So this time, although U Khin Maung Aye himself invited us to attend the meeting, we would not dare to attend because we were already shouted at once to get out of the office.

So, as you have experienced that once [verbal abuse] you would not go to the meeting this time even though you were invited to attend?

Yes.

It is because of their negative reputation?

That is right, because when we go to their territory we do not know what they will do to us, will they get us into trouble or not, we do not know. That is why we did not dare to attend the meetings anymore, but U Soe Win did attend a meeting and he explained [to us] about what was discussed at the meeting. U Soe Win said that he was asked by U Khin Maung Aye '*do the farmers want to meet with me?*' and he replied no. Then U Khin Maung Aye asked him again '*are you the person who is the in charge of the farmers?*' and he replied yes. Then U Khin Maung Aye asked him what they [the farmers] would like to happen, and he replied that the farmers only wanted to get their lands back, as the lands were previously owned by their ancestors. U Khin Maung Aye said to him '*it is right; in the past their ancestors owned the land but now I own the land*'. This is what U Khin Muang Aye said, as U Soe Win recited to us.

For the land measurements on behalf of M--- village, I said that we, the M--- villagers, did not agree to the measurement of our lands because our M--- villagers have had to go to court twice already. The first time four female farmers and one male farmer were sued, and the second time ten farmers were sued. So we will not let our land get measured anymore. We will just wait until the justice process is done. They said that we have to measure our land to provide them with a Land Form #7. And we replied to them that we could apply for a Land Form #7 by ourselves. So we, the M--- villagers, will definitely not [let our] lands be measured. But some villagers from N--- may let their lands be measured.

So those who let their lands be measured don't know anything about the land?

Yes. For us, our land was measured once in the past so this time we cannot measure our lands again, because they will trick the farmers again and that is why we don't let our lands be measured. We just confirmed that the initial measurement was the correct one.

Did they say that they will return the land to the farmers, by measuring the land?

They just said that and they did not make it happen in reality. The land was measured on May 7th [no year mentioned]. For four villages, the land measurement was done on the 28th of May, and now it is already December, so if the land measurement was really processed a Land Form #7 should have been provided to the farmers [by now]. But rather than getting a Land Form #7 the farmers were sued in court.

We don't want [them] to measure our lands because the first time they measured the land it was ten acres and the second time it was six acres.

So you mean that every time they measured the land it was not correct, for example one time they gave one measurement and another time they gave another measurement, which meant that the result of land measurement was never correct?

That is right.

So the amount of land has gotten less and less every time they measured it?

Yes, that is right. Just consider right now, they said that the land was 2,400 acres but if you measure it exactly and properly it is over 3,000 acres.

Are those lands owned by the local villagers?

Yes, those are our lands. We still have the land tax receipts that have been paid since our ancestor's era. We have kept those receipts until now.

Did you show your receipts when they come to confiscate your land?

The farmers did not know they confiscated the land. They came with a big group of around 50 people, but at that time farmers were busy cleaning the land [cutting the trees] in order to grow paddy in rainy season, so they did not know about people coming to the land. At first, I tried to go and talk with that group of people with my sister-in-law but she was busy growing plants, so I went to talk to them alone. When I reached them I asked '*what are you doing by coming here [what is your intention]?*' but they did not answer me. It was about to be the planting period, as the rainy season was coming in two months, so we had started cleaning the land in advance. They also entered our land to clean the land. They did not even tell us that '*we will confiscate your land and give you a proper compensation*'. They just entered our lands and cleaned it, so I asked them '*can't we work on our land anymore?*' and they replied '*you do not have any chance to work on your land because this plot of land has become company land*.' Then I asked them '*can a company trespasses this much?*' and they also asked me '*what do you have to plant now?*' So I replied to them '*we just do seasonal plantations*' and they said '*you can do that*'. I replied to them '*although we can plant our plantations, you also come onto our land and plant teak trees, and when you plant the teak trees you step on our paddy*'. So I told them '*I don't want my paddy destroyed*' and they did not respond to me.

After we grew the paddy, and when the young paddy shoots had come out to around four inches, they came and planted the teak trees. I reported this to the superior [farmers] and the superiors did not feel good about that. So they arranged to do the *Hton Done Tike Bwe*

for the farmers and we did it on that land. The company workers [will] come to clean the land and if they do so they will destroy my paddy, so I cannot let them enter my land at all. They did not include me in the list of the people that they were going to sue, instead they recorded my name in their office and they told their superiors that they could not enter my land. Their superiors told them not to enter my land but to clean the surrounding land. They have planted teak trees on the land, which they transported to the village in two cars. A few weeks ago I told them not to enter my land or else I would sue them for trespassing on my land, and then I grabbed my phone and photographed them. I told them *'I don't even care if you report [me to] your superiors, about what I have told you. Would you like to sue me? Just do it. We just request that you do not enter our land'*. However, they did not openly enter my land but they entered it secretly from the back of the land and cleaned some parts of my land.

So, all of your plants were destroyed?

Yes. I reported it to U Soe Win and told him that my lands were cleaned and they cut down the trees and burnt the rubber trees. Now, I have nothing on my land, what should I do? Then he replied that the sector would be dealt with [later]. All of the plants on my plot of land were cut down and the rubber trees that had already grown were also destroyed. I asked him about this and he replied that this sector would be dealt with as well.

So, according to what you have said, that chairman [U Soe Win] is on the side of the company?

That is right.

Was this man [U Soe Win] elected as chairman by the local villagers?

Whether he was elected by the local villagers or not is not our concern. The chairman that was elected by the villagers is Poe Htaung, but he did not do a good job so U Soe Win temporarily replaced Poe Htaung.

So you mean that the company used the people they can rely on in order to control this village?

Yes.

Another thing is that we have heard about the land conflict, and this morning I saw that there was demonstration about a land conflict. So, can you explain to me what has happened?

We have wanted to do a demonstration [regarding the land conflict] for the past month.

So, what was the objective of the demonstration?

The objective of the demonstration was to get back the lands that were owned by our ancestors. But they [company] do not want to give us any of them [lands]. We do not agree to take any money if they come and give us money, because if we let them occupy our land our generation will have no land to work on. The situation we live in is between two companies that are confiscating our lands.

What are those two companies?

Asia World Company and Shwe Shwan Inn [a sister company of Asia World] hydro power Company. Those companies request to buy the lands in the proper way with a fair price. However, there are fewer Bamar local villagers and more Kayin local villagers. The administrator of Htone Bo told the villagers to sell their land for 3 million kyat an acre, or else their land would be confiscated. If people threaten the Kayin villagers they are afraid. They were afraid that their land would be confiscated so they sold their lands to Shwe Shwan Inn Company for three millions kyat an acre. Now the lands from the other side of the village were stolen [by Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] instead of [sold] for money.

What is the name of company that stole the lands?

Kaung Myanmar Aung Company. They confiscated the land twice, once in 2009 and once again in 2015. They forcedly entered the land, cleaned the land and planted the teak trees. Like this aunty, when they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] confiscated her mango plantation they said that they would pay her compensation but she has not received anything yet. This aunty is a widow who she lives alone and now she has no place to live. She threw all of the receipts of the land tax into the toilet. She has to live in a very difficult situation as she cannot build a hut when the land is full of the teak trees, so she has to build a temporary shelter and live among the teak trees. Unfortunately, she was sued by the company for building a temporary shelter among the teak trees. She was sued three times.

If she touched the teak tree then she was sued?

That right.

She just tied a line between rows of teak trees in order to make a roof. Although she was told that she would be paid compensation she has not received anything until now. Maybe the superiors of the company already gave the compensation properly, but the staff or workers of the company did not manage it according to their leaders and they exploited the compensation, which is why the farmers have not received anything. Meanwhile, some farmers sold their lands but some did not agree to sell their lands at all, [not] even for any amount that they will be paid for it. Some farmers were also concerned that their lands would be finally confiscated in the end, so they sold them for whatever price [was offered]. So, since many people had many different concerns regarding their land they did not have a common agreement, and the land conflict got out of the control and the land problem could not be solved.

Since early 2015 the situation has not been like that anymore. We absolutely do not accept that the company can enter our lands.

So you mean in the past some farmers sold their land because they were threatened by the company?

That is right.

If you have land tax receipts you can sell [the land for] 150,000 kyat, and people who do not have it can sell the land for 50,000 kyat. The buying and selling process was facilitated by the police.

They [the police] report to U Khin Maung Aye when he comes and the land along the road faces the same situation. Then, U Khin Maung told to U Soe Win that '*you have no background [experience/power] so you cannot do [act] like that*'. Therefore, U Soe Win spent much of his own money and bought the land from the farmers. This means there is no proper connection between the higher superiors and the field staff [between U Khin Maung, who is the company owner, and U Soe Win, who is the company manager].

We submitted the permission letter for the demonstration we held this morning a long time ago, but it was rejected and we [the farmers] kept submitting the permission letter [to the police station]. However, they mostly rejected our permission request letters, until finally after we kept submitting the letters constantly they approved us to hold a demonstration. They only permitted us to hold a demonstration between 9:30am and 12:30pm. When the company heard that we had gotten permission to hold a demonstration, they [company] also held a demonstration and they will keep doing it more than we can. They will [hold a demonstration on] Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so they will hold a demonstration for three days. For the farmers, according to our ancestor's customs, we only held it [the demonstration] today.

So you held a demonstration today, right? So what was your main slogan in the demonstration?

The main slogan was to get our land back from the company.

What else is there? Is there any other justice system?

Our land issue has never been solved in the justice system. They [company] just blindly confiscated our land and we [the farmers] were not content with that so we held a demonstration. As I have mentioned, they sued my sister-in-law for building a hut. They did not even negotiate with us or give us any money as compensation.

So how many people participated in the demonstration that was held this morning?

120 [people].

Only that many?

When we submitted the permission letter to the township office we requested to hold a demonstration with 200 people. However, some people were travelling when the demonstration happened and some people were too afraid to participate in the demonstration. On the other hand, they just gave us a very short period of time for the demonstration, so we did not have enough time to inform all the farmers about the demonstration. So we just spread out the information from one [person] to another. Some people who heard about the news through gossip joined the demonstration and some people were afraid to join the demonstration, although they had been informed ahead of the event. Kayin villagers were very fearful and the reason why they were so fearful was because in the past they were ruled by the military [Tatmadaw] and oppressed by the soldiers who beat them. So as soon as they see the police or soldiers they already afraid of them.

Does the Tatmadaw or the police provide security for you when you hold a demonstration?

No, only for their [company] side.

Was there any police present during the event?

Yes, but the police was present only at the request of the company.

How about the military [Tatmadaw]?

Yes, at the request of the company.

Do you mean that they [the police and Tatmadaw] are monitoring farmers when they hold a demonstration?

Yes.

Did they create a barrier for the farmers when they held the demonstration?

They will arrest us if we do anything wrong during the demonstration. During the demonstration they do not allow us to bring things such as stones, sticks, bottles of drinking water and knives, according to the rule of law. Maybe they just watch us by following the demonstration from behind. However, none of the farmers were bringing anything like sticks or stones. We held the demonstration although we were thirsty, only because of our intention to get back our lands that had been confiscated by Kaung Myanmar Aung Company.

So, the police and soldiers closely watched the farmers during the demonstration for security?

Yes, that is right.

So, how do the farmers feel about that? Are the farmers afraid of them?

No, we are not afraid of them, and as long as we are not afraid of them it makes the people from Kaung Myanmar Aung Company very angry. It would be best for us if Kaung Myanmar Aung Company did not exist, and in our minds we only want to get our land back. We do not want Kaung Myanmar Aung Company; we do not want the peasant party; that is according to our slogan. The peasant party is just negotiating about the land problem between the company and farmers for money.

In your demonstration how many slogans were included? Can you tell me that?

Kaung Myanmar Aung Company occupied and forcedly confiscated our lands that are our heritage from our ancestors and this is our concern; the returning of the local villagers land that they have been working on since their ancestors era is our concern; the resolution of the land problem according to the law is our concern; the farmers do not want pretend agents, because now some of the farmers agents are fake; and also the next [last] slogan is that we do not want Kaung Myanmar Aung Company.

By saying there are pretend farmers' agents, are you saying that the peasant party is doing the taking and the giving between Kaung Myanmar Aung Company and the farmers?

Yes. That is definitely right.

So are there any trustworthy peasant party agents, or do they provide any advantage for the farmers?

No, we have nothing. They, the peasant party, firstly said that they would deal with our land problem so we gave them our vote. They would manage to get our land returned to us if we voted for them and if they won the election. But they did not win the election and they only got seven votes.

So this peasant party has been formed by the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company?

That is right.

Do you want to say it like that?

Yes, yes.

That is why this peasant party gets involved with this land problem all the time. For example, only if I requested or asked for help from them then they will do what we ask for. So now, as for our farmers, we just consider that they are messing us around, they just do that because the company asks them to do so. That is why we do not trust this peasant party at all.

So they [peasant party] convince the farmers?

Yes, very often. Before we gave our vote to the peasant party they summoned the farmers to the peasant party office. When we were called we analysed whether we should go there or not, and finally we went there. When we got to their office what they told us was '*now U Khin Maung Aye has given me authority. Just plant the teak trees that U Khin Maung Aye asked you to plant. If you do not want to plant teak trees, then plant rubber trees or plant Yaymalin tree on the plot of land [acres] that you have. If you plant the teak trees the company will give you money for the cost. They will provide the teak trees and if you do not know how to plant them then they will give you guidelines. If you do not have money, select the people who do not have money and then they will lend money to the farmers who do not have money*'. Then I stood up and replied to them that '*if we have to do that for the company then we cannot do that*'. Then, they replied to me that '*if you cannot do that, then your plot of land will be confiscated*'. They just said that '*U Khin Maung Aye will not plant the teak trees and you the farmers also do not have to plant [the teak trees] as well*', but after they said that they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] came and forcedly planted the teak trees on our land.

That was said by the peasant party?

Yes.

What is the name of person who leads the peasant party?

U Kyaw Soe Moe. The person who leads the peasant party is U Kyaw Soe Moe and the person who is active on the ground is Zaw Palae Say.

What is that name? Zaw Soe Moe?

Zaw Palae Say is a local villager, and the people who came in and out and spoke were U Kyaw Soe Moe and U Htun Kyi.

You have mentioned that the day before the farmers held their demonstration the company held a demonstration, right?

Yes.

What were they demonstrating for?

Their concern was about a greenfly environment, according to their slogan. They just shouted a few points.

How many of them were in the demonstration?

Maybe just around 30 people.

What did they use to travel around for the demonstration?

They went by car, and it was a car that Kaung Myanmar Aung Company provided for transportation.

Where were those people from, do you know?

Some of them included men and women from their company, and if they felt it was [not] enough then they hired people from the villages nearby.

What do you mean by hiring people?

If a villager followed the demonstration group then they gave that villager 5,000 kyat, a portion of rice and a bottle of drinking water. That villager just had to follow them.

So villagers only had to follow them?

Yes.

And the company hired extra people from the outside?

Yes.

They held a demonstration the day before yours and today you held a demonstration, so will they do more demonstrations?

They had already left by 2pm by car and tomorrow they will also continue to hold the demonstration.

So you held yours once and they held theirs three times?

That is right.

Does that mean they wanted to show off the number of people that they have and what they can do?

Yes, yes definitely.

But from the farmers' side, the demonstration depends on the number of people they have, whether they can get the permission for the demonstration easily and moreover, if they hold a demonstration for one day it will affect their daily livelihoods?

Yes.

But for this company, even though they were absent for a week to hold a demonstration, there is no problem for them?

Yes.

Now they have heard about how we submitted the permission letter for the demonstration, and then they said to let the farmers do it because if the farmers can do once they can do it three times.

On Saturday, the township officer gave us permission for only three hours starting at 9:20am to 12:30 pm. They gave us a very limited time. For them [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company], they held [the demonstration] on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, they held it for three days.

Were they allowed to do that for 24 hours?

Not like that. They started walking around 8am and as they have money they go around by car. But for the farmers, we just have to do it on foot.

As you mentioned previously, in order to be able to hold a demonstration you have to submit a permission [letter], which means that you cannot get permission easily to do that. Do they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] also have to submit the permission letter like you do?

No, they don't have to. They can do [demonstrate] anytime they want.

So, do you see that they are doing it under the law or not?

They are the people living above the law. They are rich people, which are why they stay above the law, but for us we are poor people and we have to live under the law.

According to my understanding, what you mean is that the influence of the law in Myanmar goes up and down, it doesn't have the same influence over everyone. Is this right?

Yes, the law cannot influence them. The law doesn't influence rich people, only the poor people.

So, because of the land problem and the land confiscation you lost your land, which affected your daily work and made you unemployed?

That's right, we became unemployed and we cannot do anything.

So how do you solve this problem?

When they confiscated and cleaned our lands, we could not harvest our plantation anymore and we had to [buy] eight bowls of bean seeds from other people and I had to pay 16,000 kyat per bowl. I planted those eight bowls and when the seedlings came out they cleaned them off. I tried to save the seeds but I lost all of them as they were cut down. In my family we have six family members including myself, my husband and my two daughters and two sons-in-law. To solve our livelihood problem all of our family members have to dig for *gone gar* [underground nut] in the forest and the hill, and we can sell it for 800 kyat per viss, so we can dig it and only [make] four to five thousand kyat per day. Amidst this situation of hardship, I also tried to follow this demonstration.

How about other villagers? Did some people migrate to where jobs are available?

As I have the most worry for my family, I prefer to face whatever together. So if we are hungry, all of us will have the same hunger, and when we have food to eat, then all of us will eat together. I will do an odd job because I don't want my family to be separated [by migration].

How about other people? Have they gone to another place for work?

Yes, some people have gone to other places for work. Most of them are Kayin villagers, and as they were very fearful after their lands were confiscated they just do [work for] daily wages. For us, we are Bamar and we are not afraid of either the police or Tatmadaw. So Bamar villagers do not do [work for] daily wages, only the Kayin villagers. Villagers who do daily wages can earn four to five thousand kyat per day.

So was the situation different before and after your lands were confiscated?

The situations were very different.

The cut down all of the plants and not even one plant of thatch tree has been left. Since we do not have any thatch trees we have to find other ways to make our house roofing, for example we have to use tarpaulin with very little thatch for the roofing. Before they confiscated our land we could plant all kinds of beans, we could plant the rainy season bean or the winter season bean, based on the season we could scatter any kind of seed. We could also grow paddy freely. So we could earn our income through growing paddy or bean. Now, in the winter season we can grow the green bean and groundnut, and we can run regularly for our living cost. If we can grow beans in the rainy season the price is 27,000 kyat for one bag of bean in the rainy season, but now we cannot grow green bean.

So what are the advantages and disadvantages of the company entering the area?

There has been one advantage since two companies entered the area. Shwe Shwan Inn Company entered the area first and they repaired the road, so it is good for the local community, and the communication has improved since that company entered. Shwe Shwan Inn built a school for the local community and also they provided electricity, repaired the road and the water supply. But the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company did not do anything to benefit the local community.

For the disadvantages, some villagers were afraid of them [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] and some villagers sold their land for an odd [low] price, as the most they can [now] sell is for 150,000 kyat per acre. At the beginning, they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] paid only three thousand to five thousand kyat, but now they pay 150,000 kyat.

Local villagers in Toungoo and Htantabin townships rely on the cultivated land along the road and when the Shwe Shwan Inn Company came we expected that it would be good for the local community. But now we cannot work on that cultivated land because they stole the water that [we] use for the cultivated land. Since then, our cultivated land has dried up and we cannot work on it anymore, so the company was not profitable [beneficial] for the local community.

In the past we could also rely on this river, we collected and sold the stone but now we cannot drive the boat to collect the stone. So we cannot do anything and when we grew the plants on the cultivated land the plants dried up and died. In the summer we did not have any water. That is why none of the companies are good. They blocked the water drain. Some villagers even had to pay the [Kaung Myanmar Aung] company 50,000 kyat per acre; they had to accept it because they were afraid of the people of the company. Some people from the company didn't even say that they would pay any compensation and they entered and planted the teak trees.

They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] didn't pay us any compensation for the plants they grew in 2012 and 2013, and now in 2015 they did not even hold any consultation with us and forcedly entered our land and planted teak trees. Moreover, when they crossed over in front of my house they insulted me and swore at me because the cows blocked their way.

Are you talking about the staff of the company?

Yes, U Saw Maung's son swore at us. If they were normal villagers like us, I would have dared to reply them that we are just poor people and how could we let the cows block their way? But they are the people of the [Kaung Myanmar Aung] company and they are rich people, so I did not dare to reply them. Although they are the people from the higher classes and they are educated people they are so rude.

In term of the advantages of the companies, as you mentioned they provided electricity and water and they also improved the road, so did they also provide job opportunities in the company?

No, on our side, where the majority of Kayin villagers live, there is a monastery but they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] did not support that monastery, however, the Shwe Shwan Inn Company supported everything as needed. They [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] didn't even give 2,000 kyat to monastery; I have already asked the monks. All of the materials, such as wood for the monastery's repairs, are the monastery's own; none of it was supported by the company [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company]. Just look at this point; the company did not even support the monastery.

The people of the Shwe Shwan Inn Company also did not get along with the monks. According to the custom of Buddhism, every year there is a celebration of *Ka Htein* but we are just poor villagers and we are not able to give any donation for the event. So this year, we were not able to celebrate *Ka Htein*.

As you mentioned, they [Shwe Shwan Inn Company] provided electricity and a road, is that also for their own usage?

Yes, it is for themselves, just for their own usage.

However, they allow the local villagers to consume that out of their own usage?

Yes.

Is there anything they particularly do for the villagers?

Nothing, like now, in our M--- village they have had to sign that they will return the land that they confiscated in the village, including the cemetery land, all together about 70 acres. Also they said that they will provide us with 100 acres of land to work on, but they have not done it yet. There are two cemetery lands, which are a childrens' cemetery and an adult's cemetery.

They have not returned the land yet?

Yes.

The lands are also covered by the water because of the Shwe Shwan Inn Company project, right?

Yes and they also have to return the land that they bought from the farmers, but they have not returned the land, instead they are planting plantations on the land. They planted banana trees, rubber trees and teak trees.

So, Shwe Shwan In Company is not doing this only to produce electricity?

Yes, not only to produce electricity.

They also do long term plantations?

That's right, but at that time the farmers just sold the land to them without knowing anything about the company. But if the farmers sell all of the land that they have, then there will be no land remaining for them to work on, so Shwe Shwan Inn Company just told the farmers to sell as much as they could and to keep some for themselves. So some farmers sold two acres and some sold three acres, but now Kaung Myanmar Aung Company came in and stole the rest of the remaining land.

We just kept some land for ourselves, to work on it for our livelihood but Kaung Myanmar Aung Company stole our land. We are living between the rich people, so we got into trouble. If you [KHRG researcher] help us we can get our lands back. People who came and said [they would] help us did not actually help us, and they are just people from the company side, like the peasant party. Also, if we got our lands back for 3 million kyat per acres with their [peasant party's] help then we have to give them back 150,000 kyat for their profit.

So the peasant party is taking from and giving to the farmers?

Yes, we have to give half to the peasant party. But it not actually by the agreement, they just do that by their own agreement, for example if they can help us by selling our land for 300,000 kyat per acre then they will take half of the money for 150,000 kyat.

How to say, as farmers we are not afraid so we do not give our signature and if they give us money we do not accept it, we just want our land back.

As you have mentioned you held a demonstration today, so have you heard that the [Kaung Myanmar Aung] company will come and negotiate with you?

Yes, just a moment ago. The top leader of the company came with two cars and said to follow them to discuss the land problem.

Who said that?

Ko C--- was the one who came and sat here a moment ago, he is a local villager here.

Is he acting as an agent?

Yes, his land was also included in the confiscated list.

But the company wants to negotiate with the local villagers about the land problem?

Yes, but the local villagers do not agree to negotiate, because they just came to negotiate after we held the demonstration.

There will be things that I have not asked, so if there is anything else you want to talk about you can tell now.

What we want is to get back our land and we want to work on our land freely. Now we are getting old, so if we plant the banana trees, depending on the extent of our plot of land, we could earn 80,000 kyat or up to 100,000 kyat within a week. By earning that amount of income we can generate costs for our living. I am already 54 years old so I want to have a plot of land and I plan to have a banana plantation, but now we are faced with this land problem. If we have a plot of land we can plant lemons, bananas, whatever, but now we have to buy food.

Like my plot of land, when everything was ready to plant banana trees they came and planted teak trees. So now we are in trouble as we cannot plant any trees on our plot of land. They burnt down all of my lemon trees and banana trees.

We have reported to U Thaug Nyunt, a lawyer from the company, with the hope of getting help from him because people from the company burnt down all of our planted trees, and he asked us what we would like to happen. He also said that [we should] write up a report and submit it to the office, then I asked him '*which office do I have to submit to?*' and then he said '*submit to the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company office they will deal it for you*'. But we do not dare to submit the report and we have to live in fear. In the past if we feel dizzy or have hypertension, then we can cure it with the lemon leaf or fruit, but now we don't have those trees anymore. We don't even have any trees on our plot of land, what we had was one lemon tree, four mango trees, and all together we had planted 65 mango trees. They destroyed all of the trees that we had planted since our ancestor's era. Who do we have to

report all this to? Even if we reported it wouldn't affect us. That is why we have to live in a fearful condition.

That company [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] is a thief company. This morning one of the villagers recorded the voice of U Khin Muang Aye, what he said was '*how pitiful that the forest has become deforested, but I am getting rich by not doing the logging, I getting rich in another ways*'. As he is a resident of Htantabinin he said that he just was replanting the teak trees because of the deforestation and it is getting hotter. They are the perpetrators who are doing the deforestation. They plant teak trees because they make profit by doing it.

Thank you so much for answering the questions.

We also thank you so much for coming and asking us questions.

Just one thing, will you let KHRG publish this information?

Yes, we will because we want to get the news out to the world.

Source #113

Log #	16-10-A4-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Interview Date: January 12th 2016</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>I am Saw Bx--- and I work as a plantation worker [farmer] in A--- area [village], Na Ga Mauk village tract, Toungoo Township, Bago Region.</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I will be 36 in the coming May [2016].</p> <p>What is your ethnicity?</p> <p>I am Karen.</p> <p>What is your religion?</p> <p>I am Christian.</p> <p>Are you married?</p> <p>Yes, I am.</p> <p>How many family members do you have?</p>	

I have seven family members; three sons and two daughters.

What is your occupation?

I mainly do farming and I also work on a plantation for my livelihood.

Where do you live?

I live in O--- old village, Na Ga Mauk village tract, Toungoo Township, Bago Region.

Do you face any problems regarding the land?

We face huge problems related to the land. Since 2009, the CB Bank chairman, U Khin Maung Aye, who owns Kaung Myanmar Aung Company, applied [to the Burma/Myanmar government] that the lands in these four villages, O---, L---, M--- and N--- villages in Na Ga Mauk village tract, Toungoo Township, Bago Region, are free and uncultivated lands and they [the Burma/Myanmar government] signed on paper [agreed]. Therefore, they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] were given permission on paper [to work on the land]. When they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] came into the area [villages], they cleared all the trees in our land. They put pressure [on the villagers]. Those villagers who did not want to take [the money for their lands] were forced to take it, and those villagers who did not want to leave were forced to leave. The villagers have been sued many times by the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company staff up until today, January 12th 2016. On [January] 18th [2016], 12 of the villagers are appointed to [attend] the court for trial and will be seen three at a time; 12 villagers are also appointed [to go to the court] for trial on 25th [of January 2016] and they will be seen one at a time. We [I] do not what [punishment they will be given].

How many times have the villagers been sued?

Personally, I have been sued three times already. I have been sued three times by three plaintiffs.

Did the truth emerge?

The [truth] case did not emerge at the first [trial]. The truth did not emerge at the second one either. As they are rich, they might have given a bribe [to the court officer]. I have faced [trial] twice already and I do not [know] what will happen when the third trial comes.

Was the case that you were sued for not true?

It was not totally true [even if the case went] in accordance with the law.

What did you try to do in order to regain your land?

We are going to keep doing [protests] in accordance with the law [to regain our land]. We have protested twice already. In order to regain our land, I am going to do [protest] resolutely until we get back our land. I am going to try to regain my land although I will be given punishment or be put into the jail, as the land is very important for us and we mainly rely on our land for our livelihood.

As I know, regarding attempts to regain the land, two or three villagers started to protest, as well as groups of people who have gathered together to protest. There have been three or four protests.

There has been no protest where only two or three people gathered and held the protest. On December 5th 2015, 80 farmers gathered and held a protest, because the farmers are easily afraid [so they gathered many people together]. Some farmers were afraid of the CB Bank Chairman, U Khin Maung Aye, [who is the] father-in-law of the second Minister for Home Affairs, Ko Ko, as well as the advisor of the President [U Thein Sein], and [they were afraid of] the police and the soldiers who were providing security so they went back home. Therefore, only 80 farmers protested that day. Today, on January 12th 2016, we protested again. The number of the people was about 150 to 200.

As you protested on December 5th 2015 with 80 farmers, what was the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company's response?

I applied for the [permission letter] for #2 police station [to be able to] protest. I applied for it more than three times. When I applied [for it] for the fourth time, I was given permission [to protest]. I do not know whether Kaung Myanmar Aung company applied for permission [to protest] or not. We protested once but they protested three times. I do not know whether they [the protests by Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] are legal and in accordance with the law. As an uneducated farmer, I see that they do not go in accordance with the law.

Did you have rules for the protest?

I wanted to write on the sign board [of the protest] "*CB Bank chairman, U Khin Maung Aye, owns the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company*" but I was not allowed to write it. I was allowed to use only "*Kaung Myanmar Aung Company*" on the sign board. I also wanted to use [write] "*We do not want the government department [staff] to solve it for us*" but they wanted us to write "*Government should solve this for us*".

What about the other rules about what the protesters were allowed to bring or not during the protest?

We asked them not to bring water bottles, sticks, knives, and stones.

Where did you protest to?

We started at Maung G---'s [villager] hut, which is in the lower part of M--- village, [and went] to the crossroads of L--- village.

What time were you allowed to protest?

They gave us only three hours. We started at 9:00AM to 12:00PM.

Did you have enough time [for the protest]?

Yes, we had. We had to rush and protest.

Did they sue the villagers after they protested?

Yes, they did. U Thaung Nyut from Kaung Myanmar Aung Company sued 12 villagers, including me and a couple of Ko H--- [villagers] so there were 13 people in total. However, the sued villagers had more than 13 cases. They signed the promise document in M--- police office, which is not at the court yet. Three villagers have signed two sections of the document, which are section #447 and section #427, but I do not know yet when they are going to court.

When did they sign the document?

It might have been on December 29th [2015] that they signed the document. Now, the second police officer, Than Zaw Oo, is in charge of the case [police station].

The three villagers were asked to sign the document, right. What kind of document did they sign?

They said that the villagers were trespassing on the lands [that their project was being carried out on] so they were asked to sign a promise document and they were sued. However, they have not been sent to the Township court yet.

Are the lands the villagers?

The land belongs to the villagers and they live and work on the land. Their grandparents passed these lands on to them. However, they pressured the villagers in many different ways and sued them with many different sections.

The villagers are facing cases. Is there any possibility that they will have to mediate [with the police]?

I do not know whether they will have mediation or not. Today is January 12th [2016]. On January 11th [2016], they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] used a strategy. They called to meet the farmers who are not actually farmers from the villages. The Farmers' Development Party held a meeting at a hall with them and distributed letters to them, but we, the real farmers, did not receive any letters. They, Kaung Myanmar Aung Company and the Farmers' Development Party, with other media groups, had a conference.

Did anyone from your village attend the meeting?

There were only a few villagers from our village who attended the meeting.

Were most of those people who were in the meeting their staff?

Yes, there were only those who had been forced to attend the meeting, their staff and other villagers who were forced to go. No real farmers [from the village] went and attended the meeting.

How did you apply for permission for today's protest?

We applied for permission from #2 police station. We got permission and protested. But when we protested a police officer shouted at me and said "*Saw Bx---! Why are you using the loud speaker for your slogans? Stop it immediately!*" I replied to him "*Are you going to arrest me? Tell me if you are going to arrest me.*" He replied, "*I won't arrest you but please*

stop it." I do not know what trouble they are going to give me regarding that.

Did you protest today because you want to regain your land?

Yes, the main reason that we protested was to regain our land. We are the farmers and we mainly depend on the farm for our livelihood.

The #2 police station officer told you to stop using the slogan. What did it say?

The slogan said "*We want to regain our confiscated land. We do not want the Farmer Development Party. We do not want Kaung Myanmar Aung Company. Kaung Myanmar Aung Company to leave immediately.*"

What do you mean by "Kaung Myanmar Aung Company to leave immediately"? Where do you want them to leave?

We want them to leave all of the four villages where they confiscated the villagers land [for their project] and to stop their project.

How many women and men were involved in the protest?

There were a number of women and men involved in the protest. I do not know exactly how many as I did not count them.

Were children also involved [in the protest]?

Yes, there were also children involved. There were four or five children who are about 15 or 16 years old. As their parents lands were confiscated, they could not stand [it] and protested together with their parents.

When you protested on December 5th 2015, were there any police for your security?

Yes, when we protested, both the police and soldiers guarded us for security and the protest went well. This year [on January 12th 2016], when we protested in Toungoo town, I did not see any police [guard for security].

Were they [police and soldiers] watching you or providing security for you [on December 5th 2015]?

We did not know whether they were watching us or providing security for us.

Did you notice if anyone was watching you?

I saw that Kaung Myanmar Aung company staff were always watching us. The Farmers' Development Party also came and donated water to the villagers, but we did not dare to drink [their water]. If they are willing to serve the villagers, why have they not served [us] since the beginning [of the land dispute]. However, they came and donated water after we protested. If they had put toxic [poison] in the water, then we would have died if we drunk it.

Were water bottles allowed to taken on the protest this year?

No, the water bottles were not allowed but some people donated water bottles and we drank them while we were protesting.

Did today's protest go smoothly?

Yes, it did.

Did all the protesters hear the sound from the loudspeaker?

When we protested in the town not all of the protesters heard the sound from the loudspeaker, as it was noisy with the cars passing. Therefore, we tried to use a sound box [for the slogans].

Who helped you organise the car for the protest?

Saya I--- supported the travelling and the cost [of the protest]. He supported the protest. He supported a conference [that we held] and paid for a judge when [the farmers] were appointed to go to the court.

What else would you like to add?

What I want to add is that I have been in trouble for almost three years regarding this [land confiscation] case. Whatever I did for my livelihood it was not successful. Whatsoever, I will face the case. It is not only for myself but for all of the farmers. I am ready to try [and face the case], whether I will be put into the jail, tied up, or ordered to be killed. My weakness is that I have financial hardship, for [supporting] my family or for travelling. However, I have been trying my best for all the farmers since December 2013 up until now [2016]. What I want is for the CB Bank chairman [U Khin Maung Aye] to return our lands. For that, I am going to cooperate with my *thara* [seniors]. Not only me but all the farmers depend on these lands for their livelihoods, and for sending their children to school. Therefore, we, all the farmers, have to fight together to regain the land, until we regain it.

Thank you for patiently providing this information.

Thank you.

Do you give KHRG permission to use this information?

Yes, I give permission.

Source #114

Log #	16-10-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>1. These photos were taken on November 25th 2015 in Htantabin Township, Toungoo District. These photos show Toh Boh Dam, also known as Thaukyaykhat-2 Dam. In</p>	

the initial construction of Toh Boh Dam, villagers were used as forced labour by SPDC (Tatmadaw/Myanmar government), and villagers have consistently lost their lands because of its construction. In spite of sending complaints to government authorities, only some villagers have received compensation from Shwe Swan In (Asia World), the company that took on the construction in partnership with the military government in 2008. SPDC (Tatmadaw/Myanmar government) has not compensated or acknowledged their contribution towards the abuses affecting villagers. According to the villagers, the areas above the dam were flooded causing displacement and loss of land and housing, and local people at the lower area of the dam have faced livelihood difficulties due to the dam's construction

2. This photo was taken on December 19th 2015. The photo shows villagers standing and holding signs that represent their complaints against Kaung Myanmar Aung Company (KMAC). According to the villagers, KMAC confiscated villagers' lands in Toh Boh village, Htantabin Township, Toungoo District, and the company did not provide any compensation to the villagers. After the ceasefire, villagers rebuilt their houses on the land, but the company accused them of trespassing on their land and forced the villagers to dismantle their houses and move. The signs from left to right read: *'The group that confiscated local peoples' land and filled a lawsuit against local farmers is Kaung Myanmar Aung Company'; 'The company that constructed the dam and did not pay compensation for the flooding area is called Asia World Company'; 'The area in which that company confiscated lands is called Toh Boh village'; and 'The group that confiscated villagers' farm lands and do not provide substitute lands to set up a village is called Asia World Company'.*
3. This photo was taken on December 5th 2015 in Htantabin Township, Toungoo District. The photo shows villagers holding a demonstration peacefully and marching in the street from Toh Boh village to Na Ga Mauk village against Kaung Myanmar Aung Company (KMAC). KMAC confiscated villagers' lands and made long-term plantations on those areas. Therefore, about 80 people whose lands were confiscated by KMAC from three local villages, Toh Boh, Na Ga Mauk and Yay Own Zin, marched in the street and held a demonstration in order to regain their lands. Some of these villagers are the same villagers who previously lost plantation lands and had to relocate due to flooding and land destruction under Toh Boh Dam. In accordance with the law, the local demonstrators proclaimed and raised placards which state, *"We do not need Kaung Myanmar Aung Company; We do not need the Farmers' Development Party; Return local people's lands, which have been inherited from our parents and grandparents, at once."*
4. This photo was taken on December 1st 2015. It shows Ku Pyoung village's primary school, located in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. This school is very old and in need of repair and renovation. It is a self-reliant school that has been managed and supported by villagers for a long time. Villagers have already applied three times for financial support from the Myanmar government but have not received any response from the government. The students and teachers report that they do need feel safe and secure due to the old building.

Source #115

Log #	16-12-A5-I1
Title / type of report	Interview

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Interview Date: January 24th 2016

Aunt what is your name?

My name is Naw A---

Where do you live?

I live in B--- village.

How old are you?

I am 25 years old.

What do you do for living?

I am working in ordinary work [daily labour work].

What is your ethnicity?

I am Bweh Karen.

What is your religion?

Anglican.

Is it Christian?

Yes.

What do you do?

I am working on a plantation and [I do] daily labour work. I have [own] a very small plantation.

How many households are there in your village?

There are 170 households.

Is there any school?

Yes.

How many standards are taught in the school?

Eight standards are taught in the school but it is not recognised as a middle school level yet. It is recognised only as a primary level.

Is there any hospital?

Only a clinic has been built here.

What do villagers mostly do for living?

They are mostly working on plantations and on daily labour work. Some of them are going to work in other countries.

Is there any military activity happening in here?

At the present time I have not heard anything. In the past [before 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement] they [military] were patrolling all the time. As we live very close to them we have to face many things [challenges].

Is there any forced labour or rape cases happening to any women here, or [any] killing cases?

I heard that [one] woman was killed by her husband. It happened because of domestic violence in their family.

When did it happen?

It occurred two or three months ago. [I think] it happened almost one year ago. He was drunk and abused his wife.

Is it because of domestic violence [that she was killed]?

Yes, sometimes domestic violence happens in families. I sometimes have arguments with my family.

Do you face any difficulties in your living [livelihood]?

As we work on daily labour work we face difficulties all the time.

What kind of difficulties do you face?

For my family we have to work for the whole week. If we do not work for a week we do not have anything to eat. It is one of our problems.

Are there any development projects such as road construction and school [construction] taking place around here?

We heard that people will build [upgrade] the school [but] whether they will build [upgrade] it or not we are not sure. The school is not recognised as a middle-school yet but we have submitted the case. We just heard [about the potential upgrade] in this way.

Where did you submit the case?

I heard that the village head submitted it for us.

What kind of difficulty do you face when you work on your daily labour work? We heard about head cutting [beheaded]¹⁰⁵?

We leave from our home to work at 7:00AM and some people [employers] do not allow us to come back even at 6:00PM. They ask us to work until 6-something, until dark. After we come back home we have to cook and feed the pig and chickens. It causes difficulty for us. We know that daily labour work [should] start at 7:00AM [and finish at] 4:00PM but they ask us to leave work at 6:00pm. Previously, they asked us to leave from work at 4:00PM. It causes difficulty for us because when we reach home it is already dark.

Was it happening here?

Yes it was happening here.

Has there been any land confiscation occurring here?

We got to know that the lands beside main road were confiscated by the forestry department.

When did they confiscate them?

They confiscated [land] since they started constructing the road. All the lands that are situated beside the road were confiscated.

Who confiscated the lands?

The forestry department.

Do you know their name?

We do not know their name we only heard that the lands were confiscated by the forestry department.

Did the villagers not go to talk with them?

At first the villagers did not understand [that they were confiscating the land]. At first my aunty lived over there but after the Tatmadaw came here they forced her to relocate from her land. They forced us to relocate then we [also] had to relocate. After we relocated they confiscated our land.

Has any forced labour happened after the 2012 [preliminary] ceasefire agreement?

It was happened a lot in the past but at the present time it has not happened.

What did you mean by the past? Did you mean after the 2012 ceasefire?

No, it was happened before the 2012 [preliminary] ceasefire. At the present time the Tatmadaw who are based here collect firewood in our land compound. We do not dare to

¹⁰⁵ The researcher is asking information on a violent abuse which is unconfirmed.

collect the firewood in our own compound because many of them [Tatmadaw soldiers] go to collect it. I told [asked] the village head, *'why did not you tell them [to stop collecting] the firewood?'* As we are women we are not daring to travel alone [to collect firewood] because all of them are Tatmadaw.

Are they still patrolling?

They are not patrolling. They only collect firewood and cut down the bamboo from people's land compounds. When they were collecting firewood they also cut off small dog fruit trees in people's plantations. The people [other villagers] had said to us, *'why did you cut off dog fruit saplings?'* In reality we did not cut them off. The people who cut off the trees were the Tatmadaw who are based here. This happened here.

What is the battalion number of the Tatmadaw based in here?

I do not know the battalion number. At the present time the new battalion rotated with the existing battalion.

When did they rotate?

Since they rotated here it has been almost one month.

Do villagers have any other concerns as the Tatmadaw army camp is based here?

Yes we have concerns. As they are based here they usually race motorbikes in competition and we almost die because of heart attack when it is too much noise. After the ceasefire it [the situation] got much better for us. It was not easy in the past for traveling. If we travelled they checked us all the time even at night. In the past they [Tatmadaw] went to stay beside the main road but after the ceasefire they do not travel from their army camp very much. They stay in their army camp.

Did you vote in the election?

Yes.

Which party did you vote for?

I voted for the NLD [National League for Democracy].

What was your purpose in voting the NLD?

I did not have any special purpose. The people said to vote for the NLD then I voted because I have no idea which party should I vote for.

What is your desire for voting the NLD?

In the past we were controlled by the dictatorship and it oppressed us so if we vote for the NLD it might be good for us and the price of goods might decrease. It might be easy to access [freedom of movement] for our living [livelihood]. Therefore I voted for the NLD. I think they might consider [our concerns] for us. That is what I think.

Have you still heard about children being abducted?

Yes, we only heard about it but we have never seen with our own eyes.

The people talk about it in Shway Nyaung Pin?

[Male villager 2:] It has not happen here. We only heard about it. In our village we have not seen that children are forcedly abducted but we are not sure in other villages. Here, if the people [village head] says, '*do not do that,*' then we would not dare to do anything.

Do you have to pay at the checkpoints here?

We usually have to pay them during the cardamom harvest season.

Can you tell me your experience after the ceasefire was signed?

After the ceasefire was signed?

Yes. What kind of conflict or problem have you faced after the ceasefire?

In the past we faced huge problems but at the present time the situation is getting better.

What kinds of problem?

In terms of the Tatmadaw?

Yes?

In the past we had to porter and carry luggage for them but after the ceasefire we do not need to do those things for them. So the situation is improving. We can travel and work a little bit freely.

**What do you think about the situation before the ceasefire and after the ceasefire?
Can you differentiate?**

Yes the change has taken place. After the ceasefire was signed the situation is improving therefore we now live happily. In the past we could not live happily.

Can women travel freely at night?

[Male villager 2:] Here?

Yes?

At the present time they can travel fairly securely.

How is the security situation here?

What kinds of security?

The safety for children and women?

At the present time we heard about the children being abducted so no one dares to travel [very far]. It is very famous news.

For me I have to go to work in the morning but I am not confident enough to let my children travel by themselves in the evening. We are not sure if it is true [about children being abducted] or not. We live in fear because of the rumour. The school is usually over at 3:00pm and I have to leave them [children] in B--- village then I come back from work at 4:00pm.

How many of your children are studying?

Two of my children are studying.

As you are mother can you tell me your challenges?

I faced many challenges when my children were very young.

Can you support your children in their studies?

At the present time the school has already started. My children are asking money from me because of the school requirements. We have to pay them but sometimes we do not have money so it is a kind of challenge for me.

What about other [challenges]?

Sometime I face sickness.

There is no clinic here?

One nurse lives here but if our children are not feeling well we have to send them to the towns.

So everything [basic service] is not running effectively?

Yes.

How many households are there here?

It will be around 170 to 180 households.

How many years have the Tatmadaw been based here?

[Male villager 2:] They have been based here many years already. Maybe 15 years. In the past we lived in C--- [village] then we moved here. My aunt's land is based over there and we lived together with her [in her compound]. The Tatmadaw forced her to relocate and she moved to B--- village.

[Male villager 2:] In the past the situation was much worse. If they [Tatmadaw] said you could not live [in your village] then you had to move and if they did not allow you to go [travel] you should not go [travel].

As the army camp is based near your village do you have any concerns?

In the past we had faced many problems.

What about the present time?

We also have concerns as we are women. If our husbands are away from home we are afraid [to sleep at home]. I always tell my husband that when you are away from home I am afraid of the Tatmadaw. If they come to [my] home what I should do? It is our concern. We are afraid they will fire a gun if something happens.

Do they [Tatmadaw] open fire?

After the ceasefire was signed I have not seen that they fire the gun. In the past when the previous [armed] group was here, if something happened they fired the gun.

Did they fire [fight] amongst each other?

Yes. They argued with each other and open fire. It caused worry for the villagers who live close to them. We were also afraid of them when they were shouting at each other.

Did they pay for the land that they built their army camp on?

No.

The land belongs to whom?

The land belongs to my aunt. She previously lived there. She lived beside the road and the Tatmadaw forced her to move over here. The Tatmadaw provided land for her here. When the Tatmadaw first came here they forced her to relocate.

How many acres of land?

[Male villager 2:] The land that they are based on?

Yes?

[Male villager 2:] It will be over one acre.

They strengthened their [army camp] and built more buildings [in the camp compound]. They previously built their army camp only on one compound of land but now it has taken up two to three compounds already. The lands which are situated near the army camp have almost gone. We do not know the lands are belonging to whom.

[Male villager 2:] They enlarge their camp by [approximately] one arm span each year.

How many army camps are there in Shway Nyaung Pin village?

There are three army camps.

Do they still fire artillery in Thandaunggyi Town?

[Male villager 2:] At the present time we have not heard anything. In the past they fired artillery when they were doing training and they informed villagers not to go anywhere when they were firing the artillery. They still fired artillery once in the summer when we were going to the cardamom plantation.

When did it happen?

It happened recently, two weeks ago. They fired it [artillery] on our plantation when they were in training.

Was it [the artillery] dropped on your plantation?

Yes it was dropped on our plantation.

Did it cause any damage?

Yes it caused damage. The first time when they fired the artillery one of the [farmer's] huts was set on fire.

Whose hut was set on light?

I forgot the name. If you go to my father's plantation [you will see the hut].

You said eight standards are taught in the school?

Yes eight standards are taught in the school but it has not been recognised at the middle school level yet. It is recognised as primary school level.

Have people already started upgrading the school?

The people had said like that [to upgrade the school] but we have not done anything yet because there is no wood for upgrading the school [building].

[Male villager 2] They will enlarge the school but there is no land to enlarge it onto. If the school committee submits the case and provides the land they can upgrade [expand] the school but the problem is that there is no land to upgrade [expand] the school.

You said the children have concerns for their safety to travel?

Yes they have concern for traveling [from their village] to school because the distance is very far. At the present time we heard the people abduct children and it causes worry for us.

[Male village 2:] Previously, the children went to school by themselves but after we heard [the rumour that] people abduct children and that children had disappeared we have been worried as we do not know exactly [the details] about the situation.

Is it accurate news?

I am not sure. I saw people posted it on Facebook?

Yes.

I heard people abducted one child in B--- village?

No they did not abduct.

[Male villager 2:] You heard a child was abducted by the people?

Yes?

[Male villager 2:] It was not accurate. People just misunderstood it. We are not sure if it is the truth or not but many rumours talk about it.

Can you tell me about your hardship experience before the ceasefire was signed?

Before the ceasefire was signed?

Yes?

Before the ceasefire was signed we faced many difficulties and only saw the Tatmadaw in negative way.

What were they [your difficulties]?

When I was child I had to go to porter. At that time I lived in D--- [village]. My father had to porter but he was sick. It was happened when I was in fourth standard. At that time I had to carry rice. I have to take rice from Tha Daw [Town] and carried it to my village. I experienced those things.

What about Tatmadaw, [did they] kill and rape people?

Regarding killing and rape, I came to experience that in my [previous] village the village heads were oppressed by the Tatmadaw. At that time my father was a village head. He was slapped and oppressed [treated badly] by the Tatmadaw. I saw it with my own eyes.

Do you have any other [experience]?

There might be a lot but as I am a forgetful person I forgot them already.

People [villagers] have said that they [Tatmadaw] set up the checkpoint here?

It does not seem like a checkpoint. They [Tatmadaw] stay there and ask people who pass through the check point. They ask them, '*where do you go?*' and '*where will you go?*'

In the end what more do you want to add?

Should I talk about family or the village?

You can either talk about family or the village?

At the present time the market price is high.

What do you mean by market price?

If you go to buy something in the market the price is very high therefore our income and expenditure is not balanced. We receive very little [money] from labour work. We have to buy everything for our kitchen depending on what [income] we have received.

How much you get pay from labour work?

We get 3,500 [kyat per day] as we are women. We want the market price will be stable. If it is stable maybe it might [solve] these problems for labour workers. Currently here, one basket of rice costs 30,000 kyat. We cannot earn 30,000 kyat per day therefore it causes the problem for us. We want the market price to go down. We think it will be much better for daily labour workers.

Most people [in this area] are working on daily labour work?

Yes. Some people have their own plantation but they cannot earn enough food. At the present it is dog fruit harvest season but the price are very low therefore they cannot earn anything.

[Male villager 2:] We planted a lot of dog fruit trees but they have not produced fruits very well, and the soil is not good.

Thank you.

Yes.

Source #116

Log #	16-27-P2
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
Date Received: March 22nd 2016	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos were taken on March 9th, 2016 in Tha Nay Moo village. There was a fight in this village before. BGF [Border Guard Forces] and Tatmadaw soldiers burned 9 houses and afterward they came back and burned the house again. There are more than 20 houses in this village. Only 4 houses which were not burned were left. 	

Source #117

Log #	16-28-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished

Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: March 22nd 2016</p> <p>1. These photos show that there is a map which indicates a KNU [Karen National Union] checkpoint between Mon and Kayin State in A--- village, Da Wel Pauk village tract, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. This map is produced by the International Red Cross [IRC] according to Saw B--- [who is in charge of Mon-Kayin checkpoint].</p>	

Source #118

Log #	16-29-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is Naw Be---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I am 47 years old.</p> <p>What is your nationality?</p> <p>Karen.</p> <p>What is your religion?</p> <p>Christian.</p> <p>Baptist or Anglican Christian?</p> <p>Baptist Christian.</p> <p>What do you do for living?</p> <p>I stay at home and treat patients and also work in the farm.</p> <p>Do you have family?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>How many children do you have?</p> <p>I have six children.</p>	

What is the age of your oldest child?

I have twins [who are my] oldest and they are both 22 years old. They are female and male twins.

What is the age of your youngest child?

My youngest child age is six years old.

We would like to know the situation in Burma/Myanmar especially at the state level, so can you tell us what you think about the [2012] Ceasefire agreement?

After the [preliminary] ceasefire was signed we have been able to work freely as villagers and also, as farmers, the Burma/Myanmar government supports us by loaning money. We can travel very freely and there is no question when we cross at the gates [checkpoints] on our way when we are traveling. We also do not need to let [the village head] know if we go to stay overnight in other villages as strangers. We are able to live freely and we are delighted to receive the ceasefire.

Where do you live?

I live in Bf--- village.

How many households are there in Bf--- village?

Over [between censored for security] households are there in Bf--- village. I think some of the villagers have left the village and it would [therefore] be over [censored for security] households left and I do not know exactly.

Do you know the number of villagers?

I do not know.

Is there any clinic in your village?

There is no clinic in the village. There are only village and midwife health workers in the village therefore if the villagers get sick we send them to the hospital.

Who elected the midwife [and] health workers?

They are elected [sent] by the government.

The Burma/Myanmar government?

Yes.

How many of them are there in the village?

There is no midwife in the village. They all stay in Tha Daw.

Tha Daw is a village?

Yes Tha Daw village.

Is it a Karen village?

No it is a Mon village.

What about education? Is there any school in your village?

Yes there is a school.

How many standards are taught in the school and is it primary school or middle school?

Eight standards are taught in the school and it is middle school but there are not enough teachers to teach in the school. There are many students but a lack of teachers.

How many students are there in the school?

Now I do not know. In the past I used to be on the school committee.

Can you guess how many of them?

I think the number of students will be around 400.

How many teachers are teaching in the school?

In the past there were 15 teachers but at the present time some of them left the school and there is no one to replace them. At the present time there are seven teachers left. In our village the villagers have to hire three teachers by themselves therefore it caused problems for the villagers to pay salary to the teachers.

Are there three of them?

Yes.

Do they get salary?

Yes, the villagers have to pay them salary.

How much do you pay them per month?

We do not pay them per month. We only pay them per year and donate some rice to them. In the past year we found only two teachers but this year we found three teachers and the standards [grades] have also been promoted [raised] because the numbers of students is also very high this year.

Are there any students whose parents are unable to support their study?

Yes some parents are not able to support their children but they try. As you know if you live in the town and your children are in eighth standard you need to send them to [private]

tuition class with a very high tuition fee. As we live in a village there is lack of teachers and no [private] tuition teachers. One male villager who passed tenth standard helps us by teaching as a tuition teacher and teaches the students who are in eighth standard.

Does he live in Bf--- village?

Yes he lives in Bf--- village and guides them in their study and he also looks after each of the students. It is very helpful for us. There is lack of teachers in the school and it has caused the problem for us at the school.

Do any NGOs or the Burma/Myanmar government come to distribute school materials such as books and backpacks?

In the past year UNICEF came once to provide backpacks and books. This year the Burma/Myanmar government provided a school uniform to the students.

Were they donating them to each student?

Not they gave them to the necessary students starting from fourth standard. The KNU also distributed books and volleyballs to the school.

Where do they [students] continue their schooling after they have passed the school [standards] here?

If they have passed school there they continue their study in K'Moo Kyoh School.

How many standards are taught in K'Moo Kyoh School?

Ten standards are taught in K'Moo Kyoh School.

Is it very far from here to K'Moo Kyoh School?

I think you came across that school. It is not very far but in rainy season the students have to go to school by the main road.

How are you doing with your living [livelihood] here as you are working on the peanut plantation?

In terms of livelihood even if there is unfavourable weather we can still produce enough foods by the grace of God but the insects attack the peanuts and we have to use insecticide to kill them. We really thank the people who sell the insecticides on loan to us. We pay them back after we have sold the peanuts. As I mentioned above, the Tatmadaw do not disturb us in anything. They do not ask tax from us but the Karen [KNU] tax us on many things including motorbikes. We use motorbikes for traveling only [not for business]. As for me I have a motorbike and use it to drop the patients [to their home] in the day and night time [as needed] but I still have to pay tax. This year I have not paid. I said that my motorbike is very old and I always have to fix it. I paid 70,000 kyat to fix my motorcycle this year so I told them that I will not pay the tax in this year because I am not a carrier [using the motorcycle to carry people for money].

How much do they [KNU] tax per motorbike?

They tax them [villagers] 5000 kyat per motorbike.

So if you own two motorbikes you have to pay 10000 kyat?

Yes.

Is it tax for the carriers [moto-taxis]?

No. We only use it for personal use.

Do they tax the carriers [moto-taxis]?

Yes but after the villagers heard about this information they do not want to be carriers [moto-taxis] because if something happens to them no one can help them. I think they [KNU] will tax them more than 5000 kyat but I am not sure because I never found out this information and I also did not keep it in my mind [remember it]. At the present time the Tatmadaw [Burma/Myanmar government] do not tax us and they also loan us money when we farm our land. The Burma/Myanmar government asks [loans] us 100,000 kyat if we own one acre of land. If you own five acres of land they ask [loan] you [us] 500,000 kyat and if you own ten acres of land they ask [loan] us 1,000,000 kyat.

They ask [loan] 100,000 kyat per acre of land?

Yes they loan us 100,000 kyat per acres of land.

Do you they ask profit [interest] from you?

No, they only asked 10,000 to 20,000 kyat as profit [interest] per year but if you pay them early you have to pay less profit [interest] but if you pay them very late you have to pay them more. Usually in March we have to pay them back but if we pay them a little bit late I think we have to pay more.

How much do they ask for in profit [interest] if you pay late?

We have to pay them 3000 kyat more. If they did not do like that [raising the interest for late payment] some people took it [the loan] and did not want to pay it back.

When did they start this [loan project]?

They have been running it for many years already but for me I took them [loans] only two years [times] because I had to have surgery on my eye and I had to support my children with their study. I think I am going to pay them back in February. If we pay them back early they will loan us [money] for another term earlier because they loan it term by term.

Do they pay them [loans] only for paddy flat farmers? What about peanut plantation [farmers]?

They only loan to paddy [farmers]. Some villagers finished their peanut [plantation farming] in February and they re-paid the loan. [Then] they will give you the loan for next year a little bit early if you give them back [re-pay] early.

Do they [Burma/Myanmar government] provide this loan only in Bf--- village?

They have been providing it in every village including Karen and Bamar villages. Currently the people come to survey the farm lands and we worry that the Tatmadaw [Burma/Myanmar government] will not loan us money again [if we permit the KNU to survey the lands] therefore some villagers did not allow people [from the KNU] to survey their land. The other concern is that we also have Burmese ID card and [we worry that they will] question us like, 'You have Burmese ID card [so] why do you allow people [the KNU] to survey your land?' We stay between both of them [Burma/Myanmar government and KNU] and it causes problems.

Is it becoming a problem for the villagers' livelihood?

Yes it has become a problem for the villagers and we also do not dare to tell them [KNU] openly because they are our people. If we tell them it seems like we do not respect their dignity.

Are there any NGOs who come to conduct development projects in your village? The development projects related to water supply and electricity?

You mean humanitarian aid like [when] they distribute the solar panel, electricity and water to the local villages?

Yes, so do they come to distribute it there?

The KNU [and other groups] distributed it in A--- village because it is a small village but they do not distribute it in Bf-- village because Bf--- is a large village. If I say openly I think the KNU leaders do not think that the villagers in here need [the aid]. In reality some rich and poor people live in this village. Some poor villagers need them [aid]. I cannot say about it anymore. If I say more than that it might not be correct. In A--- village they went to support them and trained them how to make fertiliser, tiger balm and soaps to sell to earn some income. In the local villages there is a lot of peanut powder, soil and manure to make fertiliser.

Were they conducted training there?

Yes they had been conducting training to them [villagers] about how to make fertiliser. I was born in A--- but after I got married I went to live in Bf---. I have lived in both villages and if I heard something happen I ask around for the information because I am very inquisitive.

Bf--- villagers were not invited [to the training]?

Bf--- villagers were not invited because some people after they became leaders they just do what they want and look out for their own benefit. They [village leaders] have a concern that if the people [from outside of village] come to do something [activity] in our village they will influence them [village leaders] to do something [they fear that people from outside the village come with an agenda to change the village]. In my opinion I think they want to come [for conducting training] but as you know villagers are like fingers and they will never be able to come together. We only need collaboration [agreement on what the village needs] and if you have good collaboration they [outside groups] will support us [by conducting training]. I

got to know about this information because one of my younger brothers is working with that organisation. They also distributed aid to B---, C---, D--- villages and distributed rations.

Are they NGOs [who are distributing aid and rations]?

Yes they are NGOs.

Some NGOs are from religious [groups] and some are from the government but they all have to go along with the government [agreement in order to access the area]?

I think that the NGO [who distributed the aid and rations] is from a religious [group] but they are not from [attached to] the religious leaders at the Taw Oo [Toungoo] local level. I think they are from a Christian association and they asked one Thara [teacher] to distribute the aid for local development.

Are they distributing the aid to the villagers?

Yes. They distributed the aid, conducted training and taught villagers how to raise cows and buffaloes. They invested some money to buy [livestock] to raise.

So they were giving [loaning] money to the poor villagers to buy pigs to raise?

Yes. Some villagers in Bf--- village bought cows raise and they [NGO] loaned them money.

Is there any organisation conducting development projects related to road construction and electricity?

Yes. Related to the electricity the people [the Burma/Myanmar government] told us that they will set up it for us a long time ago but it has not taken place yet. They required us to pay 400,000 kyat for number one [the first instalment], 30,000 kyat for number two [the second instalment] and 200,000 kyat for number three [the third instalment].

They required it [the money to be paid] in this way?

Yes they required all villagers to give it but some villagers [did not have money].

Did you allow them to set up the electricity?

Yes we need and allowed them but some villagers did not have money therefore we could not pay them all [the total amount they requested]. Thus, it has not taken place and it has stopped. They told us to give 200,000 to 400,000 kyat to set up electricity wires and lamp posts which started from E--- to the old primary school in our village.

Are they [the electricity providers] the Burma/Myanmar government?

Yes they are from Burma/Myanmar government.

Are they going to give you electricity wires and lamp posts?

Yes we were told to give [provide] one mile in length of wire but we are not sure about lamp posts. It has been long time already so I do not remember in detail. They told us that they

will set this up and I paid them 200,000 kyat. I told them that, *'I am going to give you only this much and if it is completed I will pay you 200,000 kyat more later'*. I told them that, *'I will pay you the day when you come to set up the electricity transformer and register my name on the list [to receive electricity]'*. Currently many villagers do not want electricity because they do not have enough money [to pay for it]. If they take it they have to buy wires and a meter box. They have to buy a meter box for 90,000 or 100,000 kyat. They [Burma/Myanmar government workers] said that we have to buy wire and the meter box therefore some villagers were not able to afford that and they did not do it. Thus, it caused the difficulty for the leaders who managed this project and it had stopped.

When was it started?

It started a long time ago and if you keep this in your mind I am sure that you will see bamboo poles on your way [when you leave the village] where they have been repairing the road.

I saw that people have cleared the road and cut down the trees?

Yes they are working on it. They will send an electricity transformer but they said that villagers can pay the amount for only one transformer but a large village needs two transformers. Whether it is one or two transformers, it has not been set up yet so we are not able to do anything.

How has the village head managed it?

I do not know but for us we have not completely paid them yet. Therefore they have not set up electricity for us and [they also] have not cleared the road yet. They just cleared the main road. I think it is not easy to get electricity. We had collected 130 [thousand kyat] for very long time already therefore some villagers got angry and said that, *'you [village administrator] collected money and loaned it for profit,'* because they [the village head/administrators] did not do as they said. Some villagers think that even if we already paid we still have to pay for the electricity meter box and they also think, *'if it has been set up by the Burma/Myanmar government why should we pay for meter box?'* Therefore some of them do not want to do it.

The village head and village administrator have not consulted with villagers about that?

Yes, a few days ago they consulted with villagers by organising a meeting but some villagers did not join the meeting because they were not interested and had they lost their faith already. Moreover we have to pay for many things therefore some of us are not interested [in the development projects]. I think that it is a good opportunity and I am very happy when the people [the Myanmar government] are helping us [by providing electricity]. If we get [electricity], it will also bring benefits for our future children. I said it is good opportunity and we should do it. Some villagers think that we have to pay for a meter box, for wire and the amount of electricity energy [megawatts]. Some of them think that instead of using electricity it is better use solar panels. We need it, and the people [the Myanmar government] are going to help us. Also, no one wants to live in darkness nowadays as it is the development era.

Are there any villagers who still use solar panels?

Yes villagers in Bf--- are using solar panels. We do not have to spend [a lot of] money when using solar panels and all villagers are currently using solar panels.

Regarding land issues, does villagers in Bf--- village have land titles?

Yes they all have land titles because the Burma/Myanmar government provide them for us and we stick them [laminated] with plastic.

Are there any land issues happening here?

I have not faced any land issues in my family.

Are there any land confiscations committed by the Burma/Myanmar government?

The government do not confiscate land but one land issue did happen here. The lands [belonging to villagers] were passed down by their grandparents from one generation to another. In the past [before the 2012 preliminary ceasefire was signed] none of them cared about the land but after the ceasefire was signed they wanted the land back. The people who took care of the land in the conflict period were angry at the owners because they asked for the land back after the ceasefire period. This [land conflict] has been happening in our area. In the past, people cleared the land and worked on it and after they did not want to work on it [anymore] they sold it to other people. Some people just finished their duty [to clear the land] because if they did not do that they would be questioned by people [Burma/Myanmar government and Tatmadaw] all the time. After they had finished [clearing the land] they sold it to other people. They sold it piece by piece and after the ceasefire was signed they [the people who had originally clear the land] asked for their land back. I do not know if it is a good sign or not. It has been happening in our village. Some of them are not satisfied with each other because some of them [original owners] came to them [current residents/owners of the land] to take back the land. I do not know how they asked [for their land back].

Have you not seen?

No I have not seen [this with my eyes]. The old people said that the land will be laughing at you if you are arguing with each other about land. I do not keep my eyes on the land issue and I have never asked about it either. I heard they [current residents/owners of the land] gave it [back] to the [original] land owner for [example] half an acre. If they own six acres of land they gave three acres of land to the [original] land owners. I just heard about that but I am not sure if it is true or not because I have never asked questions about it.

Have you worked as a village head or health worker in the past?

I have been working as a midwife health worker since I was single.

Have you [now] resigned?

Yes but if people need me I still go around to help them.

So if villagers need your help you still help them?

Yes if they need my help I still help them.

How do you feel about the situation in the past and the situation in the present?

What do you mean by situation?

As you have been working as a midwife what do you think about the situation before the ceasefire was signed and after the ceasefire was signed?

After the military coup we have to hide the medicine and we could not travel freely in the night time. Currently we can travel freely and we also can keep medicine [in our house]. In the past if we kept medicine and if they [Tatmadaw] saw it [medicine] they said that we kept it for insurgents [Karen soldiers]. If some people were feeling sick I had to go and look after them secretly. Some people did not have money and if they went for medical treatment in town it cost a lot of money therefore we just looked after each other and charged them a very low price and some of them I did not charge them because I had pity on them. It was just a voluntary job to be a midwife health worker. If I could treat them I did it but if I did not I sent them to the hospitals. At the present time we can travel a bit more freely at night time. When the military coup happened it caused problems for the villagers because we were not able to keep medicine with us and we lived with worry but currently we can travel freely and also store medicine freely. In order to live freely in our village it is in God's hands to lead us towards our future.

I would like to ask you about the 2015 election. How many female villagers were involved in the 2015 election [by voting]? How do you get opportunity as you are housewife [to be involved in the election] and how satisfied are you with the opportunity that you got?

After the ceasefire was signed?

Yes after the ceasefire was signed, do women get more opportunity or less?

After the ceasefire was signed we live freely as women.

Do women get equal opportunities, and feel more secure in their job roles?

We are receiving equal opportunity. I cannot talk about it.

Were there any women villagers elected as candidates in the election?

Yes, some of us were elected and people were calling us to be candidates but we were not interested in political issues. We can only do farming and live very peacefully in our own way. We just live and earn like that. If the people requested us [to be candidates] we told them that we were not interested in politics. We live in our own way.

Did any parties come to do election campaigning?

Yes, they came here.

How did they organise the process?

Yes, they said that you should vote for Na Ga Pyu [Party]. We were told to go to listen to the speeches and we just attended without interest. Many parties influenced us to vote for the different parties but I think most of all villagers here voted for mother Suu [Aung San Suu Kyi, NLD party]. We voted for them because we thought that we are farmers and when we were facing difficulty we had to pay [tax] even when we did not have paddy rice. We were crying [but] mother Suu and [NLD] governors also supported us. We thought that she is the only girl who works for [represents] us so we have a responsibility to vote for her and we also receive support [loans from the Burma/Myanmar government]. We voted for her because we thought that she would advocate for us, by consulting with governments [to loan more money] therefore we would receive more support from the government. Whether it is truth or not we do not know but we voted for mother Suu.

What is your vision in the future?

At the present time the [Burma/Myanmar and KNU] governments signed the ceasefire agreement therefore they financially help us and do not disturb us in our work and we can also travel freely. If our Karen people [KNU] do not tax and disturb us it will be very good, but if they still disturb us the [Burma/Myanmar] government or the Tatmadaw also might do that too. I am thinking in this way. If they do not cause problems by not taxing us they [Burma/Myanmar government] might think that if no one is taxing us we will be able to live peacefully. But if some groups want to disturb [cause problems] with each other it can also impact us and this is what we think in our heart.

Tharamu [teacher], would you like to add anything that I have not questioned you about?

I think as we are farmers we want to live and work on our own, peacefully on our own farms. There is no other job in this village and, if we are not disturbed by any [armed] group, we can live peacefully on our own. But if we are disturbed [facing problems], as we are under control by both governments [in a mixed-control area between Burma/Myanmar and KNU] sometimes it causes problem for us. When they disturb [us by taxation] we have to live with worry and unhappiness. We have concern that when our people [KNU] tax us in this way, the [Burma/Myanmar] government also will disturb [tax] us. If they [both the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government] disturb us we will be very weary. In the past we had faced disturbance [problems] but at the present time after the ceasefire was signed we can travel and live peacefully. If we live and work on our own there will be peace and if we are not disturbed by any [armed] group we can work happily as villagers. If our children do not have to serve as soldiers and if the people do not tax us then we do not feel regretful and we do not feel that we suffer poorly in our life. If they [Burma/Myanmar government] heard another government [KNU] comes to disturb us [by taxing us] the other government [Burma/Myanmar] might [repeat these actions and] come to disturb us too. We have concern about what will happen to us in the future. We cannot see and predict it and also it is not in our hands [in our control]. I think if we stay on our own the government also will not disturb us.

Tharamu would you like to say anything else?

I want to say about the needs of villagers. The people [Burma/Myanmar government] said that they will set up the electricity for us but it never happens. So I just want to know is there any group that is able to support us?

Do you want the electricity based on the need of villagers?

Yes we need it. The people [Burma/Myanmar government] would like to help us [but they] required money from us therefore some villagers were not able to pay. Thus, is there any other group who will be able to help us?

You want electricity?

Yes our village is situated nearby E--- [village] and that village received electricity many years ago already but our village still has not received it. As you know and see we are under the control of two governments so is it suitable for us to permit [one group/government to provide development] or not. We always think about it. It causes difficulty for us for living under the control of two governments. We always think about whether it is good to ask for [something] or whether it is good to express our feelings. We cannot do everything by ourselves. We work on the farm for growing paddy every year and the soils are not good to produce the rice even though the paddy [rice] has high market price. We have to use fertiliser and we spent a lot [of money] for our farming but we can produce only a little [paddy]. It is not like cardamom plantation farms. For cardamom plantation you plant for a year and it can produce fruit for two to three years but for flat [paddy] farming we have to plant paddy every year. At the present time the peanut [plantations] were attacked by the insects therefore we had to buy the pesticide to spray them. After we sold the peanuts we have to give [re-pay] our debt for the pesticide. We also do not have peanut seeds to grow so we had to borrow it from the boss [rich people] and if we borrowed one sack of peanut we have to pay them two and half sacks of peanut for their profit [interest]. Some villagers took two sacks of peanut seed and they have to pay back five sacks because this year the market price is very high. The villagers are hardly earning a living in their life.

So this year the market price is very high?

Yes. They asked us to pay five sacks of peanut for the profit [interest on the loan]. Some people who do not have peanut seeds for growing borrow it from the rich people. Therefore the villagers just work for their living in this way. If the people do not know it they will think that it has a good price and can earn a lot of income. In reality we [some villagers] raise livestock for earning income to buy rice. We hope the government will understand us.

Thank you Tharamu.

Yes thank you.

Source #119

Log #	16-39-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thaton District
Full Text	
Interview Date: April 18th 2016	
[Interview begins abruptly] What is the project that is conducted?	

It is stone testing for producing cement [project].

When did the project begin to be carried out?

They [company] came to ask permission from the villagers in 2013. [Karen National Liberation Army] Lieutenant Ee Tha also came and held a meeting once in B--- [village] and two or three times in A--- [village].

When was it [the meeting held]?

It was in 2013 and 2014.

How many times have they [company/Lieutenant Ee Tha] met with the villagers?

As far as I know, they met with A--- villagers once. Lieutenant Ee Tha came once [to meet with villagers].

Who is Lieutenant Ee Tha?

He is KNLA's Adjutant General in Brigade #1 [Toungoo]. He came to hold the meeting with the villagers in B--- village. Some villagers went to attend the meeting but some villagers did not.

What did he come to discuss about?

He came to discuss about the Maw Lay Cliff [stone mining for cement project] and get the villagers' opinion as to whether they agree with the project or not.

How many villages did he hold the meeting with?

He held the meeting with all of the villagers in the whole village tract. However, some villagers from some villages did not come to attend the meeting due to being busy with their work. No villagers from Maw Lay village came to attend the meeting at that time. The second time he held the meeting it was in B--- village. He also held meetings in A--- village many times and people from [KNU] township office joined the meeting. Later [after these meetings], it was decided that the company could not conduct the [stone mining/cement] project. The village head suggested that they [the company] meet with the upper leaders.

Which side of [the government is] the upper leader [from]?

The KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] side.

Do you mean that they [company] came to the district level [to discuss and conduct the stone mining project] and the district level leaders did not allow them?

They [company] came directly to the village [to conduct the project]. As there was conflict [among the villagers], they did not have a chance to conduct [the project]. Therefore, they tried to meet with the top leaders. Then, Manager Min Thu who is implementing the cement factory came into the village.

Who will come to test [the stones] for the cement factory?

Pru Min Tun Company.¹⁰⁶ He [Manager Min Thu] tried to build a relationship with the villagers. He also tried to approach the leaders in the village such as the religious leader in the monastery. After he had arranged everything [in this way], he came to meet with me and said to me, *"It [the project] is ready to start."* I then told him to also let the village tract [leaders] know about the project. He then replied that he will let [the village tract leader] know. The next day, I went to Hpah Paw [village] with the village administrator. He met us and the village administrator told him [Manager Min Thu], *"If the above leaders allow you to do [the project], you can do it."* Lieutenant Chit Thu from Battalion #2 and [KNU] township leader then came [into Maw Lay village]. The villagers then thought that it will be fine as the leaders come to meet with them [so they will listen to their concerns]. Before the leaders came into the village, a villager said [predicted], *"The project will be implemented even though the villagers disagree,"* after the company had had a meeting with them.

Who said that?

Tharamu [teacher] E----.

Who is she?

She is a member of the Women's Organisation in D--- village. Later the company came to test [the stone] to produce cement from the cliff. And the villagers were complaining.

What did they complain [about]?

They complained that they [company] entered onto their paddy fields and they did not inform the villagers in advance. They [company] then addressed the problem with the village head [by paying compensation]. The villagers also took the compensation as they were paid. Some plants in some villagers' plantations were destroyed but they did not complain about this. They [company] tried to test [the stone for mining] on March 2016. On April 16th or 18th, 2016, they started to test [started the project].

Do you know the director of the company?

I do not know.

Who supports this company?

I heard from people that the company is supported by people from Germany and one Singaporean is also involved.

Do you know who gave the company permission to conduct the project?

I do not know who gave the company permission. The company said that they were given opportunity [permission] by the Ministry of Mines [Myanmar Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation].

¹⁰⁶ For more information on this company see, "[Thaton Situation Update: Thaton Township, April 2014.](#)" KHRG, January 2015.

Did the KNU give the company permission?

No, the KNU did not give them permission. They [company] approached the KNU and the KNU informed them that they would not object [to the project], if they [company] get the villagers consent.

What is the location of the project that is going to be implemented?

They are going to set up six sites to conduct the stone [mining project].

In which village is this [Maw Lay/Min Lwin] cliff [for stone mining] located?

There are Ner Hpaw Hta and Htee Hpoh Htoo villages to the west of the cliff; there is P'Nweh Klah village to the east of the cliff; there are Tha Waw La Hkaw and Maw Lay and Noh Htoh Day villages at the bottom of the cliff.

How many acres [of land] have the company set aside to conduct the project?

I do not know how many acres they have set aside to conduct the project. I also heard from one of the company's rich man who said that that if they cannot produce cement here, they are going to take [the stones] to a place further away.

Did he talk about this in the meeting?

Yes, he talked about this when he met with the villagers in the meeting. In the past, he did not talk about this in the meeting. When he first met with the villagers, he only said they would construct a road, built a clinic and pay money to the villagers. He did not talk about anything related to the advantages and disadvantages [of conducting the stone mining]. However, one KNU [Karen National Union] leader reminded the villagers to be thoughtful [critical] in case [the project] might cause the destruction of villagers' properties [plantations]. The villagers thought that they would get money if the project is implemented, so they signed [their approval].

Have the villagers got money now?

We formed a group and we explained to the villagers about the advantages and disadvantages [if the project is implemented]. Many of the villagers then objected the project.

Do you think they are going to carry on conducting the project?

As I see, the company owner has his own house, [he] rents an office and they [company] signed a [rental] contract for two or six years. Since it has cost a lot already to implement the project, I think they might carry on conducting the project. They said that a hydraulic drilling machine that they bought cost hundreds of millions [estimate] of kyats. People said that there are six or seven sites that they are going to conduct [stone mining on]. Each site is going to be mined down 120 feet deep. They take the stones and put them in crates. Some of the stone crates were sent to the town and some stone crates were kept with them. They then tested the stones [which were kept in the crates] with machines.

Were you allowed to visit [their mining sites]?

Yes, we were.

What do the villagers do for their living?

In the past, the villagers were working on paddy fields near the cliff; built houses with trees from the cliff; and got some vegetables and roots for medicines from the cliff. They depended on the cliff for their daily living. Now, there is no water in the paddy fields so there is difficulty for farming. There is also difficulty for fishing since they put chemicals in the water. [In the past], they planted chili at the bottom of the cliff. The paddy also grew very well. They also paid respect the cliff. Some villagers took stone from Maw Lay Cliff when they went to work in Bangkok [because it has special significance]. There is also pagoda built by a hermit on the cliff.

How many pagodas are built on the cliff?

There are four pagodas built on the cliff.

How many acres of the villagers' land will be confiscated or sold?

The company proposed [to take] about 200 acres of lands at both the east and west parts of the cliff. I think [they will take] more than 200 acres. The whole cliff is about 937 acres [wide].

How much [money] does the company pay per acre of land?

They have never said anything in terms of paying compensation. If their testing [examination of stones] is successful, they will continue working on their project. If they get the land near the cliff, they will do [the project] near here and if they do not get the land near here, they will do [project] in a place further away. I heard that they are going to move their [project] place to the forest reserve.

Where is the forest reserve?

It is to the west of Maw Lay Cliff.

How many acres and how many villagers' lands do you think will be destroyed if the project is implemented?

There is about a thousand [acres of land] that will be destroyed. No one will be able to live near the project site. The farms which are at the bottom of the cliff will not be able to be farmed as the stones are falling over the farms. Some villagers said that they will not move even though they are asked to move. However, some of those [who do not own any land] might think that they would get 1,000,000 kyat free if they were given [compensation].

What is the percentage of villagers who agree and disagree, do you think?

Before the villagers know the advantage and disadvantage [if the project is implemented], there were more villagers who do not live near the cliff signed [the document] as they thought they were going to get 1,000,000 kyat for free soon. When they [company] first came to held meeting with the villages before the villagers know anything [about the project], they said that each person [from each house] would get 1,000,000 kyat if they agreed on the project. Many villagers went to the meeting and signed [the agreement]. They [company] did not say anything in relation to pros and cons [of the project]. Later, most of the villagers who

live in the west of the cliff, which is about 400 households, objected the project.

How many households agreed and disagreed [on the project]?

On this side [of the cliff, villagers] did not sign [the document]. Only the other side [villages at the eastern part of the cliff] signed [the document] as they live far from the cliff and do not know [the negative consequences of the project]; they thought that they will get money for free. As the villagers later came to know the advantages and disadvantages [of implementing the project], most of them then objected [to the project]. Some villagers whose children went to work as day labourers in their [company's] mining project and those who rent their houses or trucks to the company agree on the project [to be implemented].

Do the villagers' lands that are near the cliff have [land] grants?

Villagers paid 20,000 or 30,000 kyat to the officer [of the land records department] to get the grant. However, only some villagers got the grants and some villagers did not get the grants from the [Burma/Myanmar] government side. The villagers heard that the project would be implemented so they also made [prepared] grants for their lands in order to get confirmation from the KNU side [in order to protect their lands].

In which year did the KNU produce [land] grants for them?

In 2013 or 2014.

Has the [stone] testing finished?

The [stone] testing finished in March 2016, as mentioned before, and [the company] already went back [left the testing site] and took their machines back as well.

Is there any change of the water or environment after the [stone] testing?

As I know, there is less water compared to the past as they used water [from the river] both day and night. The stones fell onto the villagers' land. They also made the [road]way for their truck on Hpah Tee [uncle] Ta Kway's plantation but he did not complain about it. A company member together with a local villager named Aung Chit tried to cut down the bamboos in Muh Gar [aunt] K---'s plantation. She said that she told him [company member], *"You came to conduct the project. But, you also come to work in my plantation without letting me know."* She also went to complain to the company staff and Hpah Tee Aung Chit.

What did the [company] staff reply?

They did not say anything. However, he/she might think that that woman has messed up [caused a problem to the company staff by complaining]. Muh Gar K--- also told me, *"We hid the KNU [protecting the KNU/KNLA by not reporting their whereabouts to Tatmadaw] in the conflict time. After the ceasefire, they [KNU] do not help us to protect Maw Lay cliff."* She sees KNU like that.

Is there any other environmental destruction [due to the project]?

At the western part [of the mountain], they [company] worked on the villagers' plantation. The villagers complained and the village head addressed the problem [by] discussing with

the company. The company then paid compensation to villagers. On the other side [of the cliff], they [company] stopped [redirected] the water [river that irrigated the rice paddies] as they needed their trucks to cross to the other side of the river. Therefore, the paddies [did not have enough water so they] were not growing well and so the villagers now do not have enough rice. The company also cut down trees and bamboo at the project site. However, there was not much [environmental] destruction.

Is there anything [action taken] like the villagers gathering together and reporting to the upper leaders about the project?

The villagers formed [4 groups]: group #1 which includes [villages] which are at the bottom of F--- cliff; group #2 which includes B--- and G--- [villages]; group #3 which includes Lah Hkoh village; group #4 which includes Ma Cha village tract. When I went to visit them, I asked their opinion on the project. As they thought that there might be destruction [of their plantation] they did not want to agree on the project. They said that they were given [compensation of] 300,000 kyat [per house] without knowing anything. Now, if the villagers are called to attend the meeting regarding the cliff, they do not want to attend anymore as they also need to work [for their livelihood]. Some villagers worried that the project will be implemented so they also wrote a complaint letter.

Who did they report the complaint letter to?

The villagers formed a committee and they said that they were going to send [complaint letters] to the Myanmar president's office, KNU district and township level [departments] and KNU headquarters.

Was there any change after submitting the complaints? Did the Myanmar government or KNU government come to the area to ask about the project?

There is no one who has come to the area after [villagers] submitted the complaint. After submitting the complaints, the company still stay in the area and have repaired their houses. Therefore, we [remain] worried that the project may be implemented.

What do the villagers want?

The villagers want to have places [buildings] for a school, a football ground, or a clinic. Nevertheless, some villagers from Ner Hpaw Hta village said, "*If all of these buildings can only be built after the cliff has been destroyed, then let the cliff be. We do not want the buildings [to be built, if it requires the cliff to be destroyed].*"

What is the villagers' opinion on the project?

If they come to live [in the area], there will be a higher population, more motorbikes or cars. Some older people do not like it [being populated]. Some people said that only the road has been built and we [already] cannot sleep at night time as it is noisy. Some women said that if the cement factory is built, there would be no KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] bases and they [KNLA] would be driven out [of the area] because the Tatmadaw would come and build their camp. That is their opinion.

What do the villagers want [the project to be]?

The villagers will be very happy if the project is not implemented. They would be much happier if the [KNU] leaders came to tell them that the project had been stopped.

What more do you want to add regarding the cliff?

If there is no environmental destruction, and there is development for the villages, and it brings benefit for the villagers, we will agree to not only this cement factory [project] but also any projects to be carried out. However, I personally do not agree with this cement factory [project]. I personally object [to the project]. If it [our objections] are not successful and the project is allowed to be carried out, I will not stay in the village anymore. I will go to work in Thailand.

Do you want to add more?

One more thing that I would like to say is that we have formed a committee to [try to] suspend the project. The state level leaders and KNU leaders also help us to stop the project. We, the villagers, will try to stop the project. We will also be happy if both sides of leaders [KNU and Burma/Myanmar government] help us to oppose the project. However, we worry that we will not be able to make them [company] suspend the project. There are many other cliffs which they can do [mine] such as Lay Hpoh and A--- Loo cliffs. I think it is the best if they do not touch and conduct [mining] in Maw Lay Cliff. That is all.

Source #120

Log #	16-40-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thaton District

Full Text

What is your name?

U A---

How old are you?

51 years old.

How many children do you have?

Seven children.

Where do you live?

B--- village, Ka Lel group [village tract].

What is your occupation?

I am breeding chickens and cows. My wife is selling produce.

How old is your eldest child?

My eldest daughter is about 20 years old.

What about the youngest child?

He/she is about 10 years old.

How many households are there in your village?

There are about [censored for security] households in our village.

What do they do for their livelihoods?

Most of them are poor. Some of them are fishing in Don Ma Ni River; some are making and selling snacks; and some are breeding goats and cows.

Is there a school in B--- village?

Yes, there is.

Is it a government school?

It is now a [Burma/Myanmar] government school. It was established by B---'s village monk in the past. Just last year, it became a government school.

How many standards does the school have?

Four standards.

Do the school parents have to pay for the school fees?

School fees needed to be paid a little bit when it was run by the monk in the past. However, school fees do not need to be paid now that it is run by the government.

Does the KNU provide any support [to the school]?

I do not know exactly. I heard that they came and provided note books and other school materials.

Do KNU also provide a stipend to school teachers?

I do not know exactly, either. I heard they provided some money for funding.

Are the teachers hired by the [Burma/Myanmar] government?

Yes, they are.

Is there a religious school [in the village]?

Yes, there is. It is a self-reliant school. We collect the money [to run the school] depending

on how much the villagers can pay. If they can pay 500, 1,000, or 2,000 [kyat], we collect it according to what they can pay per house. We have to hire the teachers.

If the villagers get sick, where do they go [for treatment]?

They go to Pein Ne Taw [village] clinic.

Do people come to take identification cards in Ka Lel group [village tract]?

No.

Did you hear that the identification card is being taken [by villagers]?

No, I did not. [I heard that] identification cards were being taken in Bilin and Thaton townships, Mon State last year. I ask one of my friends, "*Friend, could you tell [the village head] for me that I want to take an identification card? Since we do not have an identification card, we face difficulties; we cannot travel to where we want.*" He said, "*Friend, I will help you [by asking village head]*" He helped me tell [the village head] but it did not work. He said that they said that identification card is not taken [given] for *ka la* [Muslims].

How do you feel as you are discriminated against?

I do not feel good. Not only myself, but also my children face difficulties [to travel if we do not have an identification card]. There is no problem for me [although I do not have identification card] as I am getting old, but I am worried for my children's future. It will be difficult for them to travel from place to place if they do not have a Myanmar identification card. For example, even though a student passes tenth standards, she/he will not get a job if she/he does not have identification card.

Is there any company coming and doing any business here in B--- village?

Phone towers have been set up [in B--- village].

Did they [the phone company] hold any discussion with the villagers [when they set up the phone towers]?

No, they did not. They might have discussed it only with the village administrator. As we are the villagers, we do not know anything about it.

How is the [village] administrator elected?

We selected by giving votes. The one who wins [the most] votes becomes the administrator. The one who became the administrator last year was born in C--- [village] but he got married in B--- village and lives in B--- village. He became the [village] administrator as he got the most votes.

To be able to vote in the election, you need to have identification card. As an identification card is not provided for you, what did you do?

I heard that those who do not have identification cards cannot vote [in the election]. There is nothing we can do. As we do not have identification cards, we do not vote. Ninety percent of

us [estimate] *Ka la* [Muslim] did not have an identification card so we did not have a chance to vote. There are only three or four villagers in B--- village who could vote. They got identification cards during the [State Peace and Development] Council era.

Could you tell me about Min Lwin [Maw Lay] Mountain?

I do not know exactly about Min Lwin Mountain as I am not allowed to be involved [in village level meetings]. I can only know [the information] from other people. People [villagers] were told to go attend the meeting in the monastery. Villagers from our village went to attend the meeting but I did not go to attend the meeting. Before the meeting happened, Moe Lin [D--- villager] came to inform me [and asked me] to tell the villagers in B--- village to go to attend the meeting in D--- [village] monastery. I told them that I would let the people know to attend the meeting. I then asked him, *“You have suddenly come to get the villagers to organise [them to attend] the meeting but I do not know anything. What is the meeting about?”* Moe Lin replied, *“It is about Min Lwin Mountain.”* In reality, we have to be very careful living here. We do not dare to speak up very much. I did not go to attend that meeting at that time. For other villagers, as they were told that one person from each house had to go, they went to attend the meeting without knowing anything [in advance].

Now, the villagers from the surrounding villages object to the Min Lwin Mountain project. The company has now stopped [the stone mining project]. What is your opinion on it?

I agree again with the project [being stopped]. We live in B--- village. My grandparents are Min Lwin villagers. My grandmother is Karen, a Min Lwin villager. She still has lands in Min Lwin village. My father is a B--- villager. My grandparent’s paddy fields are near Min Lwin village. Everyone knows that.

Thank you so much for your time and interview.

I also thank you so much for having me interview as I have a chance to express my feeling and I also feel better. In fact, we [Muslims] are not guests. We were born here, brought up here and live here. If the project is implemented, my grandparent’s land will also be destroyed. We do not want the lands to be destroyed.

Source #121

Log #	16-44-A4-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
What is your name?	
I am Saw A---	
How old are you?	
I am 35 years old.	

What is your village?

B--- village.

How about the village tract?

Kaw Luh Der village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mutraw [Hpapun] district.

What is your work and responsibility?

In the village tract level, I am the [censored for security].

When did you take this responsibility?

From 2010 until now. It has been six years.

In your village tract, how many villages are there?

There are 11 villages.

Do you know the population of the villagers?

There are 333 houses. For the villagers population for women is 1154 and for male is 1120. And there are 2504 [estimation] altogether.

In your village tract, what do the villagers do [for livelihood]?

In the village tract, the villagers do hill farming, there is no big husbandry [business], and there are only small sales [shops] and other [food] exchange.

The villagers are able to work freely?

Not freely yet. In our area there are still many places that villagers cannot work. So we can say that they are not free yet.

So the villagers have enough food from their work?

Not enough with only doing farming.

If not where do they find [food]?

Normally if it is not enough, they find [ask] from their siblings. If they have big problems with finding food, we have a place for buying and selling. They go there and buy with their small amount of money. That is the place where they buy [food].

Where is the place to buy and sell? Is that in your village tract area?

Yes, it is in my village tract area. Because of this problem [not enough food], we opened a place in our village tract area where we can go to buy and sell. It is in Khoh Law Kloh Riverside at the boat station.

In your village tract, is there any other way of making income?

No, only sometimes they [villagers] grow chickens or pigs and sell them and from that they make money for buying salt and fish paste. They save this money and buy things [food]. There is no special way of making income.

In your village tract, all villages are in their right position [not relocated]?

Yes, they are but they [villagers] cannot all return home yet. They are not all able to return to the old village where they used to live

So villagers are now able to work in their own place [in their own village]?

Not all yet. Not all of them can return yet so we can say that not all are able to go back.

Why can they all not work [freely]?

Because our enemy has their base in our place and near our work place so that the villagers do not dare to return.

In your village tract, is there a clinic?

There is one.

Where is that clinic from and it is supported by an organisation?

It is led by superior leaders from KNU [Karen National Union] organisation. They found the way and opened a clinic for us.

So in the clinic, is there enough medicine?

Not enough for civilians but just the small support.

So in that clinic, do you know how many medics are in that hospital?

There are usually two or three permanent medics.

Do you remember when that clinic was established?

I don't remember. When I came in [to the village tract], it was already established. So I do not know the date it was established.

Is there a school in your village tract?

Yes, there is school for education.

How many schools are there?

There are eight primary schools. There is also one middle school. There are nine schools altogether.

So is there a high school in your village tract?

There is no high school in my village tract.

The schools are supported by what organisation? Do you know about it?

We do not know the name of the organisation that supports the schools. We can say that it has been led by the KNU headquarters since the beginning. Our leaders and people find the way to establish [schools]. I do not know what organisation the school is supported by but they are led by the KED [Karen Education Department].

How many teachers are there in your village tract?

I do not know exactly. I am forgetful. I am sorry.

It is OK. Since the ceasefire, was there any time that SPDC [State Peace and Development Council/Tatmadaw] came in and was active in your village tract area?

In my village tract area, for the existing villages, after 2015 they were not active. There has been no military activity since.

In your village tract, how many army camps are there? Do you know about it?

There were five places. There is one new camp so there are six camps altogether.

Do you know the names of the places of the army camps?

The place where the enemies' bases are, are as follows; the first place is Moh Luh Kyoh, the second place is Leh Kyay, the third place is Kyaw Poe Hta, the fourth place is Leh Ka lee Kyoh.

So...

And there is one new army camp recently established in Ree Kyel Hta. That was established later.

So do you know the year and the month of the establishment [of army camps]?

Since they have come into our area they took over our places. They reach to Khoh Law River side as well but I cannot remember the date.

Do you remember [the date] that they took the place?

The new place that they took was sometime in 2014 and 2015. They entered Kyaw Poe Hta place and after the ceasefire they took one more place [Ree Kyel Hta]. For Kyaw Poe Hta place, they held it since 2012. They took one more place there [Ree Kyel Hta place].

At the places they are based; do you know the number of their soldiers?

I don't know the number of their soldiers.

Is there any difference with the Tatmadaw activities before and after the ceasefire such as them repairing their camps or road?

Yes there is. They repair their place [camp] after the plan [the ceasefire]. We have seen that they have conducted their activities like repairing their camps and moreover they have more activity amongst the villages like Kyaw Klee Hta place. We have been there and we have seen that they repair their place [camp]. They also help civilians.

How do they help [civilians]? Do you know about their purpose?

Their purpose is to *[inaudible]*. They help and we have seen that like in my village, B---village, we have to clear the [information] problems. We do not allow them to build such things [school] but they are doing like this, coming into our area and building more schools, especially in my area. For other places they are not active yet.

So when they help the school, they also send teachers as well?

It is their plan. Our enemy, the Burma military government, sends the teachers from [another] town. They find the teachers from the town and our people here [from the village] do not work in these schools [as teachers].

Are there any incidents such as the Tatmadaw making trouble and distributing letters and persuading the villagers [to support them]?

Never, because in villages from outside we talk with the soldiers and that has never happened.

Have they done anything like meeting with civilians and persuading civilians?

That has never happened in 2015.

Your civilians; what is their perspective on Burma/Myanmar government?

For my civilian perspective, they have not worked with [supported] the Burma/Myanmar military yet.

How do you suggest to your civilians to not work closely with the Burma/Myanmar government?

We always remind them not to be close to them because they [Tatmadaw and the Burma/Myanmar government] might have a secret plan and persuade you [villagers]. We always remind them so that they do not have an idea to go back to work [with Tatmadaw]

Is there landmine usage in your area [village tract]?

In my village tract, there is still landmine usage.

Why do they use landmines?

We are still in a difficult situation so that we are still using landmines.

Who uses landmine?

The elders who are responsible for protecting the civilians [use landmines], and the soldiers also use them.

What is the purpose of them using landmine? Why they use landmine?

[They use landmines because] We are not in a satisfactory [stable peace] situation yet and we are still in a difficult [unsafe] situation. With landmines we have to be careful with protecting ourselves. We do not have many soldiers [militia]. We use landmines in order to help villagers conduct their livelihood activities [safe from soldiers].

Has the Tatmadaw planted any landmines in your area [after the ceasefire]?

We have not seen any [landmines] here so we [could say that] they haven't planted any landmines in our area. We do not know exactly about that.

Since the ceasefire, the villagers are able to move around well in your village tract area?

Since the ceasefire, they are not really able to travel freely yet.

Is there anything that they still have to be afraid of?

Yes.

What are they have to be afraid of?

We [villagers] have to be afraid of our enemy military government [Tatmadaw]. We always have to be careful with our enemy. It is not a good and satisfactory time, so we still have to afraid when they travel.

As you are a responsible person in your organisation, do you have any additional things to add from your experience and perspectives for the future?

I do not have anything special to say. In our village tract, I do want our civilians to have an easy, healthy life and be able to work freely. We want these things. We also want our civilians to be able to go live and work in their home villages because there are many places that are being abandoned that we cannot work in. In order to have prosperity, we hope we will be able to go back to our [original] place as well. That is what I want to add.

Thank you so much for answering our questions and sharing your opinions. Thank you.

Thanks.

Source #122

Log #	16-47-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Date Received: May 31st 2016

1. These photos were taken on May 18th 2016 beside A--- road in B--- village, Taw Pyar Gyi village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. They are of a signboard upon which is written “*Nar Nat Pwint agriculture project*”. There are also plots of land beside A--- road in B--- village, Taw Pyar Gyi village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. These plots of land are the ancestral land of local residents. At the present time, business companies came to do their agriculture project on these lands. The local residents did not know whether this agriculture project will benefit them or not. Furthermore, they [local residents] wondered what would happen after this agriculture project. It [negative impact of developments] could concern the people very much.
2. These photos were taken on May 18th 2016 in Thandaunggyi Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. They are about the football ground in Thandaunggyi Town. Thandaunggyi Town that has existed for over one hundred years. There are many mountain villages located around Thandaunggyi. Many people used to celebrate and participate in a football competition held at the football ground located in Thandaunggyi Town. This football ground is also a place for traditional celebration. Since 2000, some people from Bu Yit Naung Tat Myout have proposed to the local [municipal] development committee to construct a department store on the football ground. Therefore, local residents are worried that they would lose their communal football ground so they asked the local authorities to reject the department store proposal. The plans for building the department store were abolished in 2006. Yet at the end of 2015, a fire station was built on the football ground. Around the football ground, they will construct other buildings related to fire station. The local residents do not have another football ground for sports. That is why they [local residents] had a problem with it [the development].
3. These photos were taken on May 16th 2016. They are of the road which is seven miles long between Shwe Nyaung Pin village and Nan Chain Kywe village [in the east of Maung Nwet Gyi village tract] in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. The construction of the road with smooth rocks started in February 2016. It was finished in April 2016. It rained twice at the beginning of May. As a result, the road built with smooth rocks was spoiled. Chan Mya Way Si Company has responsibility for this road but no responsible person from the company has come and rebuilt the road. Many businesses and companies came to the local area for the development project. However, local people get less benefit from development projects. Most of the benefits are only for companies.
4. These photos were taken on May 18th 2016 outside of Thandaunggyi Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. They are about a signboard informing people about the construction of a local Myanmar government office in that area. The message according to the signboard is written below.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Rural Community Developmental Department) Township Level Developmental Department The location for constructing local office building Thandaunggyi Town	Karen State
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The Myanmar government will be constructing a local office building in this area but this area belongs to the local residents. They [local residents] do not get any compensation. Only relevant local Myanmar governors and local responsible people made the decision for office construction. While the local villagers were not satisfied with the decision they could not do anything about it [to reject the construction].

Source #123

Log #	16-48-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Situation Update

The period of this Situation Update took place from February 1st to April 1st 2016. The information was documented in Bee Lay [Bilin] Township, Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District. The information in this Situation Update includes drugs, development [projects], government military, KNU/KNLA situation and the situation for civilians.

Drugs

In terms of drugs, we have seen a lot of drugs coming to many villagers in Bilin Township. We also have seen that many young people have been secretly using the drugs. If you need [want] to buy or sell them you can find them very easily. We have seen that the drugs (methamphetamine) are coming into the village in two ways. The first way it comes is through the Baw Kyoh Leh, K'Ter Tee and Htaw Klaw Hkee roads. Second way, it is sent on the A--- road and goes down to B--- [Town] and Eu--- [village]. Based on this result the disease [addiction] has occurred in Eu--- village, D--- village in E--- village, and F--- village in Noh Ber Baw village tract. We have not seen any organisation [authority] such as the BGF, the KNU, the KNLA and the Tatmadaw take any action. Therefore some villagers have many concerns and they worry that their children and the youth will be impacted by using drugs in the future.

Development project

We have seen that in April, clinic constructions were finished in many villages; in Eu---, G--- village, Ta Auh Hkee village tract and P'Yah Raw village, P'Yah Raw village tract and also in other [villages] that I [KHRG researcher] am not able to reach. The people who gave funding and built the clinics are from an organisation known as Nippon [Foundation]. The clinic was already built and the opening ceremony also was already held but until the present time the lock [on the clinic] has never opened [for the villagers]. There are also no medics or patients. The villagers were mainly talking about that clinic. A villager from Eu--- village said that the

clinic looks very beautiful but you cannot use it for anything. Villagers in E--- village also said that there is no [change], only the clinic has been built and nothing is inside. Therefore they went to one old grandfather who does not have any relatives to live with, and they asked him to live in the clinic because the grandfather doesn't have any house and he also cannot work.

The Burma/Myanmar government also does not place any health workers in the clinic and the Karen healthcare department [KDHW] face a lack of human resources and face problems with medicine therefore the villagers can only gaze at the clinic. A villager from Eu-- village said [joked] that if you have headache and you get malaria, if you look at that clinic then you will recover.

Road construction (in rainy and summer seasons)

A main road is being constructed from P'Nweh Klah to Lay Kay but until now it has not been completed. The whole road has not been completed, only some small bridges were constructed but many bridges also have not been constructed therefore we cannot travel in rainy season. The people [and companies] who construct the road are U Ye Tun, Kyi Tun and Win Laing (who is from Wa Pa village) and Mo Ze company. Another road also was constructed from Peh Wa Hta, Meh Naw Ther village tract. It passes through Khoh Hpoh Mountain to P'Yah Raw [village]. It was constructed in 2015 and we can travel only in summer. [U Ye Tun] also has planned to construct another road starting from Lay Kay village, Lay Kay village tract to Htaw Kla Hpoh Hkee, Noh Ber Baw village tract, in 2017. The people [company] who take responsibility for implementing this road construction will be U Ye Tun Company. All roads which have been constructed were agreed by the KNU and they [oversaw the] construction.

School building (Primary)

An organisation called BAJ [Bridge Asia Japan] came to build the schools in many villages. They constructed the schools in large villages which have high numbers of villagers. This organisation also installed water for the villagers. If we look at this, it is very useful [beneficial] for the villagers. This year in summer a water shortage happened because of a heatwave that caused the streams and wells, which are usually used by villagers, to dry up. The villagers did not worry about the water shortage because they received water installations [from BAJ]. They also constructed a concrete school. It is very useful because if the villagers have to build a school by themselves there will be no trees or bamboo [to construct it with] because there are few trees and bamboo. Two more primary schools will be built in Noh Ber Baw village and Klwee Lay Tha Waw Pya Kyoh [village]. These two schools also will be built with concrete. As I know the people who take responsibility to build the schools are Saw A'Ngeh Lay in Eu--- village, and Brigade (1) Adjutant General Aee Tha. We do not know where the [financial] support comes from.

Paddy rice and solar panel aid

In terms of aid, the paddy rice has been supported [donated] by the Nippon Foundation. In Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District, the people who take responsibility [for distributing the aid] are Saw A'Ngeh Lay in Eu--- village (who is a trader), Brigade (1) Adjutant General Aee Tha and responsible people from the village tract. This year, the amount of paddy rice donated was one basket per person. The rice was not donated to people who live or work very far away [from the village], or to one year old babies, monks, or to revolutionary people such as the KNU and the KNLA. Therefore some villagers and village leaders discussed with each other and collected it from the villagers who received rice donations and redistributed it to people who did not receive the aid. In terms of solar panels, the villagers have not received it

until the present time. The information that I was not able to confirm is that there was a lucky draw to decide which villagers would get solar panels.

Building houses for Internally Displaced People [IDPs]

Regarding this issue, Adjutant General Aee Tha and Saw A'Ngeh Lay took responsibility to lead [this project]. They will build very cheap toilets in three villages such as Htee Lay Kaw village, P'Yah Raw village tract, and Htee Ber Hkee [village], in Htee Hsee Baw village tract. I went to Htee Lay Hkaw village and saw the villagers have not built houses yet [for IDPs to return]. I told them, "*The rainy season will come soon, why you have not built your houses?*" The person who [will implement this project] is Saw A'Neh Lay but even by April 15th 2016, the trees [for building the houses] had not been cut down yet. In order to build houses for Internally Displaced People, Adjutant General Aee Tha came up to cut down the trees from Toh Teh Hkee Forest and Ta Auh Hkee Forest. The total [weight] of the trees cut down will be 600 tonnes. The villagers from Toh Teh Hkee village did not want to permit them to take the logs but the KNU leader came to take it therefore they agreed with the leaders.

Military activity

On February 23rd 2016 we got to know that Ta Pa (Win Ta Ma) Army Camp, Lay Kay Army Camp, Yoh Klah Army Camp, Meh Pree Hkee Army Camp and BGF #1014 and #1011 Battalion were patrolling. The Burma/Myanmar government military [Tatmadaw] which are based [in the local area] are LID [Light Infantry Division] #44. LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #118 is patrolling and stays [patrols] in the villages. The villages where they are patrolling are Lah Hkoh (Pa Ri Ko) in P'Nweh Klah village tract, Peh Wa Hta in Meh Naw Ther village tract, Noh Ber Baw and Htaw Klaw Hkee in Noh Ber village tract. The villagers said that they thought the Tatmadaw would relocate but in reality they came to stay [patrol] in their villages. A--- village head also said that they did not do anything [cause any problems] when they stay in the village but we [villagers] have concerns for the women who live in the villages because they [soldiers] all said they are bachelors. I saw that when they are staying [patrolling] into each village by village, two of their intelligence personnel went to villagers' working places and to the villages which are situated close to where they are staying. They [intelligence personnel] followed villagers and did not wear army uniforms. The BGF soldiers are staying in their own army camps.

Bilin Township is KNU-controlled and the territory of KNLA Battalion #3 therefore Battalion #3 operates there. Because they operate there, Battalion Commander Dah Nay Htoo had to meet with the LID Commander because their [Tatmadaw] soldiers were patrolling [in the KNLA territory]. LID commanders and camp commanders told him [Tatmadaw commander] that they were allowed to patrol but they should not bring any armed equipment with them. In this case it disturbed the villagers [because of potential conflict].

The Township [leaders] intend to set up checkpoints along Kah Meh Road, and Htaw Klaw Hpoh Hkee, Buh Nee Hkoh and Baw Paw Hta but the Burma/Myanmar government military did not permit them. After Battalion #3 commanders and responsible people in the township held a discussion with the Burma/Myanmar government military, the Burma/Myanmar government military confirmed details of the checkpoint, including that if they set up checkpoints they [KNLA] should not raise their flag, they should set up a barrier in front of checkpoints, and the checkpoint keepers are not allowed to bring any armed equipment.

Villagers' concern

This year the weather is very hot therefore the villagers' crops which are betel nut trees and betel nut leaves, and their water sources, also dried out. This year, the paddy rice market price

is very high. One basket of paddy rice costs 20,000 kyat. The food shortage problem has not happened only in summer season, it can even happen in the rainy season. This is the concern for the villagers.

This information was collected when I travelled from place to place and some of them I saw with my eyes and also heard from the villagers about military activity [patrolling] and development projects until April 2016.

Source #124¹⁰⁷

Log #	16-50-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: May 31st 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos show rice that has been provided by Japan Aid, Nippon [foundation]. It has been passed through the CIDKP [Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People] for rural [villagers]. This was in Moh Nyay Der village, Kwee Dee Kaw village tract, Moo [Mone] Township, Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin]. I took these photos on March 4th, 2016. 2. These photos show villagers from Noh Sheh village, Koh Nee village and Thay Nyah Au Toh Loh village. They are welcoming and accepting rice from Japan Aid, Nippon [Foundation] that has been passed down to CIDKP. The photo was taken in A---'s father's house, Haw Hta Plaw, [in Moo Township, Kler Lwee Htoo/Nyaunglebin District]. I took these photos on March 9th, 2016. 8. These photos show Japan Aid. The representatives of Nippon [Foundation] gave rice to CIDKP for villagers and explained [gave a presentation] about this aid. I took these photos in [KNU] Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin District] Liaison Office, Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Town, [Nyaunglebin District District]. I took these photos on March 31st, 2016. 9. The representative of Japan [Nippon Foundation] came and explained about the rice [donation]. They brought a Myanmar Government staff U Tin Myo Aung with them. This photo show when he gives a speech to encourage [villagers]. The photo took place in [KNU] Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin] Liaison office, Ler Doh Town, Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District. I took these photos on March 31st, 2016. 11. These photos show B--- villager [Maung] C---. His cart was hit by landmine and it injured his foot a little when he was going to cut firewood. The photos were taken in his [Maung C---'s] house, B--- village. I took these photos on May 10th, 2016 when I [KHRG researcher] interviewed him. 12. These photos show Maung C--- [his cart that was hit by landmine]. His cow was also 	

¹⁰⁷ Please note, direct reference to this source document was removed from the final publication of Foundation of Fear.

hit by the landmine so he cannot use the cow [for work] yet because the cow is currently receiving treatment. These photos were taken beside the [Maung C---'s] house, B--- village. I [KHRG researcher] took these photos on May 10th, 2016 after I interviewed him; I also took the cow's picture.

13. These photos show Thara [teacher] D--- teaching livelihood vocational training about making [natural] fertiliser by ourselves. It is not like [other chemical] fertiliser that is currently used in [modern] agriculture. These photos were taken in Doh Klah village, Moo Township, [Nyaunglebin District]. I took these photos on May 16th, 2016 to May 18th, 2016.

Source #125

Log #	16-52-I1			
Title / type of report	Incident Report			
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished			
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District			
Full Text				
Part 1 – Incident Details				
Type of Incident	Landmine explosion			
Date of Incident(s)	March 16th 2016			
Incident Location	A--- village, K'Taing Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District			
Victim Information				
Name	Saw B--- (also known as) Saw C---			
Age	42			
Sex	Male			
Ethnicity	Karen			
Family	Yes			
Occupation	Farmer			
Religion	Buddhist			
Position	Villager			
Village	A--- village			
Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Saw Than Oo	Secretary, K'Taing Tee village tract	Village tract security force (KNDO) ¹⁰⁸	Htee Thel Lay village, K'Taing	Saw Maung Kyaw

¹⁰⁸ The Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) was formed in 1947 by the Karen National Union and is the precursor to the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). Today the KNDO refers to a militia force of local volunteers trained and equipped by the KNLA and incorporated into its battalion and command structure; its members wear uniforms and typically commit to two-year terms of service.

			Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District	
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Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

Since I heard about this case, I firstly went to meet with the K'Taing Tee village tract leader in order to get the information. Then, I went to see U D--- who is the village administrator in A--- village in order to get more information, and afterwards I called him [village administrator] to go to Saw B---'s house. Then, I met with his [Saw B---] wife, Naw E---, in the house. I interviewed her about the case.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

We can confirm that this information is true because when I met with U D--- [village administrator], he said *"I, myself, organised the people and donated 300,000 kyat [to the landmine victim]"*. We know this information if we listen to his words.

3. Complete description of the incident

I am now going to write about a landmine explosion. On March 16th 2016, it happened in the west of A--- village in K'Taing Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District.

Because of the landmine explosion, Saw B---, also known as Saw C---, who is 42 years old, was injured. A person who planted the landmine in the ground is Saw Than Oo, 45 years, who is the K'Taing Tee village tract secretary which is under K'Taing Tee village tract security force [Karen National Defense Organisation]. He [Saw Than Oo] planted the landmine in 2015 but he could not find it when he tried to take it out. That is why this landmine was still under the ground.

Before the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement was signed in 2015, KNDO planted landmines in the ground for their self-protection. Later, when they cleared [took out] the landmines from the ground, they could not clear all the landmines because they did not remember the number of landmines that they had planted. So some landmines were still planted under the ground. After the case [landmine explosion], they informed that the villagers should not go in the area where landmine exploded.

The villagers thought that the landmines [still under the ground] had been planted there for many years. Thus, the villagers assumed that the battery inside the landmine would not work anymore [the landmine was not active] so that they went to their workplaces and then the landmine exploded. The incident happened like this. Saw B--- and his friends thought that the landmines in the area don't work anymore, so they went to their hill farms. As a result, Saw B--- stepped on the landmine and it exploded. Because of the landmine, his right leg was lost. Also, his chest and under his arm were injured. Because of the injuries, Saw B--- has been sent to I.C.R.C [International Committee for the Red Cross] hospital for medical treatment in Taung K'Lay Town, Mon State. We have known that 300,000 kyat [donated by

the villagers] was given to his wife for his medical fees.

4. Permission for using the details

This information has been permitted to use as needed.

Source #126

Log #	16-52-I2			
Title / type of report	Incident Report			
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished			
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District			
Full Text				
Part 1 – Incident Details				
Type of Incident	Forced Taxation			
Date of Incident(s)	February 4th 2016			
Incident Location	K’Nyin Don army camp, A--- village, K’Taing Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District			
Victim Information				
Name	Maung B---			
Age	45			
Sex	Male			
Ethnicity	Karen			
Family	Yes			
Occupation	[censored for security]			
Religion	Buddhist			
Position	Villager			
Village	C--- Village			
Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander’s Name
Saw Par Ghaw	Soldier	BGF [Border Guard Force] #1013	BGF military barrack in K’Taing Tee	Battalion Commander, Bo Hla Kyaing

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

Before February 4th 2016, I had heard that the BGF were collecting tax from people at their checkpoint.¹⁰⁹ To make sure, I went to get more detailed information from U D---, 46 years,

¹⁰⁹ According to Section 9d of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organisations must “Avoid forcibly taking money, property, food, labor or services from civilians”. See “[The Nationwide](#)”

who lives in E--- village because he and a car driver, Maung B---went together [through the checkpoint].

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

We know that this information is true if we listen to U D--- words. According to U D---, *“They [BGF] are demanding tax from the people in many different ways. I doubt that the army camp leader has taught them [BGF soldiers] how to ask for the tax”*.

3. Complete description of the incident

Since February 4th 2016, this kind of human rights abuse has been happening. It has taken place at K’Nyin Don army camp which is about one mile away from A--- village, K’Taing Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. BGF soldiers at the checkpoint forced the car drivers to pay tax. The people who paid tax to the BGF soldiers were all the car drivers who travelled along the highway between Hpapun to Hpa-an, including Maung B---, who was driving a car. It seemed like BGF soldiers have already known that they could demand tax from the car drivers. It means that the car drivers had to pay the tax although they did not want to. [They paid] because they were afraid of the BGF soldiers. Not only were BGF soldiers at K’Nyin Don army camp [asking for this tax]. The other BGF soldiers from all their army bases [along the road] also forced car drivers to pay tax. Because of the forced taxation, the money for car-fare [for villagers to travel] has increased. Because the passengers and travelers have to pay more money for car-fare, the price of the commodities [that are commonly transported] has increased. As a result, people have to pay a lot of money when they buy food and other products. As a result, only the local civilians have suffered. No one [relevant authorities] comes to give any solution to solve this problem of forced taxation [at checkpoints]. It is hard to say whether or not relevant authorities already know about this case.

4. Permission for using the details

I have got permission from U D--- to use this information.

Source #127

Log #	16-52-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township and Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Situation Update | Dwe Lo Township and Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District (March to April 2016)

This Situation update describes the events of human rights during the period between March 16th and April 6th in 2016.

Currently many events are happening along the road between Hpapun Town and K’Ma Maung Town which is located in Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District.

To be more specific, these are taking place in Me Th’Lut village, Shan Kaing village, Ku Ler

Ceasefire Agreement between The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and The Ethnic Armed Organizations. Myanmar Peace Monitor, October 15th 2015.

Kaing village, Whay Naung village, T'Kwun Taing village, Whay Mon village, F--- village, Nga Aein Su village, Ku Hseik village, Ma Taw village, Khwe Thay [or] Chaung Tha Ya village, Hsin Swel village, Pa Lon Ywar Gyi village, Pa Lon Ywar Lay village, Taung Thu village, Shan Ywar village, H--- village in Me K'Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. In Ku Hseik village, Ma Taw village, Khwe Tay [or] Chaung Tha Ya village [in Ma Taw village tract, Dwe Lo Township]. Again, in Htee Tha Ba Lu Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township there is Hsin Swel village. In K'Taing Ti village tract, Dwe Lo Township there are Pa Lon Ywar Gyi village, Pa Lon Ywar Lay village, Taung Thu village, Shan Ywar village and H--- Ti village. In Yay Pu village tract, Dwe Lo Township there are Baw Kyoh Lel village and Yay Pu village or there are Yay Pu village and Baw Kyoh Lel in Lay Boh Hta village tract. From Lay Boh Hta village tract to Wah Kaw village, K'Ma Maung town and from Dwe Lo Township to T'Khaw Koh village, Kyauk Kwin village in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract there are many changes related to the human rights situation.

The social situations have changed because the national government has changed. Social conflict still happens because some dishonourable and corrupt local government staff still exist in the country. Even though some government staff want to change and act in accordance with the democratic system in some cases, some government staff who used to work for Thein Sein president [former government] do not want to change their dirty and unacceptable behaviours. Many social conflicts happen because of them. Whatever issues or problems happen, it truly affects local civilians.

The following social conflicts happened, as below.

- 1) Saw B--- or [also known as] Saw C--- was injured due to a landmine.
- 2) Thein Sein government has [been] replaced [by] new village tract leaders for the NLD [National League for Democracy] government.
- 3) Myanmar government military troops [Tatmadaw] based their camps along the road between Hpapun and K'Ma Maung Town. Instead, now the BGF [Border Guard Forces] moved to stay in their camps after Myanmar government military troops relocated.
- 4) BGF soldiers at the checkpoints on the highway road from Hpapun to K'Ma Maung and from K'Ma Maung to Hpa-an forced car drivers to pay tax.
- 5) One Company Commander from IB [Infantry Battalion] #8 died because he drowned.

Saw B--- or Saw C--- was injured due to a landmine (March 16th, 2016)

Incidents like this rarely happen. This happened on March 16th 2016. The landmine explosion took place in the west of A--- village [about one mile from the centre], K'Taing Ti village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The villager who was injured due to a landmine is 42 year old Saw B--- or [also known as] Saw C---. He lives in A--- village, K'Taing Ti village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The landmine was not aimed at [injuring] villagers. This landmine had been put under the ground in 2015, not in the year 2016.

The incident happened like this. On March 16th 2016, at around 8 o'clock in the morning, Saw B--- and his friends went to the west of A--- village in order to work on their hill farm. When they walked to their hill farm, suddenly Saw B--- stepped on the landmine. As a result, his right leg was injured and his chest was also injured by the landmine shrapnel. His right leg has been amputated.

Saw B--- went to the ICRC [International Committee for the Red Cross] hospital for medical

treatment which is located in Taung Ka Lay Town. It cost a little of money for medical treatment at the ICRC hospital. When he got out of this hospital after he recovered, the hospital provided him with a prosthetic leg for free. There are 300 houses in A--- village. When he was in hospital, A--- village head, U D--- collected 1000 kyat from each house in the village in order to help Saw B---. The total amount [collected] was 300,000 kyat. Saw B--- is married and has five children. He earns a living by working on a hill farm, and when he did not have enough food for his family, he did casual daily work; due to his landmine injury, his family will now face difficulties.

No armed ethnic group has ever taken accountability for any incident [like this] in the past. However, some villagers suspected that the landmine was planted by the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] during the conflict period, to target Tatmadaw soldiers who used to patrol in Lay Hpoh Hta areas controlled by KNU [Karen National Union], but some villagers remain uncertain.

Thein Sein government has [been] replaced [by] new village tract leaders for NLD government (April 1st, 2016)

In the 2015 general election, Thein Sein's government did not win the election. Therefore, they had to handover national power to the NLD group who won the election [led by Daw Aung San Suu Gyi]. Thein Sein's government promised that they would handover national power to Aung San Suu Kyi [NLD] in March 2016. The Thein Sein government has chosen new village tract leaders to replace the old village tract leaders. On March 4th, 2016 the old village tract leaders transferred power to new village tract leaders.

When people held local elections to elect new village tract leaders, some of the old village tract leaders were very good at campaigning. Thus, some old village tract leaders won the election and they did not need to replace the village tract leaders.

Nowadays new village tract leaders are working in their own villages under NLD's leadership. They have not done any development projects or had any work success yet. On April 8th, 2016 Daw Nan Kin Htway Myint, Karen State minister of NLD government, went to Hpapun Town. When she arrived there, she questioned village tract leaders about what they need to do. They replied that they did not know what they needed to do during their short period of leadership training.

Myanmar government military troops [Tatmadaw] based their camps along the road between Hpapun and K'Ma Maung Town. BGF moved to stay in their camps after Myanmar government military troops relocated (February 2nd, 2016)

Both the Tatmadaw and BGF troops have changed their location of their army camps. The BGF and the Tatmadaw have been working closely together.

The reason is: previously Myanmar government military troops [Tatmadaw] have based their camps along the highway road between Hpapun and K'Ma Maung Town but now Myanmar government wanted BGF troops to stay there. Since February 2nd 2016, BGF has moved to the area around this road. They both, Myanmar government military troops and BGF troops actively cooperated together around this highway road.

To be able to cooperate together, the unit led by Company Commander Bo Hla Kyaing from BGF #1013 has replaced Myanmar government military troops [from IB #8] who lived there before. The locations they [IB #8] relocated their camps to are G--- village, H--- village, I--- village at the entrance of Hpapun Town and J--- village which is situated in K'Ma Maung

Town. BGF #1013 relocated to villages between Hpapun Town and H--- village. The unit led by Major Maung Chit from BGF #1014 relocated [itself] to villages between H--- village and K--- village. The BGFs relocation caused problems and difficulties for many car drivers.

BGF soldiers forced car drivers to pay tax on the highway road from Hpapun Town to K'Ma Maung Town (February 4th, 2016)

There are BGF army camps along the highway road [Aung Thein Di road] between Hpapun Town and K'Ma Maung Town. BGF soldiers from BGF #1013 and #1014 demanded taxes from car drivers without any reason. In the past, Tatmadaw soldiers have never demanded taxes from any car driver on that highway road.

BGF soldiers have military barracks to stay in. They have food to eat. They have clothes to wear. They also get monthly salary from the Myanmar government. Why do they demand taxes from car drivers? Demanding taxes from the people without any reason is not in line with the goals of the NLD government.

They have demanded taxes at this highway road since they set up the checkpoints following their move to the army camp alongside the road. To be more exact, they started to demand taxes without any reason since February 4th 2016. At every camp, they live along the road and they forced car drivers to pay taxes in many different ways.

Since February 4th 2016, BGF soldier [50 year old Saw Pa Gaw] from BGF #1013 led by Company Commander Bo Hla Kyaing [54 year old], demanded taxes from car drivers at K'Nyin Don army camp [checkpoint]. He asked 1000 kyat or 500 kyat for one car. The tax depends on how big the vehicle is.

One Company Commander from IB #8 died because he drowned (March 16th, 2016)

On March 16th 2016 one Company Commander from IB #8 went to swim in the river [Yun S'Lin river] which is situated beside K'Taing Ti army camp [Tactical Operations Command #223]. He got drunk and he drowned in the river but none of his soldiers knew when he went to the river. This incident happened on the same day that Saw B--- stepped on the landmine in A--- village.

The soldiers and Battalion Commander from IB #8 have been secretive about this case. Only the K'Taing Ti village tract [position censored for security] knew about this case. Nobody knew the name of the Company Commander who drowned until now. This Company Commander had settled [resided] in Bilin town.

[Conclusion]

There were a lot of changes [during this time period] but no big problems happened. Only BGF soldiers demanded taxes from the people [at checkpoints] without any reason. It was not only for one or two days. They demanded taxes all the time without limit and measure. Car drivers have faced an uncountable number of challenges. No one has taken any action for these cases.

Source #128

Log #	16-55-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished

Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	<p>March to May 17th 2016</p> <p>The Burma/Myanmar government started constructing bridges in Ka Lee Hkee village, T'Hkaw Luh place, Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township, Dooplaya District. They are constructing a road from Kyainseikgyi [Town] to Per Kler [village]. They decided to finish this road construction this year. The bridges which have not been built will be constructed in full by the end of this year. I do not know the name of the bridge constructors. Then the people repaired and expanded the place called Khyauing Hso as a tourist area. Each year people go there for their vacations and for swimming.</p> <p>Another [issue] is between [two villagers], (Saw Pin) Lay Wa Hploh and Guh Poo. They ploughed up a large area of land, from one side to another. They had the target to build 200 houses over there. There will be 200 houses built for displaced people, refugee people and for people who live in other places. If they submit their name to a list [saying they are in need of housing] they have opportunity to live there.</p> <p>Healthcare [situation] in the area</p> <p>[The pictures were taken] on May 7th 2016. T'Poh Hpoh Hta village is situated in Noh T'Kaw Township and that village is not located close to any town and any large village therefore the villagers face health problems [in accessing treatment]. At the present time the Burma/Myanmar government staff were permitted to go there for distributing medicine twice per month to villagers. The villagers said that in the past none one came to distribute medicines. After the ceasefire [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] it is much getting better for us [to access the healthcare].</p> <p>In terms of militarisation I would like to report one [issue] regarding BGF activity between April 2016 and May 9th. On April 22nd 2016 Hpuh Daw Daw from the BGF asked two of his soldiers to come to survey land. The land which had been surveyed [by his soldiers] had already been sold by Hpuh Daw Daw. The names of the two people who surveyed the land are (1) Saw Nay Gay and Saw Ta Mlah Wah. Saw Nay Gay is a forestry officer and Saw Ta Mlah Wah is a land-surveying officer. None of the township leaders knew when that they were coming to survey the land. They also did not inform the villagers. The villagers also do not know what their arrangement [plan] is. The lands which had been surveyed are situated between A--- River and B---. I do not know the length and width of the land. The lands which had been surveyed included villagers working places for three villages. They are (1) C---, (2) D--- and (3) B--- villages. [The villagers in] these three villages cannot do anything. The villagers are concerned that one day it will cause problems for them and they also said that they cannot do anything. They just wait to listen [to any consequence of this land survey].</p> <p>Incidents of Bullying</p> <p>[The incident occurred] in E--- village, Noh T'Kaw Township on May 15th 2016. [The incident] occurred between the villagers and relates to a children's issue. The child victim's name is Saw F---. He is seven years old. I do not know the name of two children who bullied their friend but they are a 12 year old and a nine year old boy. The two children who bullied the victim are students. [After the bullying, Saw F--- had to be hospitalised]. The child was not happy about the incident therefore his parents submitted the case [complaint] for the first time at the village level but the case has not been solved. They submitted the report [complaint] two times at the village tract level but it also was not solved.</p>

Then they submitted it at the township level but the township [leaders] could not solve the problem. They again submitted it, this time to the police but they also could not solve the problem. The responsible people from the township said the case [problem] has not been solved yet. The parents of the child victim want the case [problem] to be solved very soon. They said that we went [to submit] the case [complaint] many times but it has never been resolved. They said that they do not need anything apart from help for the treatment fee. The total medical treatment fee that the family spent was 2.9 million kyat when he was [hospitalised]. Related to this issue I only asked the child victim, his parents and his grandpa. Thus, these kinds of issue also happened in my area. The KNU addresses these [types of] issues more fairly, based on the rule of law [compared to rule of local leaders].

Source #129

Log #	16-56-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Situation Update: Win Yay Township (March to May 2016)

Introduction

This Situation update is from Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township for the time period between March 1st, 2016 and May 5th, 2016 regarding the human right situations related to education, healthcare, social and military activities, the KNU [Karen National Union] and the situation of civilians.

Education

The villagers described the education situation in Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township. In this year [2016], there are no problems with education because the non-governmental organisation called Japan Foundation [Nippon Foundation]¹¹⁰ came and helped the schools in the area. However there are not enough male and female teachers, who are able to teach and learn Karen literature. They have permission [to learn Karen literature] but no teachers [are available] to teach. Therefore [the schools] are having problems with these things. And in remote villages, they depend on their [villagers'] appointed school teachers and the schools are also not good [structural condition]. But [I] have seen that in comparison between the education situation from 2012 and 2016, there has been [positive] change.

Healthcare

In Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township, the situation related to healthcare is improving because we have seen that the anti-malaria group trained the villagers on how to test blood to see if they have malaria, how to give medical treatment [to malaria impacted patients] and they now can stop the malaria. But I have seen that old people need support because they are old and not useful and when they are sick they [family or children] left them at home. As

¹¹⁰ [The Nippon Foundation](#) is a Japanese NGO currently implementing social innovation and development projects in Burma/Myanmar. KHRG has received several reports from community members on The Nippon Foundation's recent activities in Thaton and Hpa-an Districts, see more at "[Hpa-an Situation Update: Hlaingbwe and Nabu townships, December 2014 to January 2015](#)," KHRG, July 2015; and "[Thaton Situation Update Bilin and Hpa-an townships, June to November 2014](#)," KHRG, February 2015.

they [old people] cannot work or move they just stay on their own at home. They do not send them to hospital as they will die soon anyway and they [family] just treat them with medicine at home. On May 3rd, 2016, I went to two houses, the first sick person is 108 years old and the other one is 70 years old and has malaria. But I have seen that compared to 2012, in 2016 there has been improvements related to the healthcare.

Social Situation

I have heard the situation of the civilians in Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township. After the ceasefire, the KNU also neglected some of our villages. After the ceasefire, [we] have to be afraid of some KNU [Karen National Union] members [who] cause problems between the villagers. That is why some village heads have many problems in managing the villages in order for them to develop quickly. Now, the security [situation] for Karen women cannot be trusted. Currently, there are [incidents of] forced labour, physical abuse and the destruction of houses. If we look at these things, the Tatmadaw in KNU [controlled] areas are not active anymore but they [KNU] cannot provide security [protection for villagers]. There were no such things before the ceasefire and in addition, the Tatmadaw are still active sometimes and [we] feel worried. That is why some villagers and village tract leaders said that for the KNU, [we want them] to do campaigns and provide them [villagers] with the skills that they [villagers] understand. But comparing to the situation since 2012, there has been improvements in 2016.

Government activities

In Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township, the Tatmadaw were quiet in 2012 and they have become active in 2016. On April 24th 2016, the Tatmadaw from LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #591 from Lay Naung camp in Yay Khyaung village, went with 30 soldiers and weapons to Naung Chaung Pya, Kwan Thit Ta, Meh Ka Naung Kyauk Tan Ta. [We] do not know the name of the leader [of the group] but the camp commander is called Yeh Win Thein. They go around and asked the villagers in Kyauk Ta Ta village if they have seen KNU [soldiers]; it was reported to KHRG by a villager who was asked [by Tatmadaw]. These things scare the civilians. [The villagers said or questioned] that *'as the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] has been signed, why do we still have to face this [interaction with Tatmadaw]? And [why do] the local KNLA also not do anything [about this matter]?' According to a villager called Maung A--- who reported [information] to KHRG, In A Nan Kwin [village tract] operation [troops] were not active. The civilians said that, it is more convenient for work and travelling if they [Tatmadaw and KNLA] are not active. Because of these kinds of activities, [our] back is hot and our ears have to be like rabbit.¹¹¹*

KNU and civilians' situation

The situation of the KNU/KNLA and the civilians in Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township is not too bad but we cannot say that it is not very good either. This is because there is no security for the children and female students. Also for the married women there is no contentment with the rule of law. The civilians could not tolerate abuse by [officers at the checkpoint and in the forestry department] and the [unknown] company. And they [civilians] reported to the township [Myanmar government authority] and when they reported [the abuse] to the township authority, they [township authority] transferred the case to the [Myanmar government] officers who oppressed the civilians [treated them badly]. The person in charge of a check point called Maung Pu spoke [badly] to civilians. The upper leaders [Tatmadaw township leaders] bully the lower people [civilians] because they know that they can influence [have power over] the civilians. And they [civilians] asked whether the KNU

¹¹¹ Means situation getting difficult and have to be alert.

has the same law [like Myanmar government]. [Civilians say] *'We want our [KNU] nation to be good and when we tell them about their mistake, they [act as if they] know more [about the situation] than the civilians.'*

For the case of Naw B--- [who was abused/raped by an unnamed man], on February 24th, 2016, her case was sent [to police] with four charges and in April [the perpetrator] was released. The [perpetrator] was fined 500,000 kyat for [instead of] one year in prison. There was an understanding [informal agreement/judgment] and then an appeal. And [the perpetrator] was released in April during the water festival. They [villagers] said [complained] that KNU law is like this [inadequate] and they want to question the KNU judicial system. This [discontent] is because the accused [person] can appeal [against a decree or judgment passed by a lower court of law] and the plaintiff cannot appeal at the township level. And I have heard that if the [affected parties] do not agree with the judgment, the township judge does not [assist by] transferring the case to the district level.

Related to Naw B---'s case, some villagers said that the judge's judgment is not right. When the village administrator heard about the case, [he] said that the judgment is unfair. But it is like you are pulling a tiger's tail and it is difficult for you to release and difficult for you to keep holding [this means there is a dilemma with no safe solution]. They [villagers] requested to report [this information] to the judge Pa Doh Myaing Hpaw. There have also been questions raised [by villagers] such as, *'Is a woman's dignity worth only 500,000 kyat?'*, *'Does the KNU law have to be like that [or can it change]?' 'If they [KNU] keep on making judgments like this, there will be no security for women and students.'* There have also been [villagers] saying, *'If you damage a woman's dignity and give [only] 500,000 kyat, the consequences will be even worse [in the future].'*

Currently in Win Yay Township, there were no cases of rape but the abuses have increased [in general]. The civilians want KNU law to be fair and this is the beginning of [pressure on] the KNU to have credibility. But in 2016, abuses between Karen villagers are increasing. These [incidents happened] because there is poor national security. Some villagers from A---village questioned, *'Do the KNU [KNLA] carry weapons in order to get national rights [to benefit themselves on a national level], or to improve the KNLA as an organisation?' In the times of fighting [in the past] the civilians helped with their security by acting as sentries [guards for the KNLA]. In addition, they [villagers] said there are further concerns [nowadays] because there are [big] problems related to [the use and development of] water and oil [supplies].*

Conclusion

There has been an improvement in education. I think [things] will improve as the new government [National League for Democracy] takes place [power]. And for healthcare, there are more government clinics, and more male and female medics but there is no free way of getting medicine. They [sick people] have to buy the medicines [for themselves]. [I think] If the government recognises its citizens [as human] I would like the Myanmar government to give oral and intravenous medicines in accordance with their diseases. For social issues, multiple NGOs from the Myanmar government's side came and gave information [trainings in village areas]. There are no information campaigns from the KNU side so there is less knowledge about social problems [related to villagers]. There is a need for civilians from the KNU to share information and also to explain to the civilians about KNU laws. The Karen National Union is like a small animal trying to climb up out of the well.

After the 2012 ceasefire, In Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township, there have been activities

[conducted] by the Myanmar government. This is related to NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement]. The KNU asked [Myanmar government/Tatmadaw] 'Why [do you] search and look in the jungle? If [you] want to see you can see at the checkpoint.' This activity might be because [they] do not believe [trust] the KNU. If they keep going like this, Karen civilians will never be able to live openly [freely]. In addition, there are also some KNU/KNLA officers, checkpoint officers and section administrators that take the opportunity [to do bad things]. It is like the jungle was set on fire and the wild cat is doing *lat hka maung hket*.¹¹² In order to avoid the situation like, if one fish is rotten, all the fish in the boat go rotten, we would like the KNU headquarters to know [about these bad activities].

[There is a rumour] that there are [fake] Burmese 10,000 kyat notes spreading in Win Yay Township, A Nan Kwin village tract. This [fake money] will not only affect the KNU's reputation but also could damage the KNU peace process [with Myanmar Government]. I [personally] think it is important for the KNU headquarters to take control of the situation.

As a man physically abused a woman and with article (202), [the perpetrator] was sentenced to only two years in prison, in future there will be more prisoners [who commit abuse like this because the punishment is not enough]. What I would like to say is that the KNU is responsible for the civilians not to become oppressed [by facing abuse]. Otherwise the civilians could become the members of the other side [lose their support for the KNU]. This would happen as in the past, when the Myanmar government oppressed civilians using weapons [so the civilians supported the KNU]. Now I would not want people to say the KNLA [is now oppressing civilians]. But it [the rumour] is spreading like this. For the elders who are nationalist [supporters of the KNU/KNLA], they listen to these concerns and solve them. But I have seen that there were disagreements between some parts [within the KNU/KNLA]. There came to be problems like interference with administration and [military] operations in the same township [by different KNU/KNLA parts]. I would like the KNU national organisation to know about these things.

Source #130

Log #	16-57-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Doooplaya District
Full Text	
Date Received: May 31st 2016	
What is your name?	
My name is U Cz---	

¹¹²A motion commonly used in Myanmar boxing to challenge the opponent. It is done by whacking the elbow with an open palm.

Can you tell me about some situations [in your area]? What is the commonly happening in this area?

The most common problem in three villages in Kya K'Wa village tract is the land problem. There are no other special problems that happen. If anything happens, only villagers report about their land [problems]. This is the most common problem happening [in this area]. But if our village tract [leaders] cannot do anything [for the villagers with land problems] then we pass it to the land department.

Does this land problem happen among the villagers in this village? Or do personally wealthy people or companies confiscate it [land]?

No, there is no company confiscating land [here]. It happens among the villagers between the land owners, because there is no company [confiscating land] in our area yet. It [company confiscating land] will happen in the Asian Highway area.

How does this land problem happen among the villagers? For example, do they live in the same village and confiscate each other's land?

Some of them [villagers] argued with each other that, *"This is my grandparents land"* and the other one said, *"This is my parents' land too, this is what they told me"*. And again the first one replied, *"My grandparents told me like this too"*. And then we had to solve [this] problem.

There were only villagers who confiscated each other's land. Are there trees on these lands or not?

Some of their lands have some coconut trees and other trees but on some have no trees. Some of their lands are only land but it was true that their grandparents lived in there in the past with one or two coconut trees. After the grandparents were gone, there were only their children and grandchildren left but they did not live in this village anymore. They went to the other villages and lived there but later they came back to the village in order to sell their grandparents' land. And we said *"You do not stay on that land anymore so if there are people who now live on that land they just [can] live there"*. But some people replied, *"We cannot do [act and agree] like this"*. Some of them are really hard to talk with [reasonably]. Therefore, sometimes I just simply said, *"If you said this is your grandparents' land, plough up this land and take it to your [new] place"*.

Regarding the people who come back to the village to sell the land, who are they going to sell it to? To the Burmese [people outside of the village] or to the people in the village?

We do not allow them to sell it to the Burmese. We told them, *"If you want to sell [this land], sell it to your own relatives and if they do not [have money] to buy it, it is fine if any person in the village buys it as you can name your price. If you love your relatives, you should sell it to them but if the price is high, you can discuss with each other and discount the price for each other"*. But we do not allow them to sell it to other people [from outside of the village].

Is this [land problem] the most common case happening in Cy--- village?

Yes. Now, another group came up [to buy land] too. [This land] is beside the monastery but the owners live in C--- village. They said it was their grandparents' land in the past too. But

the other people have been living there for a many months and years; maybe more than fifty, sixty or seventy years already. It is true [that they weren't the original owners] but this was a very long time ago. If we think [about this problem] with love [for the village], you go further and just work further [away from the village] because the local population is increasing and there is no space for people's families. There is only cemetery area [that is not cultivated/residential].

They [land owners] said that fifty or sixty years ago the land was their grandparents' land; at that time did their grandparents have a land grant?

No. We did not see any of that [documentation] because we could not see [meet] any of them to ask for their old land grants. We just told them to look for their old relatives or grandparents [land grants] from the past and now, because they do not have any land grant, [they should] just let the [newly settled] people live there. But they did not agree with it and just said, "*This is my grandparents' [land]*". Therefore, it is very hard to talk [with them].

Therefore, as you are village tract leader, it is very hard for you to solve it.

[Yes, for example] In the past, as we worked to solve one land dispute; one of the owners said their parents told them that the land boundary was in one place, and the other owner [neighbour] said that their grandparents also told them that their land boundary was there too therefore the boundaries of their land did not match. And again one of the owners replied, "*If you say it is your grandparents' land, there are betel nut trees and coconut trees from the past. Why did not you tell me anything when I got fruits from these trees? My father bought this land many years ago, why didn't you tell [us that it was your grandparent's land] when my father was still alive? But you tell this information after my father has passed away*". This [land conflict] became a very long [case].

How did the village tract leader solve this [case] for them later?

We could not solve it in any way so we passed it to the township court.

Did they [land owners] accept the township court solving this issue for them?

None of them went [to the township court] therefore the case was broken [finished] because nobody went there [to solve it]. [Other villagers said], "*The people from outside [who said it is their grandparent's land] are just waiting for them [the local land owners]. If they go [to the township court] and we will go [follow]*". But they did not go there so the case ended there [without conclusion]. If they [land owners] went there, they would have to pay. Another villager said, "*Even [if they go to the township court] they will lose some money*". Regarding us, as we are village tract leaders, they asked us to solve this problem so they gave us [money] for the food [snacks] too. I got ten-thousand kyat in an envelope [to go for them]. [One of the villagers said,] "*We got fifty-thousand kyat from this Kya K'Wa village tract*".

For example, if we submit the case we have to pay the costs for it. Isn't it the rule?

Yes. But we could not do anything for them so we passed this case to the township court.

Thank you.

Thank you.

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Source #131

Log #	16-57-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: August 22nd 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos were taken on June 17th 2016 in A--- village in the east of Thout Yay Kat Chaung village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. It shows a KWO [Karen Women Organisation] member and responsible people who help IDPs for repatriation interviewing IDPs regarding the repatriation [return] process. 	

Source #132¹¹³

Log #	15-71-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thaton Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: July 28th 2015</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Photo numbers – 100-0001, 0002, 0003, 0004, 0005, 0006, 0007, 0008 and 0009 These photos were taken on March 3rd 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract, Ta Maw Daw village and they show government staff taking photographs for the villagers' ID card. 2. Photo numbers – 100-0010, 0011, 0012, 0013 I took these photos on March 4th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Htee Nyah Paw village tract in Mi Chaung Aaing village. It shows villagers from T'Rweh Kee village tract cutting the thatch during the summer period for sale in the city for their livelihood. 3. Photo numbers – 100-0014, 0015, 0016, 0017, 0018 and 0020 I took these photos on March 6th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract in Naw K'Bo village upper part. The photos were about the distribution of solar panels and inverters [battery packs] by the [Myanmar] government's rural regional development ministry. 4. Photo numbers – 102-0006, 0007, 0008, 0009, 0010, 0011, 0012 and 0013 I took these photos on March 16th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, T'Rweh Kee village tract, Naw K'Toh village lower part. It shows a clinic built by UNHCR at the lower part of Naw K'Toh village. UNHCR also distributed mosquito 	

¹¹³ Please note, direct reference to this source document was removed from the final publication of Foundation of Fear.

nets to villagers; almost every family.

- 5. Photo numbers – 102- 0014, 0015, 0016, 0017, 0018, 0019, 0020 and 0021**
I took these photos on March 17th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Neh Paw Htah village tract in Hpah Paw village at the monastery. It is about *Myo Set Thit* [new generation] students giving awareness [training] to the local people.
- 6. Photo numbers – 102-0022, 0023, 0024, 0025, 0026**
These photos were about *Myo Set Thit* [new generation] giving the awareness training to the local people. They were taken on March 19th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Noh Tah Hsuh village tract in Noh Pah Htaw village at the monastery.
- 7. Photo numbers – 102-0027, 0028, 0029, 0030, 0031, 0032, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036, 0039, 0040, 0041, 0042, 0043, 0044, 0045, 0046, 0047**
I took these photos on March 19th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Noh Tah Hsuh village tract nearby F--- village. It shows the place where the caustic soda factory will be built.
- 8. Photo numbers – 102- 0057, 0058, 0059, 0060, 0061, 0062, 0063, 0064, 0065, 0067, 0068, 0070, 0071, 0072, 0073, 0076, 0077, 0078, 0079, 0080, 0082**
I took these photos on March 20th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, G--- village tract at G--- School. They are about the meeting of the Karen armed groups committee for unity. [...]
- 9. Photo numbers – 105-0238, 0239, 0240, 0241, 0242, 0243, 0244, 0245, and 0246**
I took these photos on May 8th, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township at Brigade #2 hall and it shows the first training of Community Health Workers (CHW).
- 10. Photo numbers – 105-0247, 0248, 0249, 0250, 0251, 0252, 0253, 0254, 0255, 0256, 0258, and 0259**
I took these photos on May 11th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, T'Rweh Kee village tract, T'Rweh Kee village. They are about *Myo Set Thit* [new generation] giving awareness training to the villagers.
- 11. Photo numbers – 105-0260, 0261, 0262**
I took these photos on May 12th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract, at Noh Tah Baw village. They show the villagers forming a self-reliant group and building up a bridge that heads to another village.
- 12. Photo numbers – 105-0263, 0264, 0265, 0266, 0267, 0268, 0269, 0270, 0271, 0273, 0274, 0275, 0276, 0277, 0278 and 0279**
I took these photos on May 27th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, J-- - village at monastery. Villagers from Maw Lay village tract are not able to elect their village tract leader in their own village tract as government military [Tatmadaw] do not allow them to elect the leader in their own village tract. Therefore, they have to go to the Neh Paw Htah village tract to elect the leader.
- 13. Photo numbers – 105- 0280, 0281, 0282, 0283**
I took these photos in May 26th 2015 n Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Ma Daw village tract at thee upper part of Naw Ka Bo village. The American Refugee

Committee (ARC) constructed a bridge for the students to go to the school from another village.

14. Photo numbers – 106-0007, 0009, 0010, 0011, 0013, 0014, 0015, 0016, 0017, 0018, 0019, 0020

I took these photos on June 5th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township in Maw Lay village tract at L--- monastery. [The issue is that] Light Infantry Division [LID] #22 and Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #202 disturbed KHRG community researchers on the way when we went to local people [to research about] the issue of Maw Lay cave.

15. Photo numbers – 106-0022, 0023, 0024, 0025

I took these photos on May 7th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Maw Lay village tract, at L--- monastery. Villagers from Maw Lay village tract came and listened to the discussion about the case of Maw Lay cave.

16. Photo numbers – 106-0027, 0028, 0029, 0030, 0031, 0032

I took these photos on June 7th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Ta Maw Daw village tract at A--- Monastery.

17. Photo numbers – 106- 0034, 0035, 0036

I took these photos on June 8th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, A--- village tract at A--- village. They show Pyu Min Htun Company Manager Min Thu who came and met with Thaton Township joint secretary in A--- village at the village tract leader's house.

18. Photo numbers – 106-0037, 0038, 0039, 0040, 0041, 0042, 0043, 0044, 0045, 0046, 0047, 0048, 0049, 0050, 0051

I took these photos on June 12th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Maw Lay village tract at L--- village. It shows Maw Lay cave that Pyu Min Htun Company will test [for suitable stone for a cement factory].

19. Photo number – 106-0052

This photo is about Interview No #1 and I took it on June 15, 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Sa Kan Gyi village tract at M--- village. It is about the one [man] who suffered because of the Yar Zar Min [robbery] and this is U N---.

20. Photo numbers – 106-0053, 0054, 0055, 0056, 0057, 0058, 0059, 0060, 0061, 0064, 0065, 0066 and 0067

I took these photos on June 15th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Sa Kan Gyi village tract, O--- village. It shows the people who suffered because of the Yar Zar Min [robbery]. These are the family [members] of Saw P--- and Saw Q---.

21. Photo numbers – 106-0068

I took this photo on June 15th 2015 in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township, Sa Kan Gyi village tract, O--- village. It is Saw R--- from Interview #3, a [position censored for security] of Sa Kan Gyi village tract.

22. Photo numbers – 106-0070, 0071, 0072, 0073, 0074, 0075, 0076, 0077, 0078, 0079, 0080, 0081, 0082, 0083 and 0084

I took these photos on June 16th 2015, in Doo Tha Htoo District, Thaton Township,

Noh Ta Hsuh village tract, F--- village. They are about the caustic soda factory.

Source #133

Log #	16-58-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: August 22nd 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo shows senior monk U Thuzana constructing a pagoda in A--- village, Maw Ploh Klah village tract. This pagoda was constructed beside a vehicular road very close to villagers' houses. The base of this pagoda is five finger tips to elbow around [unit of measurement] and its height is almost seven finger tips to elbow. 2. This photo also shows senior monk U Thuzana constructing [another] pagoda in A--- village, Maw Ploh Klah village tract. This pagoda was constructed at the road junction and it is also close to the villagers' house. He started constructing these pagodas in early April 2016. After he [they] finished it, they directly put the pagoda's spire on the pagoda. He constructed it in the same shape and size as the previous one. 3. This photo shows U Thuzana constructing a pagoda in an Anglican Church's ground in A--- village, Maw Ploh Klah village tract. As this picture shows, there are villagers' houses beside the [Anglican] Church's ground. 4. This photo shows U Thuzana constructing a monastery [building] very close to the church. It was forbidden by [church leaders or members to construct a monastery] but he ignored it. He did not respect anybody and finished the construction of the pagoda. 5. This photo shows an Anglican Thara [pastor or leader] and his fellows [church members] forbidding U Thuzana from constructing a pagoda or monastery in the church grounds and in A--- village. But they could not stop him [U Thuzana]. This picture shows [building] materials that he [U Thuzana and his fellows] kept in the church. 6. This photo shows U Thuzana [followers] constructing a pagoda beside a football ground at A--- village. As we see in the picture, some pagodas are finished and some are in the process of being constructed. 	

Source #134

Log #	16-60-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Date Received: June 17th 2016

1. These photos are from my travels over two days between May 13th 2016 and May 14th 2016 to meet with the A--- villagers who are pressed into forced labour by the Tatmadaw. I took some photos of villages on my way [to A--- village] such as; B---, C---, D---, E--- and to F---. During my [KHRG] research this time, I found out that villagers are very afraid because they did not want me to record their voice much. They are afraid of this information being released [to the Tatmadaw army] and that the Tatmadaw army will do something [bad] to them. Later, I met with one village leader and I introduced myself, my job and my organisation [KHRG] to him. Then he said *"If you recorded my voice, do not let anyone else hear it because I have to be afraid [of the Tatmadaw army] too. Therefore, I will answer some of your questions that I dare to answer."* He did not dare to go with me to another house to answer my questions and he said *"I will answer you in my house"*. His house is close to the rice milling machine so there was the sound of an engine on the interview. I did not know why these three villages; E---, A--- and G--- did not dare to talk about the armed groups. But the only thing that I knew from their faces was that they were afraid of the Tatmadaw army. But when we asked them they said *"Tatmadaw does not do anything to us, they just ask two people per day to carry water for them when there are hard times [water shortages] to get water"*. Sometimes, the Tatmadaw soldiers were drunk, came into the village, shot their gun and fought each other. Villagers had to pay the tax [to the Tatmadaw army] and they had to face the other serious problems [from the Tatmadaw army] too. I only took pictures of the villages [not villagers] because he [interviewee] did not allow me to take his photo.

Source #135

Log #	16-62-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Date Received: June 17th 2016

1. Because of the gold mining conducted by big vehicles, ships, and huge machines, the river of A--- which is B--- River was polluted all the time during the summer and raining seasons. So villagers who were situated [in that area] faced water shortages and the creeks have dried up and the well has also dried up. Villagers who live close to B--- River reported that there have been challenges every year since this gold mining started. This year [during April 2016] the creeks and well dried up as the temperature increased and villagers had to go and find water from many places. The water course [direction] of this B--- River is not like it was before as the big ships [machines] put mounds of stone in the river when conducting gold mining. Now villagers are worrying that when the raining season comes and when it rains, the water course may change and it will cause water erosion to the land and farms along the river then and the places along the riverbank will be destroyed. Another problem that villagers are facing is a water problem in the summer season. This problem exists in five village tracts and the villages in these five village tracts.

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Source #136

Log #	16-66-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Thaton Situation Update: Bilin Township (June to August 2016)

Introduction

This Situation Update describes events occurring during the period between June 1st 2016 and August 12th 2016 and discusses rat attacks on villagers' paddies, logging to build low-cost housing, development projects, and Tatmadaw activity.

Rat attacks on villagers' paddies

Villagers who live in the upper part of Bilin Township in Aye Kgoo Hkee village tract, Meh Naw Ther village tract, Htee Maw Hkee village tract and Noh Ber Baw village tract are facing rat attacks on their paddies. They have cleared a large enough area in the hill farm to grow one to two baskets of paddy seeds but some villagers are unable to continue working on their hill farms [due to the rat attacks]. There was an increase in the number of rats this year because the largest species of bamboo and other types of bamboo were flowering throughout the forest. Each night, villagers are able to kill between 60 and 100 rats. Villagers have set up traps and have kept cats in the hill farms to hunt the rats. Villagers are extremely worried about whether they will have enough food to survive next year.

Logging

At the beginning of the dry season, the [village] leaders created rules prohibiting any logging business from being conducted. Nevertheless, in both Ta Auh Hkee village tract and Htee Maw Hkee village tract logging continues to be regularly conducted. Saw A'Neg Lay and Kyeh Mway are conducting the logging. The township [leaders] permitted 1,000 tonnes of logs in Htee Maw Hkee village tract and 500 tonnes of logs in Ta Auh Hkee village tract to be logged. In order to build low-cost houses 1,500 tonnes of logs need to be cut down [from the forest].

The villagers were not informed and provided with detailed information [regarding the logging] so they worried that people will log more than they were permitted. [Villagers worried] because no village representatives were included in the decision process. Moreover, village tract leaders did not know what was going on. According to the township permission letter, they [villagers] were required to stop logging on May 16th 2016 but they [some villagers] have continued to conduct logging after that date. This has caused many villagers to worry.

In August, a rich man (logging businessman) came to ask for permission to conduct logging in Htee Maw Hkee village tract. He did not write any letter to the villagers regarding the two bridges that [he is planning to] repair. The first bridge is located between Klaw Hta and Kwee Lay Tha Waw Pyaw. The second bridge is located between Kwee Lay village and Kwee Lay Tha Waw Pyaw. The rich man said that he will pay to repair both bridges at the cost of 10 million kyat. Therefore, he asked for villagers to request permission [for him] from the

township and district leaders. The villagers who were involved with that rich man attempted to ask permission from Bilin Township leaders. Due to this, some villagers worried that permission would be granted by the township and district leaders. If they gave him permission, a lot of logs would be taken away from the forest [after the bridges have been repaired].

The villagers need the two bridges to be repaired because they are both old. The villagers and the students use these bridges every day when they are traveling and this is causing them problems. The villagers themselves wanted to repair the bridges but they could not do it by themselves. Thus, it created an opportunity for the rich man to come and conduct the logging [after offering to rebuild the bridges].

In August, some Japanese people [with the Japan Nippon Foundation] came to Bilin Township to assess a future solar panel distribution. The villagers were informed that solar panels will be distributed in October and each household would receive one solar panel.

The villagers did not know any information about the wells which were dug in A--- village, Htee Maw Hkee village tract. The diggers who came to dig the wells did everything that they wanted. They did not dig the wells in the locations where the villagers wanted them to dig. They decided on their own where they wanted to dig the wells. For each and every development project, the workers and the KNU [Karen National Union] authorities act this way; they never inform or consult with the villagers.

Tatmadaw Activity

Regarding [the situation] with the Tatmadaw, nothing [significant] has changed. The BGF and their soldiers remain in the same army camp. The Tatmadaw soldiers are still [patrolling] and staying in villages. In the past, [before this reporting period], the Tatmadaw patrolled [more in the villages] and therefore the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] formed a new company to patrol in Bilin Township. As a result, the Tatmadaw does not patrol as often as they used to.

Conclusion

The above information summarises the situation in Bilin Township, Doo Tha Thoo [Thaton] District. No special changes have taken place. Abuses are ongoing and villagers are continuing to worry.

Source #137

Log #	16-67-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Date Received: August 22nd 2016

1. These photos were taken on June 17th 2016 in A--- village in the east of Thout Yay Kat Chaung village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. It shows a KWO [Karen Women Organisation] member and responsible people who help IDPs for repatriation [return] [by] interviewing IDPs regarding the repatriation [return] process.

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Source #138

Log #	16-68-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: August 22nd 2016</p> <p>1. This photo was taken on June 6th 2016, in Khaw Thaw Khaw village, Ho Thaw Pa Lo village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. It shows a KDHW [Karen Department of Health and Welfare] clinic with health administrators who operate under the KNU [Karen National Union] health department. The health workers do not have enough medicines however they try to take care of local villagers as much as they can.</p>	

Source #139

Log #	14-99-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>1. This photo was taken on October 7th 2014 in AAz--- village, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. It a photo of Naw ABa---, a mother of an 11 year old girl called Naw ABb--- from AAz--- village. She reported that her daughter was sexually assaulted on her way to school by a teacher from another village in September 2014.</p>	

Source #140

Log #	16-72-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Lu Thaw Township and Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: August 22nd 2016</p> <p>Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, Lu Thaw Township and Dwe Lo Township (May to July 2016)</p> <p>Introduction After April 2016 the nature of social conflict [in Hpapun District] began to change. Human rights abuses by local authorities and armed groups have decreased but conflicts among local people have increased and have become more complicated.</p>	

During the period between May 8th 2016 and July 25th 2016, many different social conflicts have occurred throughout Hpapun District. To be more precise, social conflicts occurred in Ngar Aein Su village and Ka Lar Kine village in Meh K'law village tract, Bu Tho Township and "Meh Wine Shwe Twin" area, Nay Pu Khan village in Dwe Lo Township. Further conflicts also occurred in the villages to the west of Hpapun in K'law Ter village tract, Lu Thaw Township.

The main problems [in Hpapun District] are "killing", "rape", "goat stealing", "child labour" and "serious attacks by jungle rats". The people who cause social conflicts include people from everywhere. Some are from armed organisations but others are NLD [National League for Democracy] government staff or ordinary people [civilians]. The motivation to cause conflict is also different for each person. Some people do not get along because of religious differences and therefore want to oppress one another. Some people care less about human rights than [maintaining] their current jobs. Some people cause conflict because of their greediness for other people's properties. This KHRG community member has witnessed many different causes [of social conflict].

Conflicts between government staff members and civilians have increased and conflicts among civilians have also increased. Previously, most conflicts occurred between armed organisations [Tatmadaw/ethnic armed groups] and civilians, and local authorities [Myanmar government/Karen National Union] and civilians. In this time period the amount of conflicts between civilians and armed groups and between civilians and local authorities has decreased. Nevertheless, no matter what the social conflict is, the only people who suffer from the conflict are the civilians who lack weapons and power. The type of conflict might change and the perpetrator might change but the victims will always be ordinary people.

[In the past], local people never tried to solve conflicts that were caused by the previous Burma/Myanmar government's rule. In the past, the Burma/Myanmar government ruled the country through a dictatorship system where power was passed down generationally so the local villagers did not want any conflict [with them] and also did not dare get involved if they did not think the conflict was relevant to them. They [villagers] worried that if they tried to solve other people's conflict they would get into conflicts themselves. As they wanted to live peacefully without conflict, villagers tried to avoid getting involved in solving other people's conflicts. This is the spirit [habit] of all local villagers. If they encounter a conflict, they just try to solve it on their own by apologising or by running away in order to avoid the conflict. This is their best solution to any conflicts that arise.

However, some people who were unable to solve their conflicts have died. In what follows, I will report in detail those particular social conflicts.

Killing case in A--- [area], Dwe Lo Township

This killing case originally occurred on May 8th 2016. It took place in "Meh Wine Shwe Twin" area, Meh Wine village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. This killing case is not an ordinary killing case; it is about the murder of a family.

No one has been able to discover who the perpetrator [murderer] is. Despite many different opinions from local villagers, no one could identify the perpetrator. No one from any [political] organisation or armed group has confessed to the crime. No civilian has confessed to the crime.

There are three victims who were killed. The first victim is U Poe Pein, a 57 year-old who

came to sell [things] in A---'s area; he lived in Kan Taw Section, Shwe Kyin Town. The second victim is [U Poe Pein's daughter] Ma Har Zi Nar, a 27 year-old. The last victim is [U Poe Pein's son] Ko Thi Ha Kyaw, a 24 year-old. These three victims disappeared and were killed on the same day. Their dead bodies were discovered [buried] under the ground in Meh Wine Shwe Twin. U Poe Pein, Ma Har Zi Nar and Ko Thi Ha Kyaw are Muslims.

Here are the details of the case. In the beginning of 2016, they [U Poe Pein's family] came to set up a small shop in Meh Wine Shwe Twin area, Shwe Kyin Town. The family consists of U Poe Pein, his daughter (Ma Har Zi Nar) and his son (Ko Thi Ha Kyaw). On May 8th 2016, U Poe Pein and his children disappeared. No one knew how the family disappeared from their shop, who took them away or where they were taken to.

After three or four days, U Poe Pein's 54 year-old brother, U B---, discovered that U Poe Pein's family has disappeared because when he (U B---) lost his chicken (which had escaped from his house) he went to search for it in U Poe Pein's house. However, he did not see anyone in U Poe Pein's house. It was at that moment that he realised that U Poe Pein's family had disappeared.

After U Poe Pein's family had disappeared for one week, the workers from the gold mining operation area came to dig for gold and extracted the earth from the ground with a machine. They found the dead bodies of U Poe Pein's family. The local villagers talked about this case and expressed their own opinions on what happened but no one was able to find any concrete evidence that would reveal who the perpetrator was. This case occurred in a KNU [Karen National Union] controlled area so the KNU local authorities are still investigating the case. It is very difficult to find out [information about] this case because most people do not [take it upon themselves to] take responsibility [in pushing for justice] for what has taken place. The local villagers are just staying in their own places and pretending that they don't know anything. This KHRG community member hope that everyone will try to resolve their conflicts so that a killing case like this does not happen again.

When the workers in the gold mining operation area from Shwe Kyone Gyi Company came to [A--- area] to continue their gold mining they found three dead bodies on the ground that were cut into pieces. After the dead bodies were discovered, people accused Ko Zay Yar Tun, a 31 year-old man who lived in Shwe Kyin Town, of being the perpetrator. Local KNU authorities then went to Shwe Kyin Town to arrest him. Ko Zay Yar Tun was arrested by KNU on June 2nd, 2016. He was then sent to KNU headquarters in Brigade 3 [Nyaunglebin District] where he was held for eight days. While he (the perpetrator) was kept in KNU headquarters in Brigade 3, his boss, Shwe Kyone Gyi Company's owner, U Kyaw Min Naing, came to pay bail. Ko Zay Yar Tun was therefore released [from jail] on June 10th 2016. He now lives peacefully in Shwe Kyin Town without any worries. I would also like to report that U C---, 56 years and U B--- (the relatives of the victims) are currently hoping that the KNU in Brigades 3 [Nyaunglebin District] and 5 [Hpapun District] will be able to arrest the real perpetrator as soon as possible.

Rape

A rape case occurred on June 1st 2016. It took place on [Tatmadaw] Infantry Battalion [IB] #19's old helipad, which is near D--- Section, E--- village, Meh Tha Lote village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District.

The perpetrator [of the rape] is Maung Si Thu Naing, a 24 year-old Shan man who lives in A'nout Pat Ken village, K'law Hta village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District. The

victim who suffered from rape is Ma F---, a 16 year-old who lives in G--- village, K'law Hta village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District.

Regarding this case, Maung H---, who is 41 years, told me, *"The event took place very close to me and I alone witnessed this event in detail."* According to Maung H---, Maung Si Thu Naing drove his motorbike with Ma F--- between 3:30 and 4:00 in the afternoon on June 1st 2016. He drove it [his motorbike] to IB #19's old helipad. He then stopped driving his motorbike and immediately tried to rape Ma F---. Ma F--- is just a young girl and she could not fight back so she was forced to accept the sexual demands of Maung Si Thu Naing without her consent.

Maung H---, who witnessed this rape, informed the police at the police station in Hpapun Township. Maung Si Thu Naing is currently being kept in the jail at the police station in Hpapun Township. We have not yet heard anything about how he will be punished. Their [perpetrator and victim's] parents are still negotiating with each other in order to solve the case. We do not know how they [parents] will agree to solve this case. Ma F--- is currently studying in school whereas Maung Si Thu Naing is being kept in the jail at the police station.

Goat thefts

The case that I am now going to write about is one of the social conflicts [in Hpapun District]. This case occurred on June 1st 2016 in G--- or [also known as] H--- village, Mar Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The perpetrator is Saw GGi---, a 25 year-old who lives in Whay Mon village, Meh K'law village tract, Bu Tho Township. The victim is U I---, a 52 year-old Muslim who lives in J--- village, Meh K'law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. This KHRG community member thinks that the perpetrator stole goats from U I--- because he wanted to bully Muslims.

U I--- lives in J--- village but he did not keep his goats in that village. He kept his goats in the land which is covered with full of grass [pasture] to the west of H--- village near the Yune Slin stream. Saw GGi--- usually travels to H--- village so it was easy for him to steal the goats. Saw GGi---'s uncles and aunties also do not get along with Muslims and it is also for this reason that community members believe that Saw GGi--- stole the Muslim's goats.

[A]lthough [the perpetrator who stole the goats] Saw GGi--- was arrested with evidence, U GGj--- who is Meh Tha Lote village tract administrator did not make a clear decision to solve this case and he just kept this case for a long time. We can assume it is because [the victim] U I--- is Muslim. This is an inappropriate [way to act] in a democracy. Although Muslims are born in Myanmar not all of them have Myanmar citizenship ID cards or are able to exercise their right to religious freedom.

In this case, U I--- suffered alone [lost his goats] but does not want to talk about it anymore. He relied on the village tract administrator to provide justice but the village tract administrator did not care about [his case]. Because of this, the Muslim people in the local area are unhappy. The other local villagers [non-Muslim villagers] are just staying in their own place and ignoring the problems that arise.

Conclusion

It is the opinion of this KHRG community member that even if we inform villagers about all the social problems in the area, they will ignore them. This is their [the villagers] habit: to avoid problems and not attempt to solve them. As long as this is the case it will be impossible to reduce these social conflicts. Although it may be impossible to eliminate social

conflicts entirely, it is still necessary for villagers to attempt to resolve the conflicts that emerge.

Source #141

Log #	16-76-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: August 22nd 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These photos were taken in Hpapun Area (2), Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District. These photos show Burma/Myanmar government Hpapun Township commander U Aung Than Zaw's house. The Burma/Myanmar government leaders gave money to him for [so he could run] a development project but he did not give this money to the civilians. He controlled all of the development projects and money. Civilians in Hpapun area said <i>"he controls [holds] all of the money for the development project and then [he used] this money for building his house"</i>. 	

Source #142

Log #	16-80-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received September 16th 2016</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on September 12th 2016 at Lay Kay Kaw Town, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. The photo shows the houses that were built for the families of Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The project is supported by the Myanmar government's Ministry of Border Affairs and the Nippon Foundation. The Myanmar government and leaders of the KNU [Karen National Union] set up this town in 2015 as a landmark of peace building. Some IDPs including Rakhine, Mon, Pa-O, Bamar and Karen came to live in this place. The IDPs did not have to pay any money to live there. The town area is 750 acres wide and is located on a forest reserve area, according to the Land Administration Department of the Myanmar government. Some of this land belongs to villagers near the area, but there are no land titles for this area. The government has said it will remove the area from their list of forest reserves and provide land titles to the residents. 2. The photo shows the houses built for the families of Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The project is supported by the [Myanmar government's] Border Affairs Ministry and the Nippon Foundation. The Myanmar government and the leaders of KNU set up this city as a landmark of peace 	

building in 2015. The Border Affairs Ministry gave money for 213 houses and the Nippon Foundation gave money for 100 houses. There are currently 462 houses including the houses that the villagers built themselves. The 200 houses that are supported by the government were built, but the 100 houses that are supported by the Nippon Foundation are not finished yet.

3. Some IDPs including Rakhine, Mon, Pa-O, Bamar and Karen came to live in in this place. The IDPs did not have to pay money to live there. Officials are only providing housing for IDPs and soldiers' family members, but other people who are not IDPs or soldiers' family are also buying their own land and living in this area.

Source #143

Log #	16-83-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawakareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	<p>1. These four photos were taken on September 27th 2016 at Myaing Gyi Ngu Town. These photos showed the names of 33 villages that were affected when fighting began. These four photos show the list of village names, household numbers and village population. The names of all 33 villages are shown in the photos. There are 965 households and 9609 people living there. Households number 965 and the population numbers 9609. The name of the villages that villagers fled from and returned to are: A---, B---, C--- and D--- village. There were four villages in total. On October 1st 2016, all villagers from three villages out of the four villages that had returned, were displaced again to Myaing Gyi Ngu Town. The names of these villages are: B---, C--- and D--- villages. At the same time, one 20 year old B--- villager who name is E---, stepped on a landmine.</p> <p>2. On September 27th 2016, a village representative called Saw F--- told me about the following incident. On September 10th 2016, DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] splinter group which was led by Bo Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung initiated conflict and started fighting against BGF [Border Guard Force] which is led by Bo Chit Thu. The fighting occurred in Meh Th'Waw area. At that time villagers did not know where to flee, therefore Myaing Gyi Ngu Monk U Thuzana arranged over 200 trucks to pick up these villagers and bring them to a monastery in Myaing Gyi Ngu Town. On September 10th 2016, while villagers were staying in Myaing Gyi Ngu Town, people from abroad, cities and other villages came and gave support such as foods and clothes. The displaced villagers left all their work, animals such as cows, buffalos and chickens back in their village. Because [during the pick-up] some villagers were staying at their huts, they could not get any of their precious belongings such as money and gold. They were asked to get into the trucks immediately. Some villagers fled to Thailand. Villagers who were displaced in Myaing Gyi Ngu Town were able to access health care. Regarding education, schoolteachers have to teach students at Myaing Gyi Ngu's monastery compound and in surrounding places. There were four [primary] schools which continued teaching. Some villagers were injured and killed when the fighting happened. Some villagers stepped on landmines when they went back to their houses to get their belongings. Others were</p>

killed by the army. These villagers want to go back and stay in their village but they do not dare to currently go back.

Source #144

Log #	16-84-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published ¹¹⁴ in November 2016: http://khr.org/2016/11/16-84-a1-i1/toungoo-interview-saw-october-2016
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is Saw A---.</p> <p>Your age?</p> <p>I am 41 years old.</p> <p>How about your village?</p> <p>I was born in B--- village, Khoh Hkee village tract, Htaw Ta Htoo [Htantabin] Township, Taw Oo [Toungoo] District.</p> <p>So now you live here [in Ei Tu Hta IDP camp]?</p> <p>Yes, as a displaced person.</p> <p>Do you have any position in the camp?</p> <p>Ever since I arrived in the camp, I have worked as a person in charge of education [administration].</p> <p>Up until now?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Is your nationality Karen?</p> <p>Yes, Karen.</p> <p>How about your religion?</p> <p>I am a Baptist.</p> <p>Are you married?</p>	

¹¹⁴ This report was initially categorized during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

Yes.

[Do you have] Female [or male children]?

Two male and two female.

How old is the oldest one?

My oldest daughter is 17 years old.

How about the youngest one?

Over three years old.

Related to the return [of IDPs], what information have you had about the return process?

In 2014, we received the information.

By [who]?

By KCBOs [Karen Community Based Organisations] that stand in the middle [between the IDPs and The Border Consortium, TBC]. They notified us about how the food rations will be stopped and, for us, we have to go back to our place [village] as they have planned.

What do you think of the return?

My opinion on this return is: actually, we are willing to go back to our land where we were born but now we look at the political situation; it causes a big doubt. And if we look at the political transition after the Thein Sein government, and in the recent past, another government took over power. And last month, they [Burma/Myanmar government] did the 21st Pin Lon [Panglong]¹¹⁵ peace conference. And if we look at [the situation] after the big meeting [Panglong peace conference], the fighting increased in ethnic areas.¹¹⁶ Especially in Kachin state, southern Shan State as well as in Karen State, and the IDPs are increasing [because of this fighting]¹¹⁷ so that for us if we look at returning [leaving Ei Tu Hta IDP camp], we are having big doubts because of the unstable political situation. It is a concern for us.

What do you think is the greatest concern that you would have if you go back?

¹¹⁵ The 21st Century Panglong Conference was held on August 31st 2016 in Nay Pyi Taw. It marked a crucial step in negotiations between the Burma/Myanmar government and ethnic groups towards an agreement for peace and national reconciliation. It followed from the historic first Panglong Conference, in 1947, in which Burma established its independence from Britain. See "[Myanmar's Suu Kyi kicks off peace conference with appeal for unity](#)," Reuters, August 31st 2016.

¹¹⁶ Sporadic fighting in 2016 has been ongoing in ethnic areas although this is not widely thought to be a direct result of the Panglong Conference.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, "[More than 3,000 villagers flee escalating conflict in Karen State](#)," September 12th 2016, The Irrawaddy.

For us the greatest concern is security. And if we look at the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement]¹¹⁸ between the country government and the KNU [Karen National Union], it doesn't please us so our opinion and [what] we think is [that] maybe, if fighting happens again we would face a worse situation than in the past that we faced.

In your personal opinion, do you support the return process? If you do please elaborate why and if not, elaborate why not?

Related to this repatriation, in my opinion, if we look at one side I think, we should support, and if we look at the other side based on the situations around it [in Burma/Myanmar], it is not strong enough to support this process.

When you go back what would your basic needs be?

When I arrive [back at the place where he originally fled from], the most important thing we civilians would need is security and second and other things are food, education, healthcare and multiple kinds of social services. The most important things that we would need are security, food and other things.

How do you think the Burma/Myanmar government should support you in this time of return? Could be anything [that you expect from the country government].

In my opinion, now I am not going back [returning] with the Burma/Myanmar government's plan. If I go back, I would go back with UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] and KCBOs' plan because I know that if I go back with the Burma/Myanmar government's plan straight [with only their plan], it will benefit the Burma/Myanmar government a lot. So currently, according to KNU and [Karen] districts who have authorities, they have plans for us [to help], I think that I don't need the Burma/Myanmar government's support. I would need support from our mother organisation KNU and from CBOs by their cooperation and work.

By support I mean from many ways such as improving healthcare services and removing army camps in order to solve the security problems [that you mentioned above].

¹¹⁸ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see "[Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups](#)," Reuters, October 15th 2015. Despite the signing of the NCA prompting a positive response from the international community, see "[Myanmar: UN chief welcomes 'milestone' signing of ceasefire agreement](#)," *UN News Centre*, October 15th 2015, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe's decision to sign has been met with strong opposition from other members of the Karen armed resistance and civil society groups alike, who believe the decision to be undemocratic and the NCA itself to be a superficial agreement that risks undermining a genuine peace process, see "[Without Real Political Roadmap, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Leads Nowhere...](#)," *Karen News*, September 1st 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see "[Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#)," KHRG, May 2014.

If it is like that, [with] support from the Burma/Myanmar government's side what we would mainly need is [for them] to remove their army camps in our areas and the camps that are situated close to our villages because they are causing concerns for our/us civilians to go back. And after removing their camps, we are not only happy with removing their camps; we also know that there are landmines that they planted near their army camps, we also want them to clear them [landmines] all.

Services such as healthcare or education etc, are there any services from the Burma/Myanmar government that you trust?

If we look at the new government's work plan that they have for the ethnic groups, if they do it as they planned before they [NLD] become the government, we trust them based on many ways [situations]. But if we look at the past, over the six months since they became the government, the promises that they had with the ethnic minorities, nothing happened so [because of] that, there is nothing that I would trust them deeply [about]. In addition, if we look at the recent education [situation], as I am an education worker, we do not trust them at all because if we look some places [in Karen State] that are in country [Burma/Myanmar] government controlled areas, they set up their schools. They send their teachers along with their curriculum to our Karen schools; they extinguish our Karen written language and as we are unable to learn our language, culture and our [Karen] history, I am not supporting their plan [system] of education.

Do you know anything in advance about the return plan relating to the available choices [for IDPs who return]?

What kind of options?

If you go back, you will be supported like this and for those who choose to stay, will there be support for them, etc...

For the repatriation, the information that we received so far is: for us IDPs, if we arrive at our place [village], there will be food support for 12 months for us or less than that; it will not be more than 12 months. For education, healthcare and other needs, I think it will be supported by the UNHCR's departments [partner non-governmental organisations] that are related to social needs. For those who stay [in Ei Tu Hta IDP camp], the support will be stopped by September 2017 and there will no longer be support in the future for them. There will be only be vocational training such as agriculture and animal husbandry in [preparing] other ways for rehabilitation. For food, it [support] will end by September 2017.

So they [IDPs] have choices: go back or stay and if they stay, future support is unsure for those who stay. So two choices basically?

Yes.

How do you feel about leaving this place [Ei Tu Hta IDP camp]?

It is as human nature [as you would expect]. As we have been living here for a long time, we have our homes and our own community as it is supposed to be, according to our situation [as IDPs]. So now if the time comes for us to leave, it is depressing for us as we have to be leaving our [current] place, [and] have to start a new life; it is just like restarting a life. For example; we have passed A and B already. If we go back, we will have to be starting from A

again. And I feel like it is a big problem for me. In addition, in our social relationships in the Karen community, we have been working together for many years and many months. If we go back, it causes problems as human nature [as you would expect]; it is problematic for me.

How long have you lived in the camp?

Starting from May 11, 2016.¹¹⁹

Do you know where you will be going and the situation of the place that you will be going back to?

For me as I am from Taw Oo [Toungoo], there is no special place for us that has been planned [for return]. There is only going back to the village that we originally come from. And now my village, according to what I knew, there are no big business operations in the place where I am from. There is only hill farming and agriculture and we are not able to work freely because it is situated near the Burma government Tatmadaw camp.

Do you have land in the place you fled from before?

I can say that I do not have land because the place where I was based, my home place after I got married, I was displaced [from that place] to a Karenni [refugee] camp and now I have moved here [Ei Tu Hta camp]. I can say that the lands that I used to have are gone.

In the place where you will be returning do you know the situation of education, healthcare or employment where you get job?

To get work for our livelihoods, there is none I think. We will have to struggle, the same as people there [at the place they return], with difficulty.

Has the discussion been held with the people [IDPs] here?

There was discussion last year already, because of the uncertainty of sending back people, the survey was not confirmed [no final result was given]. Now, as we have known, there will be discussion with civilians [IDPs] when they [authorities responsible for IDP return] carry out a survey among the civilians [IDPs].

So then, they will be collecting the civilians' perspectives and confirm [what will happen]?

Yes.

Ok, are there any questions that you want to mention that I missed from my questions?

From the questions that you missed to ask that I want to mention is, there is one main thing; in our country, there is ceasefire between the country government and ethnic armed groups. They signed the ceasefire agreement. It is not a question. I just want to mention that many people will know [the situation] and give pressure in many ways to the Burma government in

¹¹⁹ Saw A---was in a Karenni refugee camp for an unspecified amount of time before moving to Ei Tu Tha IDP camp.

order to [pressure them to] remove their army camps along with their soldiers in our Karen areas so that we IDPs, we will be able to go back and work freely [in our areas].

If I use this information for publication, would you be OK?

For the information that I shared, I fully give permission for publication anywhere.

Thank you very much.

Thanks.

Source #145

Log #	14-92-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
Date Received: November 12th 2014	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This photo was taken on October 24th 2014 in Lay Kay village, P'Ya Raw village tract, Bilin Township, Thaton District. The photo shows the community health workers attending a three-day health care training at Lay Kay monastery in Lay Kay village provided by Red Cross Society. The training focused on the prevention of disease and Mine Risk Education (MRE). There were 15 trainees who attended the training and the host organisation provided them with 2000 kyats per day (US\$2.00). 	

Source #146

Log #	16-86-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
Date Received: October 7th 2016	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This picture was taken on October 7th 2016 in D--- village, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. The picture shows villagers from six villages, who fled from the fighting between DKBA (Buddhist splinter) and joint forces of BGF [Border Guard Forces] and Tatmadaw soldiers in Meh Th'Waw area to reach safety in D--- village. When this picture was taken villagers had been staying there for two weeks and they had built their own temporary shelters. There were 504 people and 90 households when the photo was taken. They left behind their livestock and belongings since they could not bring anything with them when they fled. Some of their livestock, such as buffalo, stepped on landmines planted by the DKBA (Buddhist splinter) led by Bo Bee. 2. This picture was taken on October 7th 2016 in D--- village, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. The picture shows two displaced villagers from other villages who have 	

been selected as the temporary village heads in D--- village, whilst internally displaced persons (IDPs) stay there.

Source #147

Log #	16-89-I2
Title / type of report	Incident Report
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Killing and rape/violence against child
Date of Incident(s)	August 23 rd 2016
Incident Location	A--- village, Mi Nan village tract, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District

Victim Information	
Name	Nan B---[also known as Nan C---]
Age	16
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Single
Occupation	N/A
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager
Village	A--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Nay Naing Oo	Villager	N/A	Ba Ya Ngok To village	N/A

Part 2 - Information quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information:

The violence, rape and killing of a child happened on August 23rd 2016. The dead body was discovered in U D---'s betel nut plantation in the western village on August 25th 2016, by U D---'s sons, Maung E---, Maung F--- and Maung G---, when they were planting betel nut.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

On August 29th 2016, they uncovered the truth because of reporting from U H---'s four years old daughter.

3. Complete description of the incident

The violence, rape and killing of a child happened on August 23rd 2016 in U D---'s betel nut

plantation which is located in western A--- village. We discovered that the female victim's underwear and sarong were removed [by the perpetrator]. She was stabbed with a knife [by the perpetrator] twice in her upper back, once below her right breast and twice in her hip. The names of the victim's parents are U I--- and Nan J---.

On August 25th 2016, the dead body was discovered by U D---'s three sons: Maung E---, Maung F--- and Maung G---. The Burma/Myanmar police, the Democratic Karen Benevolent [DKBA] and the villagers cooperated to investigate this case. On August 29th 2016, they were able to uncover the truth because U H---'s four years old daughter reported that she was with the victim [Nan B---, also known as Nan C---] on that day [of the incident] and also during the time of the incident.

The name of the perpetrator is Nay Naing Oo. He is a thirty-three year old from the Mon ethnic group. He married a villager from A--- [village] named Nan J--- in Thailand [when they migrated for work]; they have one son. He originally fell in love with her in Za Tha Pwin village and has been living in A--- village with her family for only two years.

Source #148

Log #	16-90-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published ¹²⁰ in September 2017: http://khrq.org/2017/09/16-90-a1-i1/dooplaya-interview-saw-october-2016
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Can you tell me your name, please?

My name is Saw¹²¹ A---.

Can you tell me your age?

I am 65 years old.

Which village do you live in?

I was born in Deh Pee village.

Currently, where do you live?

Currently, I live in B--- village, Kya Inn [Kyainseikgyi] Township.

Do you have a family?

Yes, I have a family.

How many people are there in your family?

¹²⁰ This report was initially categorized during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

¹²¹ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

There are five people in my family.

How many children do you have and how old is your oldest child?

My children are unmarried.

What is the name of your oldest child?

I do not think it is necessary to tell you.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 20 years old.

So can you tell me the name of your youngest child? If you cannot tell me [the name], please tell me which Township and District you live in now.

Now I live in Waw Raw (Win Yay)¹²² Township, and my duty is here.

Which District?

Dooplaya District.

What rank are you holding now?

I am serving as a Battalion Sergeant Major.

What Battalion?

[KNLA] Battalion #16.

What work do you do for your livelihood?

I do not have any special work to do for my livelihood because I am a revolutionist [in the KNLA].

So as you are a revolutionist, can you tell me your perspectives and experiences?

During the revolution [conflict], I experienced many different things. I chose to do this work [with the KNLA], so I faced many challenges but my opinion is that each challenge was good. Every challenge that we face is an opportunity to learn and to improve our lives.

Can you tell me how many armed groups operate in your area, Waw Raw Township?

There are KNLA, BGF [Border Guard Force]¹²³ and Tatmadaw troops in Waw Raw Township. There are also many other groups who work with Karen armed groups.

¹²² During this interview both interviewee and researcher use Waw Raw and Win Yay interchangeably to refer to the same township.

How many armed groups are there in your township?

There are many armed groups in our area, such as BGF.

What challenges do you face with the many armed groups operating in your area?

All of the problems in my area are caused by misunderstandings among armed groups.

What kind of problems do you have? Please tell me about them.

We have to work together. We are Karen, so we work for Karen people. Most of the armed groups are Karen, but we also try to build good relationships with the armed groups who are not Karen.

[Since] they [armed groups] are all active in Waw Raw Township, is there any problem between civilians and the KNLA?

There is no big problem between civilians and us [KNLA]. We stand up for our people. It is because of civilians' support, that we can still stand up now.

How many villages and village tracts are there in your area [Waw Raw/Win Yay Township]?

Regarding how many are villages [in our area], we have that information in our records, and we could find out if we check our records. If you want to know the information in detail, you can go and ask the administration officers. For us, we can only find it out [the number of villages] when we look at our [village] registration.

What about village tracts? Can you tell me about it [how many village tracts there are in Waw Raw/Win Yay Township]?

For me, I cannot remember the exact number, but we have the information [how many village tracts] in our record book.

Can you tell me about Tatmadaw activity in your area after the ceasefire agreement was signed in 2012?¹²⁴

¹²³ Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw. BGF battalions are assigned four digit battalion numbers, whereas regular Tatmadaw infantry battalions are assigned two digit battalion numbers and light infantry battalions are identified by two or three-digit battalion numbers. For more information, see "[DKBA officially becomes Border Guard Force](#)" *Democratic Voice of Burma*, August 2010, and "[Exploitation and recruitment under the DKBA in Pa'an District](#)," KHRG, June 2009.

¹²⁴ On January 12th 2012, a preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. Negotiations for a longer-term peace plan are still under way. For updates on the peace process, see the [KNU Stakeholder webpage](#) on the Myanmar Peace Monitor website. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014. In March 2015, the seventh round of the negotiations for a national ceasefire between the Burma/Myanmar government and various ethnic armed actors began in Yangon, see "[Seventh Round of Nationwide Ceasefire Negotiations](#)," *Karen National Union Headquarters*, March 18th 2015.

There has been no notable [military] activity [in our area] after the preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed, but sometimes they [Tatmadaw] travel from place to place without letting us know. Sometimes they inform us if they travel. Some of the administrators [from Tatmadaw] inform [KNLA] but some do not. However, they have not done anything against us.

Regarding their [Tatmadaw's] activities, what do you think of it since you are an elder?

Personally, I think some people think that the ceasefire agreement is [a guarantee for] peace, but other people understand it [the ceasefire agreement] more clearly. Some villagers doubt it [the ceasefire agreement]. [Their doubt is] based on their [Tatmadaw] activities and transportation because they [Tatmadaw] do not inform [KNLA when they are active or using the roads in KNLA areas]. As a result, villagers worry that the Tatmadaw is using the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]¹²⁵ to trick villagers [into thinking there is peace].

Can you tell me about your opinion on the NCA?

I think the NCA is good. We try to follow our leaders' path in order to solve our political problems. It is not only the responsibility of the KNU [to build a good relationship with the Burma/Myanmar government], but the [Burma/Myanmar] government should also try to build a good relationship [with the KNU]. We should treat them [the Burma/Myanmar government] as a friend in order to move forward for our future.

Can you tell me your opinions about the education situation in the past and now?

If we look at it [the education situation], it [the improvement] is a sign of their [KNU and Burma/Myanmar government] collaboration. Many schools have been built in our area, because of the support received from many different [people]. There are many people who want to donate to and support our local schools. They have to improve the schools in the local villages depending on the political situation. Since local villagers were oppressed [in different ways impacting the quality of the education], they [people with financial means] have come to improve our local schools. Therefore, we must thank those who help to improve our schools. Sometimes villagers' also help and provide resources to update and

Following the negotiations, the KNU held a central standing committee emergency, see "[KNU: Emergency Meeting Called To Discuss Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement And Ethnic Leaders' Summit](#)," *Karen News*, April 22nd 2015.

¹²⁵ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see "[Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups](#)," Reuters, October 15th 2015. Despite the signing of the NCA prompting a positive response from the international community, see "[Myanmar: UN chief welcomes 'milestone' signing of ceasefire agreement](#)," *UN News Centre*, October 15th 2015, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe's decision to sign has been met with strong opposition from other members of the Karen armed resistance and civil society groups alike, who believe the decision to be undemocratic and the NCA itself to be a superficial agreement that risks undermining a genuine peace process, see "[Without Real Political Roadmap, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Leads Nowhere...](#)," *Karen News*, September 1st 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014.

improve the schools because they [people from outside the village who support the schools] cannot do anything without villagers' support.

I heard there have been a lot of different issues in Waw Raw Township. Local villagers felt frightened because the Burma/Myanmar government's troops [Tatmadaw] who were on sentry duty interrogated local villagers. Regarding this, would you like to share your perspectives?

At this time, we cannot only look at one side because the Burma/Myanmar government or its troops will do what they should do regarding their own security, but we need to understand them. We cannot judge them as bad based on one situation. Sometimes we have to work with them in order to move forward. If there is a problem between the Burma/Myanmar government and us, we have to call a meeting in order to solve the problem.

When the case happened [local villagers were interrogated by Tatmadaw sentries], did it affect local students? Or did they have any other issues?

Local children did not have any specific issues. Teachers [from Karen Education Department¹²⁶] and Burma/Myanmar government teachers both try their best [to improve the education system]. There are many Burma/Myanmar government teachers and KED teachers in our area. Sometimes we [villagers] worry about the relationship between the Burma/Myanmar government and KED teachers but they both try to improve the education system in our area. Also, they [Myanmar government teachers] in some cases help our villagers by giving us [opportunities] to learn about [our] community's [Karen] culture, Karen language and Karen history. The KNU also helps villagers improve the community, so we will no longer have difficulties regarding education and healthcare. Thus, local villagers will be happier if all children [in B--- village] can go to school to study.

How many schools does the Burma/Myanmar government recognise in Win Yay Township? Can you tell me about this?

Now, we have to look at the situation. As I told you before, we have the number of schools in our records. If you want to know the details, you can look at our registry.

Were there any KNU schools in Win Yay Township before the NCA was signed?

As far as I know, in the past there were many KNU schools in many different areas, but now there are more Burma/Myanmar government teachers in our area, to improve our community. That's why we do not deny them [Myanmar government teachers from helping our community]. We, KNU, also tries to improve the community, and it is like, "*The more meat [you eat], the heavier [you get]*" [Karen phrase meaning the 'more opportunities you take to satiate your hunger, the stronger you become' in this case referring to becoming stronger by working together for the sake of the community]. However, we have to work

¹²⁶ The Karen National Union's Education Department. The main goals of the KED are to provide education, as well as to preserve Karen language and culture. During the civil war in Burma/Myanmar the KED became the main organisation providing educational services in the KNU controlled areas in southeast Burma/Myanmar. The KED also previously oversaw the educational system in the seven refugee camps along the Thai-Burma/Myanmar border, however in 2009 these activities were restructured under the Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity (KRCEE). See "[Conflict Erupts over Govt teachers deployed to KNU areas](#)," Karen News, August 20th 2013 and the KRCEE website: "[About](#)," accessed July 21st 2015.

hand in hand with them [Myanmar government and Myanmar government teachers] in order to improve the education situation in our area.

OK. Please tell me about your perspectives on business activities in your area?

I have not seen any particular business activity during the ceasefire period, because the fighting has stopped and people's fear about fighting has lessened. However, if we look at the situation in our area, there are things that can negatively affect our community such as drugs and alcohol. It is apparent that more and more drug users are in our area.

Can you explain what kind of drugs [affect your community]?

There are two types of drugs, strong drugs and soft drugs. A soft drug is like alcohol. However, if anyone uses either soft drugs or strong drugs in excess, it can create difficulties for people's lives. Therefore, we try to be active in reducing drugs in our area. We educate villagers to become more aware of drugs and their negative side effects. We try to do as much as we can.

Were there any development projects conducted in your area after 2012?

After 2012, they [the Burma/Myanmar government] came to initiate development projects in our area and made plans to construct schools and clinics.

Were the clinics built by the Burma/Myanmar government or the KNU government?

I have already said that the Burma/Myanmar government led these development projects. We [KNU] have our own clinics, but we only have a few clinics. Some of the clinics were supported by other people, but some of the clinics we built ourselves.

Regarding healthcare, does the KNU come to educate villagers about healthcare in your area?

The KNU's Healthcare Department [KDHW] and military troops [KNLA] do their best [to educate villagers about their health] as they have to fulfil their duties.

Are there people who are poor, such as orphans, who cannot buy medicine, and other people who face issues like this in your area?

Problems are everywhere. We also have problems in our area, but we try to solve them as much as we can. Now there are [many groups] who enter our villages in order to help villagers regarding healthcare issues, so I have not seen any serious illnesses in our area [because there are now people trying to help improve healthcare]. Sometimes if villagers get sick or need urgent medical assistance, healthcare workers try their best to solve their [health] problems immediately.

What common diseases are there in Win Yay Township?

In the past, the common diseases in Win Yay Township were respiratory disease and liver disease. I do not know what else to say about this. We become sick from the hot weather. There are many different diseases, but we see that malaria is the most common disease in our area.

Do Kaw Thoo Lei¹²⁷ [KNLA] army troops try to help children who are not able to study in the areas under your [KNLA] control?

Currently, there are only a few students who cannot study. Now children's parents are more open-minded, so they try to send their children to school. It does not matter whether they live in rural or urban areas; they try to send their children to school. As for the Education Department [KED], they plan to do their best for education because that is their responsibility.

How do people earn their income in Win Yay Township?

Mostly, people earn their living by doing agricultural work in our area. This is their main source of income. There are only a few people who buy and sell goods [traders/small business owners], but the majority of the people earn their living by working in agriculture.

What type of agricultural work do they do? [Do they tend to work on] long term plantations or do they grow vegetables short term? Can you explain, please?

Regarding agriculture, they [villagers] are working on the same farms that their great-grandparents used to work on. Now they [villagers] have long term plantations such as rubber plantations, and their livelihoods are dependent upon their rubber plantations. However, recently the price of the rubber has decreased, so people who work on rubber plantations have faced issues with their livelihoods. We have also seen that in some places paddy fields have become other people's farmland. In the future, we, KNU, will try to prevent land confiscation. We set up a rule to keep the land for the next generation [the Karen youth]. However, [this rule doesn't solve the current issue where] some people who work on rubber plantations for their income face issues because the price of the rubber has decreased [therefore they earn less].

So, some people work on rubber plantations in this area. Do rubber plantation owners have KNU land titles that are recognised by the Burma/Myanmar government? Please tell me if you know anything.

In our area, the KNU is trying to make legal documents for villagers so they will have legal ownership rights to their land and have rights to work on the land so that they can claim their rights.

What can the KNU do legally [regarding land rights]? Did they try to solve it [the issue regarding land titles] before 2012, or have they only started to do this recently?

We [KNU] have tried to make it [legal documents for land ownership] in the past, but we must continue to make land titles to protect our lands, as our rights have been challenged by current political changes [where in some instances land titles issued by non-Myanmar government authorities have not been accepted]. We try to look after villagers' lands, as we, KNU, have our own rules.

Road construction has occurred in your area. Can you tell me what company is

¹²⁷ The term *Kaw Thoo Lei* refers to Karen State as demarcated by the Karen National Union (KNU), but the exact meaning and etymology is disputed; see: Jonathan Falla. *True Love and Bartholomew: Rebels on the Burmese Border*, Cambridge University Press: 1991.

responsible for that [road construction]?

There are many companies in our area, but we know that most of the companies are from Burma/Myanmar [national companies]. I think they [companies] get money [support] from Nay Pyi Taw.¹²⁸ Myanmar companies work together with the Burma/Myanmar government to construct the road.

Some lands beside the road have been destroyed by the road construction. So can you tell me who is accountable for that?

As far as I know, regarding this [destruction], they [the Burma/Myanmar government] try to do their best to solve the problems. Some of the local authorities made a list of the damages and they reported it [the Burma/Myanmar government authorities], but I have not heard if villagers will get money [compensation]. Some [Myanmar companies] do not care if they expand the old road 100 feet wider than what was agreed upon. However, I have not seen them give money [compensation] to villagers and I also have not heard about it yet.

Who permitted the Myanmar companies to expand the road by 100 feet? The KNU or the Burma/Myanmar government?

The road was expanded after the Three Pagoda Pass road [National Highway] was constructed. However, the KNU did not agree to it. The problems surfaced because there had not been any agreement between them [Burma/Myanmar government] and us [KNU].

As you told me before, some officials made a list of land that was damaged and they reported it. Which organisation did they report it to? Burma/Myanmar government?

Some officials from the Road Supervisory Committee [consisting of local authorities from the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government] reported it to [Burma/Myanmar] government administrators.

Who is the leader of the Road Supervisory Committee? Can you tell me?

The leader of the Road Supervisory Committee is D--- and he is in charge of transportation in Win Yay Township.

The road was constructed between 2012 and 2016. How much did it cost to construct the road? How much did road constructors receive?

I do not know the information of how much money they used to construct the road. You will find those answers if you ask Road Supervisory Committee.

What advantages and disadvantages does it [road construction] bring to local villagers? Tell me your opinion, please.

In my opinion, it will be easier for villagers to travel if the road is of good quality. However, since the road makes it easier for people to travel, I also think bad people will also use this

¹²⁸ *Naypyidaw* (also spelled *Nay Pyi Taw*) is the capital city of Burma/Myanmar. In 2005 the military regime moved the capital from Rangoon to a greenfield at its present location, 320 kilometers (200 miles) north of the city. In this interview, the interviewee is referring to the Burma/Myanmar government, who are based in Naypyidaw.

road to travel [e.g. for illegal trafficking].

Are there any issues for villagers?

There are no particular issues in our area, but more and more cars and motorbikes will be used because of having better roads and some people do not fully understand traffic rules. Therefore, accidents sometimes occur.

Regarding this road in your area, we heard that the Ministry of Construction has already recognised the 230 [rule],¹²⁹ so I want to know how KNLA troops have helped villagers?

What? [Can you explain] again?

The Ministry of Construction released road rule '230' and they [Burma/Myanmar government] confiscated local villagers' lands, so I want to know how they [KNLA] plan to protect or help local villagers [from having their land confiscated]?

For our KNLA, if they [the Ministry of Construction] informs us [about the rule '230'], we will know. If they do not inform us, we will not know. I have not heard about this rule '230' that you're speaking about.

Regarding this road construction, did they [people constructing the road] consult with local villagers? Or did they explain it to villagers?

To be able to make it happen [construct the road], they cannot build it by themselves alone. They established a Road Supervisory Committee in order to monitor the road construction. They had a meeting with villagers and responsible people. Responsible people from the Road Supervisory Committee tried their best in order to make the road happen.

What did local villagers say about the road construction?

Currently, local villagers do not have any particular issue to report. However, some villagers are not satisfied with the road construction because the road workers built an arch-bridge over a stream which caused the water to flow in the wrong direction, and now the water does not flow as it should. Villagers have reported these sorts of things.

Presently, what companies are active in your area? Who is the chairperson of the company? Can you tell me?

I do not know exactly which companies [operate in our area] and who the chairpersons are. If you want to know, you can ask Road Supervisory Committee.

As you told me before, there are construction workers [from the Burma/Myanmar government] in your area. So can you tell me who is in charge of the construction? Where does he live?

¹²⁹ This rule, locally known as '230', is said to come from Ministry of Construction information that for road construction in this area, land will be built on up to the width of 230 feet along the length of the road. This width of land taken would cause significant disruption, damage and loss to villagers' lands. However, the details of such road construction and whether this rule is indeed accurate remain unconfirmed.

I do not remember the name of the person who is in charge of construction. In order to construct the roads and bridges or anything, they simply form a group of construction workers to make it happen.

What challenges did KNLA face in your area between 2012 and 2016?

Sometimes we experienced challenges in our area because we tried to build trust with the Burma/Myanmar government when there was not much understanding between us. So we must plan to build a good understanding [between us] as much as we can. However, both of us [KNLA and Burma/Myanmar government] do not trust the other fully.

I heard that a cement factory will be constructed in your area, but I do not know where it will be located. Please tell me if you have heard anything about it.

There is only a proposal for a project to build a cement factory in our area. For us, we are trying to prioritise villagers' wants and perspectives. If it [the cement factory] will benefit villagers and if villagers want to have it, we will let them [the companies] do as they wish. Our understanding is that we have to tell [inform] local villagers about how it will affect our community. Local villagers are now open-minded [to development projects]. Concerning the cement factory project, we will have to explain to villagers how it can affect our community, but until now we have not allowed any development projects in our area.

Do they [companies] have permission to survey the area to test [if the soil is conducive for cement production]?

Where they can go and survey depends on what permission we give them. If we do not permit them to go, they cannot go and test. If they try to implement any development project, we must give a chance for villagers to decide. If the development project is not useful or beneficial for villagers, we must reject it immediately.

I heard that there is a dam project underway in Win Yay Township? Is that true? Can you tell me more about it?

I have also heard about it [the dam project], but I do not know for certain whether they have already begun construction of the dam or not.

Can you tell me about where they will plan to construct the dam?

I do not know exactly where they will construct the dam. For example, if they construct a dam, they have to inform us. If they do not receive permission from us [KNLA] and local villagers, then villagers will reject the dam project.

Would you like to say anything about something that I have not asked you?

What I want to say is that in my area there are no urgent issues. As we mentioned before, our greatest challenge is the issue of drugs. As for other issues, our leaders [in the KNU] and the Burma/Myanmar government do not have a reliable plan to solve our political problems. Both groups do not trust each other fully. Until now, we have had to live very cautiously.

What [can you tell me] about problems within the communities in Win Yay Township from the past compared to now? Can you tell me how it is different?

Presently, the situation is getting better. However, the people in our community have to be aware of the situation because villagers are facing food insecurity from infrastructure development. The food is not produced naturally [anymore] and [everyone uses] chemical fertilisers instead. Therefore, in the long run, it will negatively impact villagers' health.

Currently, Tatmadaw troops are active nearby villages and religious areas. So, how far do you want them to stay [re-locate] away from villages? Can you give me your views on it as you are a KNLA Battalion Sergeant Major?

If we look at army troops' policy [as stipulated in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement], they have to stay within the areas stated in their policy. However, we also want them to abide by our wishes [and not be active near us], but we cannot do anything about it because we do not have the authority to order them to do this. We have to understand the situation as it is. For example, to keep the area peaceful, they [Tatmadaw] should stay in their camps such as Noh Su Naw army camp and Lay Naw army camp and we do not think it is appropriate for them to be active near to villages.

So how far away would you want them to stay from villages? Can you tell me your perspective on this?

It would be better if they move their army camps to another location, but we have to consider our NCA rules between us [which allow their army camps to be based in certain areas]. So we both have to follow the rules since the NCA has been signed. I think our leaders know about this situation better than us.

So do you want to say anything that I have missed?

No.

After we finish our interview, I would like to take a picture of you. Can you tell me how we should use your picture and this audio interview?

I do not have any suggestion to give you regarding how to use my picture and audio interview. It depends on their [KHRG] guidelines, how they should use it.

Thank you so much.

It is fine to use as long as it does not dishonour our area.

Yes, thank you again.

OK. Thank you.

Source #149

Log #	16-90-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>This situation update describes events occurring in Win Yin [Win Yay] Township, Dooplaya District, during the period between January 1st 2016 and October 20th 2016 and discusses development, military and KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] movement, education, healthcare and the region's social and economic situation.</p> <p>KNLA and Tatmadaw Military Movements</p> <p>Since January 1st, 2016, there were no significant military activities by either the KNLA or the Tatmadaw, with the exception of minor movement caused by Tatmadaw troop rotations. The [frontline] military unit was rotated every six months. On April 28th 2016, the Tatmadaw army in Lay Naung military base camp was led by military camp commander Ye Win Thein. 30 fully armed soldiers patrolled [around] the Met K' Wa, Kwun Thay Ta, and Kyauk Ta Dar areas. Military activities did not take place only in this township, however. Similar activities also took place in the Kawkareik and Kyainseikgyi townships.</p> <p>On July 22nd 2016, the Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #591, led by Major Kyaw Myo Aung and consisting of 17 fully armed soldiers, came to monitor the school and the newly built low-cost housing in the old village of Met K' Tha, Kyainseikgyi Township. Then they headed back to Three Pagoda Pass Town after changing from military uniforms into citizen shirts. From the KNLA side, the vice officer Saw Ba Thein and his group came to greet them (LIB #591) and guided them toward the places they would like to go [for sightseeing]. The [local] villagers were very happy to see this.</p> <p>However, [local] people panicked again in September 2016 after minor clashes took place in some areas that created instability. The local people became worried and wondered if the clashes would happen again. It was a situation in which armed groups were sometimes friends but also sometimes fighting each other. In addition, while the citizens were trying to let go of their fear, the Tatmadaw restarted its activity [among the region]. Although both the KNLA and the Tatmadaw were geared to hunt each other, the real victims of the conflict were the citizens. Military movements from both sides have not stopped.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Compared to 2010, the education situation in Karen State within KNU controlled areas has mostly improved in 2016. Due to newly built schools and roads, the involvement of government teachers, increased support for Karen literacy classes in school, and general educational support, many children were able to attend school. However, less educational support was received [by villages] in deep rural areas [hill areas], where there are around 50-60 houses in one village. Some villages still have not received any [Myanmar] government recruited teachers. This issue was raised on September 10th 2016 when KHRG field researchers went to a meeting between A--- village head, a locally-recruited teacher and several [non-governmental] organisations. These NGOs agreed to support [the school]; however, since they returned, no help has been provided and no action was taken. There were in total three teachers in that primary school; one was recruited by the government and two were originally there.</p> <p>Daw D--- has been serving as a teacher since 1993 and she has worked in [many] different places. She is the wife of an Immigration Authority [Officer] and has been secretly paying</p>	

contracts to teachers. The village heads disregarded her actions because they had no idea what she was doing. She hired a villager named Daw Hser Hayblu Moo and paid her 1,500 Baht per month. Though the government teachers have not disclosed this information, the government should be aware that the Karen children would not gain sufficient knowledge, or learn the Burmese language [because she is not the proper teacher and lacks Burmese language skills]. This case was reported to the KNU controlled area of Dooplaya District office. This truly happened according to the village [position censored for security] Saw B---

Currently, the KNU and the Myanmar government are supporting primary education as much as they can. As a result, there are changes within the [local education] situation.

Healthcare

Concerning healthcare in Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District, since 2010 there has been a reduction of malaria infections due to the campaigns led and medicines provided by organisations working against malaria [in rural villages]; thus, there were improvements [in healthcare].

However, there were not enough nurses or doctors and medicines in the government-provided clinics in rural villages; this has caused local people to encounter healthcare difficulties. In response, several young people who attended the training regarding healthcare [opportunities] opened by KNU have volunteered or taken on informal medical jobs to provide healthcare services [to the village]. Moreover, the organisation against malaria assigned one staff member to each village and tested the blood of all villagers who have suffered from fever.

Social

According to what has been documented between January 1st 2016 and Oct 20th 2016, in Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District, there have been major changes between 2010 and 2016 regarding the social situation. These changes are due to increased practices of religious literacy training, village safety, and more voluntary work in villages. Youth have been prioritised and there are more opportunities for them to take on leadership roles than before. Disciplinary action has also been taken which has stopped authorised personnel and the KNLA from using drugs with impunity. However, women are not currently being selected to village leadership positions because of the stereotype that they are unqualified. Meanwhile, the KWO [Karen Women Organisation] and KYO [Karen Youth Organisation] are raising the awareness of the people; the social situation seems to have improved due to their inspirational campaign calling for the prioritisation of education in the Karen community.

Economic

There are significant changes and improvements to the economic situation in Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township, between January 1st 2016 and Oct 20th 2016 because increased freedom of movement has opened up more opportunities to trade domestic livestock. Many people have rehabilitated their houses between 2015 and 2016. However, there are still some homeless people due to the confiscation of lands caused by the development of the International Asian Highway [AH1]. This [AH1] has only benefitted companies, armed groups, and investors. [Local] people are too honest, naïve, or unwilling to speak up, which has made it difficult to fight back against the AH1 and effectively apply the strategies that KHRG provided. NGOs [non-governmental organisations] have come to collect money [from the villagers], saying that they would help them but since they went back to town, they have not returned. The names of the NGOs are unknown and they frequently enter and exit [the villages]. Furthermore, fighting also broke out, causing people to worry. Meanwhile, some

wealthy individuals from the big cities have seized opportunities by cooperating with KNU authorities and ignoring the local people. Instead of raising their voices, the villagers did what they were asked to do: if they were asked to go, they went; if they were asked to pay, they paid; if they were asked to answer, they answered. They continued this until the companies/wealthy individuals and armed groups were satisfied.

The cement company came and tested the stone twice. When they first came, they said that the villagers didn't accept them so they went back. When they returned, they had received permission from Dooplaya's District governor [Pa doh] Shwe Maung to conduct assessments of the stone for fifteen days so the villagers had no idea who to report [their complaints] to. Although the villagers have protected the township and village's natural beauty, [they feel that] wealthy individuals who are rich and powerful have used many different tactics to seize what they want. As a result, only wealthy individuals and armed groups have profited whereas local people have been left behind, their lands and gardens lost, and their lives full of intimidation.

Regarding local people's business, they just sell the fruits that are annually produced from their domestic garden in order to support their livelihood. One local villager said, *"We don't face difficulties like before; we can purchase and consume meat such as fish, pork, and chicken easily. We don't have big businesses."*

Local residents in Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township, mainly make their living by working on rubber plantations, betel plantations and by farming. [Local] people have questioned, *"Why has our mother organisation, the KNU, ignored us on the issue of the International Asian Highway construction? If our own government cannot help us, how can the Burmese/Myanmar government help us? After all, the Burma/Myanmar government is not made up of Karen people!"* The International Asian Highway is believed to be connected with the KNU but it is unclear how they are connected. Villagers have also reported, *"We propose that [a CSO] helps negotiate between the Myanmar government and the KNU. So far, only affected government buildings or lands were compensated, but no other information or compensation has been given by stakeholders, organisations and armed groups since 2013. Moreover, if they (authorities) want to meet amongst themselves, they call on us (villagers) to support them."* Thus, business in the local regions can be considered to have improved only slightly. The local villages have not benefited; all the improvements have gone towards the companies and KNU members' relatives who have taken advantage of local people in Win Yay Township. Thus, there has not been any 'real' change in the economic situation; change will only be 'real' when it is easier for local people to earn their livelihoods [than before].

Development

The economic situation regarding development has improved in Win Yin [Win Yay] Township, Dooplaya District, between January 1st 2016 and Oct 20th 2016. After the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) was signed [on October 2015], there has been development of education, social, economic, healthcare, transportation and communication. However, there are also significant negative consequences to development. For example, there was a fraud in which villagers were asked to submit 500 kyat per household in order to help them gain access in solar energy. However, after there was a signed agreement to build [solar panels], the fraudsters disappeared and were never heard from again. The affected village is C--- and this fraud took place on March 2016; however, we don't know whether this also affected other villages because we didn't contact them.

There are also improvements in education. Despite increasing [financial] support for schools and higher enrollment rates in every village, challenges still remain due to the shortage of teachers as well as other needs. There are still some villages that do not teach Karen language during school time. Some schools still exist which are able to stand on their own feet [without outside support] such as Buddhist schools and government schools in some villages. Moreover, greater access to libraries is needed. Regarding transportation, the International Asian Highway is beneficial for the public as well as for organisations and local citizens. However, it has hugely impacted [local people who live along or near the road construction]. The road is crossing through local people's lands/gardens and farmlands; but, the road has not met the [qualified] standard until now. The actors didn't care about providing any compensation for the damage they inflicted upon gardens and farmlands. Those who had lots of land could endure [this damage], but some people lost everything they had and no one was able to care for them. Some villagers said that they requested compensation in order to fund village development: *"They have not even paid for 60 feet of lands but they say that they have already paid for 230 feet of lands, so we should just watch and keep quiet. Thay Min Ta Man Lan [literally 'Asian Death Railway', this is the nickname given for IAH] is even scarier than the Death Railway [that existed many years ago]."* As it ruined farmlands and long term plantations many people suffered. Moreover, another concern is the cement factory, which has already assessed the rock on the mountain [in order to produce cement]: *"Our homes have been built along the road, beside [or near] the mountain where road construction operated. If the mountain is able to successfully produce cement according to their assessments, we would like to ask our mother organisation KNU where we should run to?"* The villagers are really concerned about how the KNU will protect the villagers from the negative consequences of development. As a proverb said, *"When tree-stumps are composting, Karen people are fleeing"* [this means that when there are no trees or lands in Karen local land, the Karen people have to run away to other places, such as Thailand to seek refuge]. In conclusion, the International Asian Highway has disappointed villagers and if cement production is successful, it would have huge effects and destroy the long term plantations, houses, and farmland of villagers. [This issue] was disclosed to KHRG by village chairpersons and villagers. Regarding this concern, the villagers want KNU leaders, if possible, to consider the long-term needs of villagers.

Conclusion

The main incident in Win Yin Township, Dooplaya District, during this period is the International Asian Highway. We [villagers] don't know whether the highway is completely constructed or not but they are still asking for taxes to be paid. We feel like no one cares about local citizens' plantations/garden and farmlands, especially the International Asian Highway construction special unit (22) U San Lon [led group]. [Therefore,] the local citizens encounter many difficulties. U E--- from F--- [village], who has seven children, has nothing left though even though he previously owned [land] before. He is over 60 years old, is a widower, and earns money by working daily irregular work. He is tightly managing his family's health, education, and livelihood. Although others are facing [difficulties] like him, he is one of the worst victims that this KHRG community member has witnessed. According to Sayama (Teacher) Naw G---, this [highway construction] is connected with central KNU.

Another issue which appeared in this period was cement production. This reflects the country's desire to develop, which has created stress and caused some citizens to be intimidated. In addition, around 6 dams are also believed to be in operation in other areas in Dooplaya District. Local people are unsure whether they should be pleased because the future is still unknown and [the citizens] are *"blown by the wind"* [all talk, no action].

Education and health care have improved in the township. Regarding healthcare, the majority of malaria infections have been reduced. Despite this, the medication in government provided clinics is under-stocked. The government provides only nurses or healthcare staff but we have to pay for other medical expenses. The social situation has improved a lot; there is nothing special to say about social issues. Drugs still exist in Win Yin [Win Yay] Township, Dooplaya District, and in the Three Pagoda Pass region because you can witness drug users, including kids, who were on drugs there. Finally, the KNLA Battalion (16), Company (2) is trying to arrest and issue punishments to those who use *yaba* [methamphetamine] in the villages.

There has also been recent activity regarding economic and taxation issues. Land owners with a land grant have to pay 60,000 kyat/per year for tax. A-five-year land grant costs 1,500,000 kyat, 300,000 kyat of which go towards paying tax, so no money is left over. Three years ago, land from one of the land owners was confiscated and used by constructors without compensation. [The land owner] took back the land and signed a contract which charged the constructor for staying on the land. [The land owner] still has to pay taxes for this land but she said this payment was not a burden because it was going to support the Karen ethnicity: "*It's for our people,*" she said.

Eventually, because the state is being called Karen State, I would like to conclude on behalf of all people [Karen villagers] that we need love, warmth, and care from the KNU.

Source #150

Log #	16-91-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Date Received: November 3rd 2016

1. These photos were taken in A--- village, Noh T'kaw Township, Dooplaya District. It shows a Buddhist temple. This temple has existed for years. There is no land to build a new temple. There are a mix of monks and nuns living in the same temple. In fact, nuns should stay in their temple and monks should stay in their temple. Both of them cannot stay together in the same temple. However, they do not have extra land to construct a new temple so they have to stay together. The village head of A--- village told me about this and he wanted me to give some ideas how to fix this problem [a new temple] but I had no idea to give him. These photos were taken by me.
2. These photos were taken in A---, Noh T'kaw Township, Dooplaya District. There is no place to build a new Buddhist temple in this village. It shows a place with grass and water. On one side there is grass and a school. On another side is grass and a sports ground. The old Buddhist temple is located in the middle of these places. The monks who live in the old temple said that the other temples from other villages are very good but their temple compound is very narrow. It has caused difficulty for them to live in.

Source #151

Log #	16-92-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: November 3rd 2016</p> <p>1. This photo was taken on October 26th 2016 and it shows 30 households from Noh Poe refugee camp returning to Myanmar.¹³⁰ These refugees from Noh Poe refugee camp are the first group that has gone back to Myanmar as part of an organised return process.¹³¹ They packed their belongings and prepared for their return. Some are returning to their original villages while others return to different locations in Myanmar. Each of them received 8,000 baht (US\$233.57) from the Thai government if they went back to Myanmar. It is not certain if they will get support from the Myanmar government's side, but Thai government authorities have said that the Myanmar government will give [donate] 300,000 kyat [US\$219.59] to each household. The leader of Noh Poe camp wants leaders from Myanmar to help and support these refugees.</p>	

Source #152

Log #	16-92-S1
Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously published ¹³² in July 2017: http://khrhg.org/2017/07/16-92-s1/dooplaya-situation-update-kawkareik-township-january-october-2016
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>This Situation Update describes the events which have occurred in three different Townships in Dooplaya District during the period between January and October 2016. The Situation Update includes issues regarding a rape and killing, army base locations, drugs, villagers' livelihoods, military activities, refugees, development, education, healthcare, land issues and taxation.</p> <p>Rape and Killing</p> <p>In the last two months [between September and October 2016], a Burmese man from A--- village raped a 17 year old girl and then killed her. The man [who committed the rape] was arrested and he was sent to Tatmadaw military police. The man had also taken drugs before committing the rape.</p> <p>Army bases location in Dooplaya District</p> <p>1. Thit Kha Law Taw or Than Ken Nyi Naung</p>	

¹³⁰ "[Kayin refugees returning to Myanmar](#)," Myanmar Times, October 27th 2016.

¹³¹ "[First Myanmar refugee returns from Thailand under way](#)," UNHCR, October 25th 2016.

¹³² This report was initially categorised during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

2. Myawaddy
3. Dih Klow or Par Chaung
4. Palu
5. Moto Talay
6. Ghaw Lay 362
7. Ka Nel Lay 2006
8. Ba Yin Naung Kone 3997
9. Maw Khee 2036
10. Htee Tapan
11. Tha Waw Thaw or Sa Khen Thit
12. Suu K'lee
13. Meh K'tee
14. Taw Wa Law
15. Pen Klen
16. Kwin Ler Ter
17. Htee Hta Baw
18. Kyaik Doe
19. Kalee Khee K'ter Koh
20. Buyar Ngue Toe
21. Htee Ghuh Thaw [BGF]
22. Taray or Kalay
23. Kyaw Hta [BGF]
24. Taw Tee
25. Anar Kwe
26. Lay Per Htaw or Taw Soe
27. Ghoh Than Plat- Bu Yin Naung Kone
28. Ghoh Than Plat- Pyan Mam Kone

These are the locations in Dooplaya District where Tatmadaw and two BGF camps are based. There were no army bases in these places until 1995 or 1996. After 1997, they [Tatmadaw] began to base their camps in these places.

Drugs

There are drug issues [regarding Yaba] in Dooplaya District. Village authorities have tried to solve the drug problems, but they have not been successful because they cannot eliminate all the drugs [yaba]. Some people rely on drugs [yaba] for their work [to sell and earn an income]. Some people use drugs [yaba] chronically until they experience psychosis and engage in dangerous activities. Some parents have had family problems because their children use drugs [yaba]. It [yaba] also causes problems in the village, and it creates more problems for women and girls. The leaders and village authorities have been trying to eliminate drugs [yaba], but the drug issues remain.

Villagers' livelihoods

This year villagers in Dooplaya District had difficulties earning their living because villagers' paddy fields in Kawkareik Township were infested and eaten by insects, which turned their paddy fields yellow. Farmers applied a chemical fertiliser to the paddy plants in order to make them grow well, but they [farmers] still worry that their paddy fields will not yield enough rice in the upcoming year. They had never seen [an insect infestation like] this happen in the past, but this year it has turned their farmlands and paddy fields yellow. Therefore, villagers are concerned.

In regards to farming and selling betel nut, the price is good, but some of the betel nut plantations in Dooplaya District have died due to the high temperatures this summer. Some of the betel nut plants that survived [the heat] were not able to produce enough fruits. The price of betel nut is very good, but the price of limes and large sour limes is unpredictable. If the size of the lime is big, it costs 2,000 kyats [US\$1.46]¹³³ for 100 limes. If the size of limes is small, the price is 1,200 kyats for 100 small limes. For large sour limes, it costs 12,000 kyats [US\$8.78] for 100 fruits. However, the price of limes and large sour limes is not stable. Sometimes their price increases and sometimes it decreases. However, the price of elephant wild yam is very good. It costs 500 kyats for one viss¹³⁴ of elephant wild yams. If people come to buy elephant wild yams from those who sell them, it costs 400 kyats [US\$0.29] for one viss. I do not know the price of rubber and rice, because it is not the season for [selling] rubber and rice.

Military activities

Starting from September to October 20th [2016], military activities in Dooplaya District have increased. Since the military activities have increased, Bo San Aung [DKBA splinter group commander] and his soldiers, who were more than 40 soldiers, came to hide at a place beside C--- village at 2:00 PM on September 10th. They planned to ambush another armed group [BGF], but no one knew that they [Bo San Aung's groups] came to hide in that place. Then, Bo San Aung's groups fired and hit a car from KNLA battalion #17 when they [KNLA] were travelling. Three soldiers in the KNLA car were injured. One of them injured his arm, another injured his back and the third injured his legs. None of the soldiers [KNLA] were killed. During the same time period, military activities increased. Because of the military activities, the Burma/Myanmar government military [Tatmadaw] did not allow anyone except local authorities to travel. They [Tatmadaw] closed the route that people used for travelling from September 11th to September 19th. Thus, BGF, Karen Peace Force (KPF), Tatmadaw, KNU and DKBA (splinter) called a meeting in Lay Law Saw area, which is controlled by KPF. In the meeting, they discussed their activities and plans [to reopen the road]. After that, the route was opened for everyone to travel freely starting from September 20th 2016.

Refugee Concerns

After the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] was signed [in October 2015], the local villagers and refugees started to feel confused in 2016 because the situation was just getting a bit [better] and there is no land for refugees to resettle. Some refugees have their relatives who live in Myanmar so it will be a bit easier for them to go back and stay with their relatives. Some of the refugees do not have any relatives or land in Myanmar; therefore, they will follow what is planned for them. Some of the refugees thought that nothing [about their situation] would be different for them [than it was during the conflict] so they reported it to UN [the United Nation]. It would be easier for their return if the UN made a plan for them.

53 households from Noh Poe refugee camp [in Thailand] submitted a list of their names to the UN for their return. Then the UN came to meet and interview them [refugees] several times in order to make sure everything would be prepared for them if they go back to Burma/Myanmar. We have known about their [refugees'] opportunity to go back to Burma/Myanmar since October 25th 2016. They [refugees] left Noh Poe camp and went to stay at Kyout Bu's place in Myawaddy temporarily and then they returned to their own places

¹³³ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the July 18 2017 official market rate of 1366 kyat to US \$1.

¹³⁴ A viss is a unit of weight equivalent to 1.6 kg or 3.52 lb.

or villages in accordance with the UN's plan. By the time the refugees were ready to go back to Myanmar, Bo San Aung's group [DKBA] started fighting with BGF and Tatmadaw, which creates problems for refugees if they return. Local people in Myanmar are also worried for refugees if they come back to Myanmar because the fighting could break out at any time. They [villagers] also worried that refugees will face difficulties and problems if the UN does not plan anything to support their livelihoods. There is not much land available for refugees to work on, therefore, they will confront many different difficulties if they come back immediately. These are the villagers' concerns and challenges.

Development

As people from other countries have come and given support to Burma/Myanmar, we have seen [more] development activities such as road construction in Karen State [southeast Burma/Myanmar]. Previously in Dooplaya District, there was not a large road. Now a large road has been constructed and the local villagers are happy because they can travel more easily and smoothly. However, some people are not pleased with the road because their long-term plantations were destroyed during the road's construction. For the people who lost many of their long-term plantations, the companies have paid compensation to them. However, the people who lost only a small number of long-term plantations did not receive any compensation from the companies. If we look at this situation, companies should also give compensation to those people who lost a small number of long-term plantations. According to a local elder, *"[if] we have many children, we still want our children even if some of them die. [If] we have only a few children, can you imagine how much we want them if they die? So consider this for people who lost a small number of their long-term plantations and how badly they feel [because of their increased dependency on a small amount of plantations]."*

Education

We have seen that education in rural areas has improved, so local teachers, leaders and parents are happy. Presently, if we look at the situation, there are a lot of our students who graduate from [migrant and refugee] schools on the border [in Thailand] as well as from Myanmar government schools. However, people [who graduate from schools on the border] do not get the same opportunities as people who graduate from the Burma/Myanmar government's schools, especially if they want to be a teacher in the local Burman/Myanmar government's school. According to a local elder, *"people who graduated from different schools want to work for the government, but they do not get the same opportunities [as those who graduated from government schools]. So why do we not have a discussion or meeting to talk about equal opportunities?"*

If we look at the education situation in Dooplaya District, it is getting better each year and the students' parents are supporting their children to study at the schools. Some people cannot afford school fees for their children, so they send their children to schools in the refugee camps. Their children can study at the schools in refugee camps until they graduate. KWO [Karen Women Organisation] has also tried to find a way for children who do not have parents in the refugee camps to study at the schools. KWO collaborated with TBC [The Border Consortium] to establish one dormitory for those children who do not have parents living there [in the refugee camp], so those children can study at the school. This has improved the education situation. Also, more schools are being established in almost all villages in Dooplaya District.

Healthcare

We have not seen any issues regarding healthcare in Dooplaya District during these five

months. Karen Department of Health and Welfare [KDHW] have been doing their best to educate local villagers about hygiene. [They told villagers] that they should wash their hands before they eat food, should drink boiling water, and everyone should build their toilet in their house compound. In addition, KDHW distributed mosquito nets and malaria testing tools. KDHW told and informed the local villagers how to take care of their health. However, while some local villagers followed [their instruction], others did not. The number of local villagers who followed KDHW's advice are greater than the number of villagers who did not follow it, which has improved the healthcare situation.

Land issues

There are now many land issues in Dooplaya District since the [political] situation has gotten a bit better. In the past, many people left their lands and they fled to the [Thai] border. Since then, people from other villages have come to live and work on the land that refugees and IDPs left behind. When the [original] owners of the land came back, they told the people from the other villages [who had taken their land] that these lands are their lands. Then, the people from other villages responded that they had cleaned and cut the bushes in these lands and they worked on the land because it had turned into a jungle since nobody stayed on [and looked after] these lands from 1997 to 2016. Therefore, many villagers are experiencing land issues because in the past villagers did not have any legal land ownership documents or land titles and villagers did not know how to apply for land titles. I am not certain, but most of the lands on the border do not have land titles and legal documentation. Land titling is also a problem with land far away from the border. We heard that villagers who do not have land went to work on the land in Noh T'kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township. Then, one leader [unknown] said that they [the IDPs] could work on those lands, but they could not own those lands because they were owned by the local authorities. The returning villagers, who had fled [and were previously displaced] questioned the authority's age when the other villagers began cultivating the land [since the authority might have been too young to remember that the returning villagers had owned the land originally].

Taxation

There are several types of taxes people have to pay because there are many different armed groups in Dooplaya District. All of the armed groups are Karen ethnicity. Many different armed groups have different roles in each area, so the villagers have to pay a lot of taxes. According to a farmer, he reported that he had to pay a rice tax to many different armed groups. He had to pay 10 kyats per one big tin of rice, so he had to pay 10,000 kyats [US\$7.31] for 1,000 big tins of rice. As a result, he had little money left after he paid the rice tax. He said that he did not officially report this case [to local authorities], but spoke truthfully about the situation [taxation issue]. He also said he would have more money if taxes are reduced and thought that other rice traders probably confront the same tax issues. Regarding taxation, there have been no changes. This taxation issue is normal [has been happening for many years] as usual. However, we have to survive and do our best based on the situation.

Source #153

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Location	Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>People call me Naw A---.</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I am 40 years old.</p> <p>Where do you live?</p> <p>I live in B--- village.</p> <p>In which village tract and township is B--- village located?</p> <p>It is located in Taw Soe village tract, Ta Kreh [Paingkyon] Township.</p> <p>Do you have a family?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>What is your occupation?</p> <p>I do not have a job.</p> <p>Maybe you work on something [for your livelihood].</p> <p>I only work on a farm. I do not know much about working on a farm because he [my husband] did it [for us] when he was alive.</p> <p>I would like to know if you have experienced anything while living in this village that has upset you?</p> <p>There was only my husband's case.</p> <p>Could you tell me what happened to him?</p> <p>I did not know anything [about why he was killed] until after he was killed by those people. After he was killed, people told me that he put things [witchcraft materials] under villagers' houses. He put things under Mu D---'s house, Naw E---'s house, Saw F---'s house, Naw G---'s house and Naw H---'s house.</p> <p>What materials did he place [under peoples' houses]?</p> <p>They said that he buried a piece of red cloth, almost one fingertip to elbow deep (18 inches),</p>	

¹³⁵ This report was initially categorized during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

under Mu D---'s house, a charcoal used in cremation under Naw E---'s house, and beside Saw F---'s house posts and under Naw G---'s house he buried seven voodoo dolls and stones that were cursed by witchcraft.

Please describe your husband's past, when he was alive?

When he was alive he never told us about this [admitted to us that he could do witchcraft], and I did not know anything about it. People told us [he could do witchcraft] after he was murdered. We never knew about this when he was alive.

So, you are saying that people accused him of practicing witchcraft, right?

People told [me] that he could do witchcraft and that he was malicious to everyone, including his wife and his children.

How long had you lived with your husband?

It had been almost twenty years.

Did you ever see him doing suspicious work [witchcraft]?

I never saw it.

That is good. When was your husband killed by those people?

It was on Talah [Karen month for March and April] 2, 2016 [or April 9th 2016 if according to the Burmese calendar].

People accused him of practicing witchcraft and then they killed him, so do you know who killed him in secret?

I do not know. While I was hiding, I heard people say, *"If we shoot him by gun, the gun will not fire out. If we hack or stab him with a knife, then he will not get injured. We cannot grab him or tie him up with string. Even if we can arrest him, we will not be able to tie him [because he is a witch]"*. We [myself and my children] had never heard him say he could do witchcraft. Other people said they heard him [my husband] tell them that [he could not be killed or captured]. [They said] he told them this while he was in other people's houses. They [people in the village] said he told them that he could do witchcraft. For me, I did not know anything [about the rumours that my husband could do witchcraft]. People told me about it after he was killed.

Did people tell you about how your husband died?

People said, *"He could do witchcraft, so his wife can do it too. Her husband would have taught her [how to do witchcraft]"*. They spoke in secret and said if anything happens [in court] and if I report this [that they killed my husband] to someone [the authorities], then they would kill all [of my family members], and they would not leave anyone left.

Regarding how you have spoken about this case, it seems you might know who the killers are.

Hmmm.. I might know. Saw L--- said my husband ordered people to steal his younger brother's motorcycle while he looked after his younger sister in the hospital. The hospital is in Kru Tu [Town] and my husband was at home [in the village], so how would he know [about his brother's motorcycle]? He would not know [about] it.

I think you know who the killers are.

After my husband died, [a villager] told me, *"Do not phone any of his [my husband's] siblings because his siblings can also do witchcraft. Therefore, we will clear [kill] all of them if you contact them and if they come here"*. This was Saw L--- himself who said this.

Do you think the killers are villagers or soldiers?

They are villagers, not soldiers.

Could you provide information about how he was killed?

That night, my son and my husband were watching a movie at Pu J---'s house. [I was told that] someone asked them to turn off the video, so the children in the house did it. After, he told our son, *"Son!! Let's go home because people will not let us keep the television on anymore"*. Regarding what people told me about my husband, it is likely he did not know anything [about people's plans to kill him], so he [and our son] came back [home]. My son said people arrested him [his father] when they [he and our son] arrived beside Uncle Saw K---'s water well. I ran to my son when I heard him crying because I thought he was bit by a dog. Before I reached my son, I heard my husband scream for me to come help him, *"Naw Moe! Help me, Naw Moe! Help me!"* I went out with a torch light, so I could see, and I saw people strangling his neck and squeezing his nose [suffocating him]. Therefore, I rushed to those people [who were killing my husband]. Then my younger brother tried to stop me, but I was still able to reach two of the killers who were holding my husband and pushed them away. I could not see those killers' faces. I only saw their hands [restraining my husband]. Then some other people stopped me and others caught him [my husband] and then they separated him from me, and they did not let us see each other anymore.

Did those people take him away?

They took him away and killed him. [Before he was murdered] I begged my younger brother to let me see him again. When I went there [to where they were holding him], I could only see the killers' legs and could not see their faces because they were hidden behind a walking tractor, so I did not know who [the killers] were. People asked me [who murdered my husband], but I did not know who the killers were. Later on, I heard people [villagers] say that if we try to ask [other people about who the killers were] then they would know who beat him [killed my husband]. And so I asked them [villagers], *"Who knows who the killers are?"* One of the villagers said, *"The person who hit your husband was Saw L--- because they [he and his friends] said if people shot him [my husband] by gun then the gun would not fire out, and if people hacked or stabbed him with a knife, he would not get injured."* In my [experience], I had never heard him say that [he could do witchcraft].

That person's name is Saw L---, right?

Yes. But I do not know if someone ordered him [to kill my husband] or not.

Is [Saw L---] a man?

Yes. He is Saw M---'s younger brother.

Did you reach [your husband] just before he was killed?

Yes. I reached him when he was calling out to me and he was not dead yet, but people took me away. When people were holding me for a while [several minutes], I tried to shake myself free. Then people slapped my face, and my younger brother also slapped my face and strangled my neck. My brother told me, *"It is not only villagers committing the killing, soldiers are also involved."* Later, I heard that it [this killing case] did not involve soldiers.

Did you have a chance to bury your husband?

No. I could not bury him because after they took him away from me, they took me to my house and then they did not allow me to go [and see him] again.

Do you know where your husband's grave is?

I do not even know where they keep his body. I asked Saw M--- [about my husband's grave] and he said he knew the place because he followed those people [the people who killed my husband there]. While the mob of killers tried to kill my husband, he was in N--- village but he heard noises from the killers. Then he [Saw M---] told his nephew to come and stay at home with his mother [and went to follow the noise]. I thought he would know some [information about this killing case] because he took a ring from my husband's finger [after he was killed]. People told him to throw it away, but he did not do it and he just kept it. [Actually,] this ring was not my husband's ring. [One day] Naw O--- gave me this ring, but it did not fit my finger so my husband told me, *"Let me try it on and see if it will fit my finger or not"*. Then he wore it and it fit his finger. Before he wore this ring, the ring was not this light golden colour, but it turned into a light gold colour after he wore it. People [unknown] said there were words and voodoo engraved [on the surface of the ring] that were cursed by witchcraft, but I did not check when I got it because I am not educated and would not be able to recognise [what was on the ring]. I asked Saw M--- about this ring and he replied to me, and said, *"There were words and voodoo dolls cursed by witchcraft that were engraved inside the ring and looked like the shape of a flower"*. I just thought the people who had made the ring put a flower on the ring. Since I got it, I had never checked this ring. They [the people who killed my husband] were going to bury this ring with my husband, but Saw M--- did not agree with them. Then he took the ring off my husband's finger. I asked Saw M--- about this ring and he said he kept it.

So you have not seen his grave yet, right?

I have not seen it because they do not allow me to see it. When I walked around [the village] people asked me, *"Have you not gone to pay respect to your husband's grave?"* And then I told them, *"People do not allow me to see it, so how can I pay my respect to him?"*

Do people [your surrounding neighbours and villagers] still keep their eyes on you and watch you closely after your husband was murdered?

People always keep their eyes on me and watch me closely, and even just yesterday, people questioned me [about what I did to follow up my husband case]. When I went to my

younger brother's house this morning, his wife asked me too [about what I answered when people asked me about my husband case]. I replied to her, *"I did not say anything about it [killing case] to anyone who did not ask me, but I told everyone who met with me and asked me about this case."* Naw E--- told me, *"If people ask you for information [about your husband's case] and if you do not know it, then just tell them 'if you want to know information [about the killing], just go to the people who committed the killing and ask them [for information]".* They said this to me because they heard that this case would go [to court], so they questioned me about it [if I reported something to local authorities]. However, I told them, *"I did not report anything [to authorities], and I only answered people who asked me [about my husband's murder]."* I did not report this case directly to [the authorities]. I told them, *"If you do not believe me, just come and ask you [KHRG researcher]. When I was selling fish [at C--- village], I went with Kyaw P---. I arrived to his [KHRG researcher's] house and met with him and he asked me for information [about my husband's death]".* I will wait and see it if they dare to come to you [researcher] or not. They said, *"If this [killing] case comes out, we will have to go [to the court] because we committed the crime."* They know, themselves, that they committed the crime. They told me if they had to go [to court], then I would have to go with them. I replied and told them that if I have to go with them, then I will go.

Is there anyone who does not believe that your husband could do witchcraft?

Yes, there are a lot of people who do not believe that he could do that [witchcraft]. They told me that my husband could not do it [witchcraft] because he had lived here [B--- village] for many years and they never saw that he could do it. He lived with me for many years and if he could do it [witchcraft], I would know it. They [perpetrators] said they saw my husband do it in secret, but his nephews and nieces never saw him practicing witchcraft when he was in his own village. His nephews and nieces were raised by him. They want to come here [this village], so they told me to ask you [KHRG researcher] if they can come or not. If they can come here, they would like to meet with you too.

Yes, I want to know the exact information too. We will confirm everything [the situation and security] and then I will respond to the people who want to come here.

People in my village said he told other people that he could do witchcraft and he used witchcraft to kill almost a hundred people in his village. I asked his nephews and nieces who were raised by him about it, but they said they had never heard this.

Where is his village?

His village name is Q--- village.

Where is Q--- village located? Is it far from here?

Yes, it is very far from here. Q--- village is located in part of R--- village.

People said he used witchcraft to kill a hundred people in his village, so did he dare to visit his village?

Yes, he visited his village with me and we sometimes stayed there for a week or a month at a time. He always went back to his village when he was alive. Actually, he had a plan to go back to his village this week because his younger brother told him to go back for the

ceremony to celebrate the stupas' finial [ornament at the top of a stupa], so I thought I would visit his village with him after our son sent money to us. Unfortunately, he was murdered before he went back to his village.

People said he killed people in his village by witchcraft, but he always visited his own village once or twice per year, right?

Yes, he always went back to his village once or twice per year.

Did people in his village say that [he could do witchcraft]?

No, they never said that. People in his village had never heard that he could do it. There were a lot of people [in his village] who were nice to me.

So the only people who said that [he practiced witchcraft] are those people [from your village] right?

They [the people involved from my village] were the only people [who said that]. Other people did not say this. His nephews and nieces also spoke highly of him. When I phoned his nephews and nieces I asked them, *"Did your uncle do [witchcraft]? When he lived in your village, had you ever heard that he could do witchcraft? You can tell me what he did because people from here [my village] said that he could kill people by witchcraft. They gossip about this case behind my back and it is making me uncomfortable since my husband is now gone forever"*. They replied to me that they had never heard [that my husband could do witchcraft]. They said, *"Our uncle had looked after cows since he was a child until we grew up. People even asked him to blow and start a fire, but he could not do it well, so how could he do witchcraft? Therefore, we do not believe it. Why did they [people who accused our uncle] not inform his siblings to come [to the village] before they killed him? If they told us in advance, we would have come and spoken on his behalf. Even if we had to sign an agreement, we could do that too"*.

They killed him, but his relatives did not know because nobody informed them.

People killed your husband because they suspected that he could kill people by witchcraft. Regarding what you have said, he did not do anything bad in this village. Had he ever argued or fought with any people in this village when he was alive?

In our arguments, I always told him everything I wanted to.

No, I mean to other villagers.

Sometimes people argued with him, so he responded back to them.

What issues did they argue about?

There were not any serious issues. Sometimes Saw S--- [interviewee's neighbour] argued with my husband about planting bamboo in his area. He told Saw S---, *"Doh Pu! I planted bamboo on your land, but it does not mean I will confiscate your land; you can cut the bamboo when they are mature. I will not take it, but I am just someone who loves to plant"*

[vegetation], so I planted the bamboo on your land. I also planted [vegetables] on Naw T---'s and Pa Dtee¹³⁶ U---'s farm [who also rent from Pa Dtee V--- because I do not have my own land to plant on]. I asked permission from Pa Dtee V--- to clean a place on his land to work on and plant beans, cucumber and yams in the upcoming raining season. He let me work on his land to grow vegetables because [he knows] it does not mean I will confiscate his land."

Later on, Saw F--- rented this farm [from Pa Dtee V---] to work on. One time, Saw F---'s goats came to my husband's [vegetable] fence and he [my husband] made sounds by clapping his hands and shaking his legs, which made Saw F---'s goats run away when they heard the sound. After that, his pregnant goat had a miscarriage. Saw F--- angrily reported this issue [to the authorities] and said that my husband shot his pregnant goat [with a sling shot]. My husband and I just looked at their [Saw F---'s and authorities'] faces without saying anything to them.

Also, when Saw F--- and his children would argue with each other, he would say that my husband made them argue with each other by using his witchcraft. [However,] my husband stayed at home and he did not know anything. My husband just said "Hmmm! Kwa [cousin] Saw F--- is arguing with his children again." I had never heard about this [accusations that my husband made their family argue with each other] before. I only heard it after my husband was killed. They [gossipers] said they did not dare to talk to me about it frankly when my husband alive. I replied to them, "Why did you not say this to his wife [me] when he was still alive, and you could still come and tell me? If you told me, I would have told my husband and taught him moral values and what is right and wrong." They said, "We did not dare to talk about it because we were afraid that this information [witchcraft] would spread [to the authorities]." However, they dared to do it [kill my husband] in secret. They said they did it openly, and everyone knew it [but I did not know who killed my husband].

If they said everyone knew it, why did they try to control you and not allow you to travel or tell information to other people?

Yes, they said this. They made me drink promissory water [for not spreading information about my husband' case]. They told me that if information about the case spreads, it would be because his wife [spread information about the case].

She [unknown name] said, "Teaching [someone] how to do witchcraft is like making a snack that our husbands cannot make. Later on, we will teach them and then they will know how to make it [the snack]. As her husband could do witchcraft, she can do it too and I will not believe her even if she says she cannot do it. Her husband had to have taught her." However, if my husband could do witchcraft and if he taught me [how to do witchcraft], I would still not be able to do it because I do not know any letters [I cannot read and write]. I cannot even recognise the words or pictures of witchcraft. I do not know how to write words or how to draw a picture because I have never gone to school, not even when I was a child. If I had been to school, it might be possible that I could learn it, but I have never learned how to draw a picture [so it is impossible].

I told them that I do not have any knowledge about witchcraft and I let them check [everything in my house]. They checked all of my husband's belongings and then they burnt them. They accused me of telling other people that I was not allowed to plan my husband's

¹³⁶ Pa Dtee or Dtee is a familiar term of respect in S'gaw Karen attributed to an older man that translates to "uncle," but it does not necessarily signify any actual familial relationship.

funeral. I told them I never said that. I spoke to the married woman [unknown] I had met at a shop last time about how people accused me of telling her about the funeral issue. I asked her, *"I heard people say you [the married woman] said this [that I said other people did not allow me to plan my husband's funeral]."* And I said, *"[Last time we met] we were buying things and only discussed other issues."* She said, *"Yes, it is [true] that I did not ask you anything about this issue [about the funeral]."* I replied her, *"Yes mu ghar,¹³⁷ you did not ask me anything [about the funeral] and I never told you about his killing case either. People [gossipers] said 'I told you that people did not allow me to plan for my husband's funeral.' I could show you the place where they told me, it was in the area underneath the house."* I asked her, *"Did I tell you this information?"* She said, *"You did not tell me any of this [when we met last time]. They [the people involved in the killing case] did not dare to tell me [that I had discussed the murder case] and they told my children, so my children scolded me."* She continued, *"If this case comes out [to court], it will not involve any people from N--- village because they [N--- villagers] already said none of them were involved in this case."* This aunty told me like this.

One of my husband's grandchildren, who is the child of his nephew, came to the village and asked aunty Kyaw W---, *"Aunty, do you know how my uncle is?"* She replied to my husband's grandchild, *"He passed way."* Then they did not ask anything about how their grandfather had died. The aunty [Kyaw W---] said later she heard people say that my husband's grandchild questioned Saw L--- and Saw M--- [about their grandfather's death]. She said his grandchild did not know Saw L--- and Saw M---, so they could not question them. I asked other people [about the grandchild asking questions] but nobody saw it or knew about it. I asked her, *"Who told you [about the grandchild], aunty?"* She said she did not know or remember the people who said it. I think, if this grandchild knew [this information], they would have already phoned and informed his relatives in X--- village and Y--- village. Then his relatives would have informed other relatives [from other villages] because these villages are not far from here. All of my husband's relatives would have known the situation of his death because some of his grandchildren live in Q--- village. My husband's father is from Z--- village and he had a lot of relatives, nephews and nieces in X--- village and Y--- village. My husband is one of four children, with two older brothers and one younger brother.

Regarding your husband's death, do all of your husband's siblings and relatives know about it yet?

Actually, they [the people who were involved in his killing] did not allow me to inform my husband's siblings and relatives, but I informed them because if this [killing] case comes out [later] people [his relatives] would suspect me that I asked people to kill him. Therefore, I informed my husband's nephew by phone. I told him to inform his fathers and his uncle, who is my husband's brother, that my husband was murdered. Both of my husband's brothers are monks. He asked me, *"Was my uncle sick? If he was sick, why didn't you let us know?"* I replied him, *"Your uncle was in good health, but people said he could do witchcraft and said he already killed a hundred people by doing witchcraft in his village. Have you heard about any of this?"* He said he did not know anything and there had never been a witchcraft case in his village. He asked me, *"Why did they not ask us to come [before they killed him]? All villagers from Q--- village might not have liked my uncle, so they killed him. My uncle should not have died because he could not do witchcraft."*

¹³⁷ *Mu ghar* is a familiar term of respect in S'gaw Karen attributed to an older woman that translates to "aunt," but it does not necessarily signify any actual familial relationship.

After I informed him, I thought I could live peacefully, but they [the villagers here] always gossip and question me about my husband's case. I heard [people gossiping about me and my husband's case] yesterday, so I told Saw M--- that I would have no value if I died like my husband. Nobody would know if people killed me because he stays in his house and my neighbours stay in their houses. He said, *"I need to make the case clear for you [so all the villagers will understand you]. We need to have a meeting with the people who said that you discussed this issue [to the authorities]."* He asked me, *"Who told you about this [about reporting your husband's case to the authorities]?"* I replied him, *"They were your younger sister, Naw H---, and your older sister-in-law, Naw E---, who was your older brother's wife."* I overheard them talking about me [and asking if I reported my husband's case to the authorities] and then they questioned me [about this issue] too. When I took fish paste for my older sister they also questioned me and asked, *"Who are you taking the fish paste to?"* I replied them, *"I am taking the fish paste to him [KHRG researcher], but since I have never been to his house, I took it to my older sister's house. I did not know whether my older sister would take it to him [the KHRG researcher] or if he would come and take it himself."*

As you previously mentioned Saw M---'s sisters, what is his younger sister's and his older brother wife's name?

Saw M---'s younger sister's name is Naw G--- and his older brother's wife's name is Naw Aa---. My brother defended me [that I could not do witchcraft and that I would not report the case], but then Naw E--- and Saw I--- themselves said that if this case is reported to the court, then my brother has to kill me and my two sons.

How is this case related to these women?

Naw E--- ordered people [some of those involved in the killing] to arrest my son and take him to her when my son was shouting and while other people were killing my husband. She was holding a piece of wood and she was going to strike my son and she was going to kill my son herself.

Who was that woman?

Her name is Naw E---. Her father saw the incident and he told her, *"The child does not know anything and you do not have to strike him."* They [perpetrators] said my husband buried things [witchcraft objects], so she hated him [my son because of this]. She said, *"We were made sick by witchcraft, so we went to Thara [traditional healer], but I did not say anything else [to the Thara] about who did witchcraft [to make us sick]."* But they [perpetrators] said they knew it [that my husband could witchcraft] when they went to Thara [shaman's] house. They knew it because a man was possessed by my husband's spirit. The [unknown] shaman called my husband's spirit and then he possessed that man. They said the man who was possessed by my husband's spirit [and was speaking like he was my husband] said he could do witchcraft. They said my husband held me when he was talking about himself. Actually, we [my family] did not know anything about when the villagers went to see Thara; it happened before Saw Bb---'s mother passed away [unknown date]. The people who went to Thara were Saw Bb---, Mu D--- and Naw Aa---. I did not notice that [they went to shaman because of my husband] because we [my family] thought that they went to Thara just to heal their illnesses. They tied pieces of spirit thread around their houses after they came back from Thara's house. If you go now, you will see it done around every house of the people who healed their illnesses at Thara's house. When I visited their [my neighbours] houses,

they said I was spying [for witchcraft deeds]. I replied to them, *"How did I spy? When I went to your houses I saw you lit the candle on your ladders, so I did not step on them and then I entered your houses another way, and then I spoke with you. Did I say anything unusual?"* They replied *"No"*. I asked *"Why did you think that I spied on your houses?"*

When my children went to fish, Saw I--- said they went around his house. I asked my children [about this] and they replied to me, *"His house is on our way to our fishing place, so we went across his house and returned across his house with fish."* That night [when they asked my children about it] my children were in fear, and afraid of them so they [my children] had to accept everything that they accused them of [my children]. Don't you [KHRG researcher] see how they threatened my children? My son would have been murdered together with his father that night if her [Naw E---'s] father did not see it. She was going to strike him until he was dead. She is evil and thin. I looked for Thara [a healer] for her when she was sick but she did not remember that I had done a good thing for her.

After he [Pu Ka Nah Pa] passed away, they said Pu Ka Nah Pa and my husband were [doing] the same thing [witchcraft] and then I did not allow my husband to go to his house anymore. When he was alive he visited us. He was nice to us. We liked him and we loved him. I cooked food for him. My husband bought bottles of beer and they drank together. Both my husband and Pu Ka Nah Pa loved playing lottery. After Pu Ka Nah Pa passed away, people said he could do witchcraft, so I did not allow my husband to go to his house because [I heard] people said that if my husband went to Pu Ka Nah Pa's house, they would arrest him on his way and then they would hang him from the tree and would say that he had hanged himself [suicide]. Do you think that this is just?

Who said that?

Saw F--- and Naw Aa---

Are they the people who you mentioned before?

Yes, they were the people that I mentioned before. I heard that Pu Ka Nah Pa could do witchcraft. When I visited Naw C--- she told me in secret, *"Naw Moe [the interviewee]! People said the man who passed away [Pu Ka Nah Pa] could do witchcraft too."* I replied to her, *"I never heard this."* And she continued, *"You used to travel to your parents-in-law's house [passing by Pu Ka Nah Pa's house] and you did not hear that?"* I replied, *"No."*

They hid this information, so they did not want me to go to C---village because they were afraid that man [KHRG researcher] would know about [the case]. They were [also] afraid that if my youngest son, who always followed me, would hear about how his father was murdered, then he would take revenge one day when he was older. Do you think they like my children? They hate my youngest son. They did not dare to say this openly and directly to me, but instead told my [older] son and then he let me know about this. My older son said to me, *"Mom! You should not visit other people houses. If you do, my younger brother might hear the case and when he grows up he might do something back to those people who murdered his father."* They [those involved in the murder] are afraid the houses [other people] that I visit will serve rice and snacks to my youngest son, and they will tell him this information [about the murder case] and they will teach him [to do something back to the people who killed his father]. Now you see? As he is just a child, he does not know that some people dislike him.

Yes, he is just a child, so he does not know it.

They said if the case goes to court, there will be no one on my side. I do not care if they are against me, as my husband's friend, Kyaw Dd---'s mother knew him very well and knew that he could not do witchcraft. She said, *"When he [husband] stayed [worked] for me, I sometimes treated him badly and cursed him. I asked him to do many things such as clean the vegetation in the rubber plantation, and plough the land to make the land surface smooth so I could build a house. If he could kill people by doing witchcraft, he would have killed me already. I told him everything what I wanted to say."* Then she said, *"He could not do witchcraft. If his siblings come, I advise you to explain this case to them and I will be on your side."* His nephews and nieces phoned me and they also want to talk with you [KHRG researcher]. They want to ask about coming to visit [my village].

Which authority do you prefer [to handle] your husband's murder case?

I do not dare to do anything [to report the case] since I am afraid of my neighbours. However, my husband's family members will do something to get justice for him. They [villagers involved in the murder] threatened me that if I report my husband case, I would not have any food to eat. They said I would not be able to buy a basket of rice, even if my son from Bangkok sent me money, it would be because I gave money to my older sister to help me get justice for my husband case. Actually, I gave money to my older sister because her daughter, who studies in a refugee camp, asked my son to send two thousand baht for her. My son sent money to me in Burmese currency, so I asked Kyaw Dd---'s mother whether she had any Thai currency with her, and if she had it, I would ask her to exchange it for me. She replied, *"Don't worry, I will give it to Naw Ee--- [her friend] when I reach Myawaddy town."* Then I gave it to her.

What kind of job did they accuse you of paying someone in this village to do for you?

They accused me that I asked them to report my husband's case [to the court].

Pay people to resolve this case for you, right?

Yes, it is. I did not ask people to do anything to [solve] my husband's murder case. Sometimes my son [who works in Bangkok] told me, *"Mom if you get money, let grandma use some."* Therefore, I gave some money to my mother. I always give some money to my mother when I receive money from my daily labour and from my son. I sometimes buy snacks and milk for my mother too.

Are you able to travel freely now?

Not yet. Wherever I travel, people always suspect me [of spreading information], keep their eyes on me, and they still gossip about me behind my back.

If you return back to your village, do you think they will ask you why you were in this village [C--- village]?

Yes, they will definitely ask me because they already said and suspected that I would report something to you [KHRG researcher] before I came here [C--- village]. They said they would question me and Auntie Ff---'s daughter who came along with me. Yesterday, my younger sister told me that she was questioned by villagers about my trip to C--- village [and was

asked] if I had met with that [KHRG researcher]. They also questioned about the money that my son sent me. My younger sister replied to them, *"We are siblings, so of course I will ask her when she returns to the village."*

After I returned from C--- Village, I explained everything to my sister. I even heard they [perpetrators] whispering and gossiping about it [me coming to speak with KHRG researcher] beside my younger sister's house. I told [them], *"If you want to know what I am doing regarding my husband's case, just come and ask me. I will explain everything to you. I did not report anything to the court, but I answered everyone who asked me [about my husband's murder case]. I did not know who beat [murdered] my husband and I just heard rumours while I was travelling"*. I asked them back, *"What are you hiding from me?"* They replied, *"We are not hiding anything."* I told them that someone might be hiding something from me. They suspiciously asked me, *"Where did you hear about this issue and who told you about this?"* I replied, *"I heard it from the people [my neighbours]. When you [gossipers] heard something you did not mention their names, so I will not call out their names."* I told them to ask themselves, who is hiding information about my husband's murdered case? They might ask each other after I leave. I met with them when I was taking a bath in the river. They spoke with me, but their faces were still full of suspicion and unfriendliness. They were gossiping about me even when they were arguing with their children and when they were taking a bath in the river. I heard them say they hated me, but I just pretended like I did not hear anything and I walked past them. I can show you the location where they were gossiping about me. They even asked me if I reported my husband's murder case to anyone. I told them, whoever asks me about my husband case I answer them [and tell them] as much as I know. They told me to reply to whoever asks me [about my husband murdered case] by saying *"If you want to know about this murder case, go and ask to the people who committed the murder."* I heard gossipers talking about the killers, but I do not know exactly who committed the crime and who the leader of those killers is.

Mu D--- and Naw E--- did not talk to each other much before, but since my husband was murdered they always visit each other. They [perpetrators and my neighbours] did not eat my food when I shared it with them, but I did not tell them anything and I was not angry and did not hate them. I ate their food when they shared it with me. My children asked me, *"Mother! People do not eat your food, but why did you call [share food with] them?"* My children said this to me like this because they know that the people involved in my husband's murder case did not dare to eat my food. Since then, when I have vegetables or food I have not shared with them. They [people in the village] have not entered into my house since they built the house for me [a long time ago]. They came beside my house and spoke to me, but they have not entered into my house because they believe that my ladder is evil because it was made by my husband when he was still alive, so they said my ladder is not good for the people to climb on it. Only my younger sister has come into my house. If it [the ladder] was good or not [I do not know because] I have to use this ladder since I do not have anyone to build a new one for me. They [gossipers] told me that they dreamt that [my husband] did witchcraft to the ladder, but I did not know and I have never dreamt that. I just dreamt that he [my husband] came back [to the house], but he did not say anything. They said they dreamt that he [my husband] followed my younger brother and he tried to stab him. They told me that sometimes people saw him [my husband] alive here, so I should go [to the monk] and offer rice [breakfast or lunch] to the monk and then ask the monk to call out his name, so that he would go back [to the death world]. They did not allow me to plan my husband's funeral, but they asked me to do this at the monastery, so I think I will not do it because they did not tell me where my husband was buried. If his siblings want to do it for him, they can do it [but I won't do it].

Were they [people who asked you to go to the monastery for your husband] unpleasant?

Yes, they were unpleasant. Firstly, they told me, *“You can only plan the funeral if all villagers participate. Otherwise do not plan a funeral [for him.]”* They will not go to the monastery for my husband, so I won’t go. They [perpetrators] said, *“If his [my husband’s] nieces and nephews report it to any [authority] and if they call them [to the court], then all of the villagers [from B--- village] will go with them to the court [to report] that they are not guilty.”* Let’s wait and see if this case goes to the court, if all of the villagers [from B--- village] will go or not. Then, if the authorities ask them [villagers who were not involved in the killing case] to compensate my husband’s life on their [the perpetrators’] behalf and if they are willing to pay it, then I think it will be fine [I don’t mind].

Now, they always keep their eyes on me and they said they will do [kill] all of us [my family]. I worry for my security and that they will plan to kill me when there are no people around. Yesterday, Saw M--- told his younger sister [Naw G---’s mother], *“You should stay in harmony and you should not gossip about other people. Now you gossiped and said a bad thing [against her] that people would do [kill] her, so she is scared now that she is in danger.”* I am scared of this [that people will kill my family], but this morning he told me not to be afraid, as I still have my relatives and siblings [to look after me]. However, I heard them say that none of my relatives would care if anything happened to me. Why should I not be afraid of this [the possibility that people might kill me]?

How do you want local authorities to solve this case for you?

I want [local authorities] to explain everything carefully and solve the case effectively and clearly among villagers and myself. I can stay in the village peacefully after the case has been solved [by authorities]. I want people [authorities] to explain this case to every villager, so they will understand my husband’s case clearly. My husband’s siblings care about me and want me to be able to live peacefully. My husband’s nieces and nephews said, *“We want our uncle’s wife and children to live in peace even though our uncle has passed away.”* My husband’s siblings want to visit and support me, and they asked me to get permission from local authorities to come and visit me. They also want to know more about my husband’s murder case. I cannot live a peaceful life after my husband’s murder.

Thanks for your detailed explanation. Do you have any other issues that you want to mention that I might not have covered?

No

I would like to thank you for giving me your time and for explaining to me in detailed as much information as you know.

Source #154

Log #	16-93-A3-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District

Full Text

What is your name?

People call me Naw A---

Which village do you live?

I live in B--- village.

How old are you?

43 years old.

Do you have family? If we ask clearly, are you single or married?

Single.

What is your occupation?

I am working on a farm, doing sesame plantation and breeding cows, pigs and chickens.

Which village tract do you live in? Do you know it?

Waw Pra village tract

I would like to know if you have [information on] any incidents happening in your area. Could you tell me please if you have?

Yes, it has happened. People said my mother and my brother were practicing witchcraft. They said my mother had a stone which was carved [cursed] by a witch and my brother went under other people's houses [doing witchcraft]. People who said my mother had a stone which was carved [cursed] by a witch called us to my cousin Ma M---s house and questioned me [about the stone]. I replied to them that we did not have it [stone], if we had to drink promissory water [to seal the promise that they cannot to do witchcraft] we would drink it in the village but they did not make us do it. Three *Thara* [traditional healers or shaman] said it was my mother alone who did it [gave bad spirits] to all of the villagers' children who got illnesses and such high temperatures with fever that the children were delusional.

Who are the people who said [your mother was practicing witchcraft]?

They are Neh Pyu and Nyah Lee.

Where does Neh Pyu live?

Neh Pyu lives in B--- village.

How about Nyah Lee?

I call him brother.¹³⁸

What jobs do they work for their livelihood?

In the past they were trading [precious] stones but they lost [were unsuccessful with this business], then they migrated to Thailand for work. He [Nyah Lee] made the conflict [about witchcraft] after they came back from Thailand.

Who is that?

Nyah Lee.

Does Nyah Lee work in any job now?

He sold his land and bought a gun then he shot us [Naw A--- and her mother and brother].

Regarding him buying gun, who is he [i.e. is he part of an armed group]?

I do not know. He is a soldier. He said he was KNU/KNLA Peace Council.¹³⁹

KNU/KNLA P.C right?

Yes.

Regarding what you said, the incident that happened [in your village] is that people killed your mother with a gun. When did this incident happen? How long has it been since the incident happened? How many months?

Umm I do not remember, the incident happened over a long period [of time]. You have to ask my female cousin because she and her husband went with me when people [police] called me to go and meet them. It has not been one month yet [since the final incident/killing].

What time did people kill your mother with a gun? [Was it] at night time or in the morning?

It was around 3:00 AM in the morning.

How many robbers came [to your house]?

I heard that a robber who was arrested [by Burma/Myanmar police] said [there were] four

¹³⁸ Brother in this context is not used to imply a direct family relationship, it is used to suggest a respectful familiarity.

¹³⁹ The KNU/KNLA Peace Council (also called the Karen Peace Council or KPC), is an armed group based in Htoh Kaw Koh, Hpa-an District, which split from the Karen National Union (KNU) and signed a ceasefire agreement with the SPDC government in 2007. The KNU/KNLA-PC subsequently refused to comply with orders from the then-SPDC government to transform into a Tatmadaw Border Guard Force in 2010. The KNU/KNLA-PC signed a preliminary ceasefire agreement with the Burma/Myanmar government on February 7th 2012, and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on October 15th 2015.

[robbers in total].

How many times did they fire the gun [during the robbery of your house]?

I heard [the gun fire] two times in the house. I was shocked when I heard it so I did not hear the sound of the gun when they shot my mother. They shot my brother on the ground floor [of the house] three times.

Where did you sleep [during the night of the incident]?

I slept outside of the [bed]room and my mother slept in the [bed]room. I rushed to my mother when [I heard the gun shots]. People shot my mother inside the [bed]room.

Did you wake up when they came to your house?

Yes, we did. My mother had a stomach ache so my brother and I woke up and we massaged her. We heard the noise from our cows. [In the past] one of our calves had died so I told my brother, “C--- [brother’s name]!! Go and check our cows, [check] if they got outside of their shelter”. Then he went outside and checked. My brother [came back inside and] said, “The mature calf was trying to breastfeed from the mother”.

After this we went back to bed for a while, then the robbers arrived and shouted [the brother’s name] “C---!!” then my brother responded “Humm!!” A robber said “We will kill all of you!!” While they pointed a gun [at us] my brother was screaming “Hey Mommy!!! These people are going to shoot us”. Then he ran around on the [ground] floor and he was screaming nonstop that, “Hehhhh people [villagers], these people are going to kill us!!! These people are going to kill us!!!” Then they tried to shoot my brother so he rushed to the window to jump down but he heard the sound of the people running [on the ground below] so he returned to the northern corner of the house. Then he started getting injured by the robber’s bullets so he jumped down into the paddy plants. The robbers followed my brother. I heard the sound of their footsteps as they ran [sounding like] ‘Tu Ta Tu Ta’ but I did not know how of them [robbers] there were. They shot my brother ‘Ta Ta Ta’ [the sound of three gun shots] so I said to myself, “My brother is dead”.

Then they returned to the house and knocked down the first door until it broke. Then they went to the room that we [mother and Naw A---] were hiding in and hit the door. My mother was shouting “Waehhhhh nephews [younger men]!!! What mistake have we done? If you need money, we will give you”. Then they arrived beside us and pointed the gun at my mother’s head. During that time, I just looked at the ground and did not dare to raise my head because I was afraid that they would shoot my eyes. They [one robber] pointed the gun to my head and I felt pain on my head. They grabbed and pulled my hair then they asked me “Where is the money?” I replied it was in the pot. Then I opened the pot and they took my green wallet quickly which was full of my money when I took it out. Then I told them “Oh there is money in there too” so I opened the other pot. They took my money and went out from the house. Then I touched my mother and called to her, “Mother!! Mother!! Oh my mother is dead”. Then I went to the outside of the room to get a torch light and pointed it to my mother. My mother was dead.

Then I went down to the ground floor and heard my brother shouting “Wayyy Naw A---, I am thirsty”, then I replied him “Wayyy C---!! I heard that people who get injured [shot] by guns have to drink coconut water”. Then I looked for people [for help]. I shouted “Wahhh Kyaw

[brother]!! Ask Maung D--- to climb the coconut tree for his Uncle C---. Then I went to my older sister's house; it was very far from my house. [When I arrived to her house] I called *"Ma E---!! Ma E---!!"* She answered *"Hummm"*. I told her, *"People killed Mommy and Maung C--- with a gun"*.

When I was returning to my house, I touched my head and said [to myself] *"It was not raining on my way here, why is my head wet?"* Then I told [my older sister], *"Ma E---, my head has one injury. Oh [checking] it has two injuries"*. Then she said *"Naw A---!! Your head is bleeding a lot"*. There was a lot of blood here [on my head] but I did not know [I was injured] and I did not feel pain either. When we [my older sister and I] arrived back at my house, I told her, *"Ma E---!! Regarding this killing, we need to inform the village head"*.

I did not know if she [older sister] went to the village head and informed them or not. I went to my cousin's house and called *"Wayy G---!! Wayy G---!! Do you have Ma H---'s phone number?"* My cousin replied *"I do not have it"*. I told my cousin *"Wayy G---!! People killed my mother and my brother with a gun"*. Then I went back to my house and stayed alone. I had to give myself courage [to stay alone]. Then another one of my older siblings who lives on other side of the river arrived and we just sat down at our own place [because we did not know what to do]. Then we looked for a *Tharamu* [nurse] in I--- village [to treat Naw A---'s head wound]. The *Tharamu* said *"I cannot treat it here so you have to go to Ta Kreh Hospital"*. I told [other people] *"I will not go there, I will just stay with my mother. My mother was dead here so I will stay with her here"*. She [nurse] said *"Sister!! You have to go. If you do not go there, it is not good. We do not know if you have an internal head injury or not. We [I] do not dare to treat it here [in the village]"*.

Burma/Myanmar police arrived at the time of the sunrise. [The police officer] questioned me, *"How many people were there who killed [your mother and brother]?"* I answered him, *"It was in the dark so I do not know how many killers there were."* They called me to the room and they pointed at my injured head with a torch light. Then they checked the room and they saw a bullet shell beside by mother. They asked me, *"Did you hear the sound of the [gun] fire?"* I did not hear its sound because I was in a state of shock during that time.

Was your mother old?

She was 87 years old.

What was your mother's name?

Her name was Ma J---

What was your brother's name?

His name was Maung C---

How old was he?

He was 48 years old.

As you mentioned that people killed your mother [and brother], did they do something to you?

After they killed my mother, they punched my head down [to the floor with a gun] and it injured me. [After the Burma/Myanmar] police arrested them [perpetrators], they examined the crime scene for clues [by bringing the arrested perpetrators back to the house]. [One of the] perpetrator's said *"I hit your head with an axe. Then I saw that I had got all of your money and jewellery so I did not kill you. People ordered me to kill all of you and I knew that you had not died yet but I did not do it [kill you]. When I went back to them [the other perpetrators], they asked me 'Are they all dead?' I replied 'Yes, they are all dead.' Actually I lied to them"*.

Did you hear the voice of the people [perpetrators] who talked to you? Do you know him?

I did not know them because I had never seen them before.

Is he an ordinary person?

No, he is a part of a robbery group.

They said your mother, brother and you had evil spirits [practised witchcraft] but they [punished] you by robbing you?

Villager #2: If they said [believed] we had evil spirits, they would have just killed those people [mother, sister, brother]. They did not have to take money or jewellery.

How much did they take of your money?

They took three million and five hundred thousand kyat [3,500,000 kyat/US\$2565.36]¹⁴⁰ of my money.

Did they take it with other things too?

Yes, there was a lot of gold [jewellery] included

.

How much of your gold did they take?

I do not know because I never counted it [in weight].

Then how many pieces of your gold [jewellery]?

There were 4 rings, 4 necklaces, one pendent, pieces of a golden hair clip, a golden comb, a golden bangle, and a dozen golden buttons.

Was the weight of each golden necklace 8.165 grams or 16.329 grams?

One piece was 8.165 grams and another piece was 16.329 grams. I do not know the [weight of the] other [pieces] because my mother had saved them [kept them aside] since she [was young].

¹⁴⁰ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 16th August 2017 official market rate of 1364 kyat to US \$1.

So altogether [the weight of the gold jewellery] will be [about] 81.645 grams?

I do not know, maybe it will be but I have never mentioned their weight.

Regarding what you said, they asked you where your gold and money was, then they cut your head [with an axe] after they took that gold and money. Then they left you right?

Yes.

In the past, they said your mother could do witchcraft so had you ever looked for a Thara [traditional healer or shaman] to purify yourselves [take out the bad spirits]?

Yes. In the past, after they [villagers] said that [about the mother doing witchcraft], I went to the Thara [shaman] who lives in K--- village, Htee Lo Township to make ourselves become good people [take out the bad spirits].

A person [Thara] who was possessed by a spirit said *"You [family] had enemies of ours in the past, so [that is why] people would come and kill you".* We were afraid so we asked him, *"What do we have to do?"* He said, *"Go to L--- village and take out [forget] your animist beliefs [change your religion]. You have enemies so they try [to harm] you by evil spirits and animist spirits. It will be [safe] after you take out [forget] your animist beliefs".* I did not know if it was true or not but the spirit told us [through the Thara that was possessed] that so we believed in it. Then I went back to my house and discussed this information with my 'brother' Nyah Lee. I asked him *"Kyaw [brother] Lee!! Do you know how to treat [exorcise] a person who has done something bad?"* He said he knew how to treat it. [Naw A--- said] *"If you [Nyah Lee] can do it [exorcise evil spirits] then I will look for bananas and coconuts [for use in the herbal medicine to perform the treatment]."*

Where is Kyaw [brother] Lee living?

He is in Pa Meh village.

So he told you that he could treat [exorcise] evil spirits [from people] right?

Yes. Then I asked him *"How much do I have to pay for it?"* He replied *"It will cost seventy five thousand kyat [75,000 kyat/US\$54.97]".* Then I gave him [the money]. He told me to look for the stem of certain plant. [He said] *"To be protected from all people [spirits], [I will] put these stems at each of the four poles/corners of your house".* He did this at night. By the morning the stems of the plant had fallen down so he said, *"This woman [evil spirit] is really strong".* He [Nyah Lee] came to make us 'be good' [free from evil spirits] but he said we were strong [with evil spirits/witchcraft]. Do you think it is right? Then he called us to Uncle Apu's house and his sister's house, and he told us that we had to make ourselves 'become good' [free from evil spirits] because the three Thara [shaman] who had treated us had said our mother had [evil spirits/witchcraft] [and therefore the shamans could no longer treat them].

I told them, *"If you do not believe us [that we are good/not practising witchcraft], call all the names of the people who accuse us of doing witchcraft. Write down their names onto a note and we will drink promissory water [to promise to them that they do not practice witchcraft]."* These people did not accept it. They said, *"You have to look for the Thara [shaman] for*

yourselves". We replied to them, "We will look for a *Thara*. Tell us, where is the best *Thara*?" One of them said "[The best *Thara*] is in N--- village". [One of the villagers] had said [at some point in the past] that they had an illness and they blamed us [that the illness happened because of a bad spirit the family created]. So they had go to a *Thara* [in N--- village] and [said that] we [the family] would pay the travelling cost for them.

Then we went to Thaton. The *Thara* in N--- village possessed spirits in people and had said a long time ago this woman [my mother]'s parents were selfish. My grandparents could do witchcraft at that time and they passed their skills to my mother before they died. My cousin and people in the village said my mother took a stone that was carved [cursed] by a witch from my uncle in K--- village but she [my mother] did not know anything about it. They just said my parents took a stone that was carved [cursed] by a witch from K--- village. They said we had the palm [of our hand] like an evil spirit monster's hand, but we had never seen this. They said we looked for food at night time [whilst we were possessed by evil spirits] but we did not know it.

Is this what they told the *Thara* [in Thaton]?

No, the man who was possessed by spirit said it.

Oh, the *Thara* in N--- possessed the spirit of that man, right?

Yes, the *Thara* did that. The man who was possessed by the spirit said the woman that you suspected [could do witchcraft] was not wrong. It was indeed that woman [the mother]. We could not understand Burmese well so we called others to interpret it for us. They interpreted what they wanted us to hear, what the spirit man was telling us, but they did not translate the things they did not want us to hear.

How many days did you stay in N--- village?

I do not remember.

How many years has it been since you went to N--- village?

It has not been a year yet. It was in *Tah Lah* month [April 2016]. I asked them [villagers], "Do you rely on or believe in this *Thara*? If this time you are not satisfied, we will go to another *Thara*". They [villagers] said this *Thara* was not really true [good] yet. [They said] the *Thara* in O--- village which is in the area of T' Ko Lo was better. Then I phoned my nephew and told them [him] to come back to us. I told my nephew that it was suspected that we could do witchcraft so [he should] take us to O--- [village] where we could treat it. Then my nephew came back directly to us by car.

That afternoon, I sent my mother and my older brother to O--- [village] and then I followed them the next morning with one other villager. When we arrived at the *Thara*'s [place] in O--- village, I told him "*Thara!! People said we are not good [we have evil spirits] so please examine our spirits for us*". Then he examined our spirits but he did not see evil in me and my mother. He found that my brother had taken a ball of thread from dead people so the evil spirit was close to him so he let us to stay there for three days [to treat the brother]. The *Thara* treated him by letting him take diarrheal medicine [to force diarrhoea] for three days. Then this *Thara* told me that I did not have any evil spirits. I phoned my sister and told her about this. Then the *Thara* phoned me and said, "*Call all of your village leaders to come to*

your house. Then we will go and resolve this issue [of bad spirits] at your house". I told him "Thara!! Come to my house and clean the area of my house for us because we do not know if anyone buried witchcraft [items/spirits] under our house or not".

When the *Thara* arrived to my house, some people in the village tried to talk with him, follow him and call him to sleep in their houses. Actually they would have tried to kill the *Thara* but we did not know anything [about this]. The *Thara* was aware of this issue and stayed at my cousin's house.

The *Thara* treated [the family] by [using] the spirit of a stone and by asking her [an unidentified female] to hit her head with the stone fifty times. He told her, "*You talked about the spirit that possess the stone, so who was the owner of this spirit?*" She replied, "*It was the house's owner*". The *Thara* told her that if it was house's owner, just take it [the spirit] out and we would treat it. But this girl did not see it [the spirit] so she could not take it and she was afraid of her owner [of the spirit] too. The *Thara* asked her in many different ways to take out the evil spirit from the stone but she did not do it so the *Thara* cursed her and slapped her face. Then the *Thara* looked at her father and saw he was not happy about it so the *Thara* did not do anything more to her.

The *Thara* said that, "*If it was true that she is good/pure, she would be able to take out the evil spirit from the stone but she could not do it. This act was the evil spirit causing bad things for us.*" Maw Kyee Myint, Maw Khay Thaw and Nyah Lee believed in her that she was a good spirit and that she told the truth [they did not believe the shaman]. The *Thara* saw that these people [who trusted in the girl] looked unreliable so he did not sleep in my house with them because he was afraid they would kill him. He heard [a rumour about] the bad thing that they [Maw Kyee Myint, Maw Khay Thaw and Nyah Lee] would do to him [the shaman] so he [the shaman] said, "*I came here to do a good thing but it caused problems.*" Then he did not treat the evil spirits in my house but he went back to his house [in O---village].

People talked about a stone [possessed by an evil spirit] so I wondered if it was the stone that my grandmother used to make a medicine with for people who got diarrhoea, or my father's red [gem] stone on his ring. There were only these two stones [in my house]. Next morning, I took these two stones to the *Thara*'s house and asked him '*Is one of these was the stone that people are talking about?*' He told me, "*Niece!! This stone is for people to make medicine for diarrhoea and [I] have one too. And the red stone is a good stone*". I asked *Thara*, "*How about this red stone on the ring?*" He said [again], "*The red stone is a good stone*".

Regarding what you mentioned [about] Ah Pyu, Maw Khay Thaw, Nyah Lee and Maw Kyee Myint, they did not agree with the decision that the *Thara* made about the evil stone [when he accused a female of not being good/pure because she could not take the spirit out], right?

Yes, they did not agree with it. Oh Uncle¹⁴¹ [researcher], I forgot to tell you about drinking promissory water. They [these four men] did not believe [what the *Thara* said] so the *Thara* let us drink promissory water. P'Doh P--- who controlled Ta Kreh Township sent a request letter for us to be present on the drinking promissory water day. *Thara* phoned them to attend. On that day, they [Ah Pyu, Maw Khay Thaw, Nyah Lee and Maw Kyee Myint] went to

¹⁴¹ The term Uncle here is used to show respect to an elder male and does not signify a familial relationship.

the place where they should drink promissory water early in the morning, before we [Naw A-- and her family] had gone there and then they hurried to return back to their house. They [Ah Pyu, Maw Khay Thaw, Nyah Lee and Maw Kyee Myint] said they hurried because they had to vote for Aung San Suu Kyi so they were busy. Actually [the time to drink promissory water] was at 09:00 AM in P'Doh P---'s letter but these four men: Ah Pyu, Nya Lee, Maw Khay Thaw and Maw Kyee Myint did not [drink the promissory water at that time]

So your planning on that day did not happen, right?

Yes. When my mother stayed in the *Thara's* house, I visited her once a day and I bought juice and snacks for the *Thara*, and a monk. They [villagers] saw what I was doing thing so they told the *Thara* and the monk, "*Do not eat the food that this woman brought for you. The witchcraft will attach itself to you*". They [the *Thara* and the monk] replied them that, "*We dare to eat it*".

You said that four men [Ah Pyu, Nyah Lee, Maw Khay Thaw and Maw Kyee Myint] were dissatisfied with you, so what did they see [think]? What thing made them dissatisfied with you?

They said my mother could do witchcraft, had the palm [of her hand] like an evil spirit monster and [owned an] evil stone, and they said all the bad things that they liked to say to us.

As you are living in B--- village, did you ever kill anyone by witchcraft?

No. They just blamed my mother and gossiped, saying bad things about my mother. When anyone got an illness, they said my mother did [witchcraft] to them [to make them sick].

Who is Ah Pyu?

He is the [Buddhist] religious leader.

Who is Maw Khin Thaw?

He is the village head.

Who is Maw Kyee Myint?

He is also a village leader.

You said Nyah Lee is a part of KNU/KNLA Peace Council right?

Yes.

Do you know any of the people who killed your [mother and brother]?

I do not know any of them and I had never seen them before.

You said Burma/Myanmar police came to your house after your mother and brother were killed. Did they arrest any of the perpetrators?

Yes

Did they [the police] arrest any people [perpetrators]?

Yes, they did.

Do you know any of them?

I know only four people. They were Nyah Lee, Poe T'Thay and Poe T'Thay's father. I did not know the other person's name.

Where did the Burma/Myanmar police take them to?

Now they are in Taw Ka Lay [Town].

What do they do there? Are they in prison or not?

I do not know [exactly] but they are in prison.

Were any KNU/KNLA Peace Council [KNU/KNLA-PC] co-workers included?

No, they are the people who asked other people [to kill my mother and brother]. After the incident happened, the police called the perpetrator to my house [to examine the scene and be questioned] and then we [I] served them rice [for breakfast]. They [the perpetrator] said that some people asked them four times to kill these three people [her mother, brother and herself]. [They also said,] *"They [the people who gave the order] told us to share the money that we got from [robbing] them between us."*

You said your head was injured or hit, so which hospital did you go?

I went to Ta Kreh hospital, then I had to go to Lu Pleh hospital and then I went to Hpa-an hospital. The first [two] hospitals did not dare to treat it before I had received an X-ray examination so police sent me to Hpa-an.

How many days did you stay in Hpa-an hospital?

I stayed there for only one day because it was the time of my mother's funeral service and I wanted to see her too. Therefore I requested [to the doctor] that I would come back to my house and receive treatment at Ka Kyon [hospital]. There was nobody in my house so I had to talk to my siblings on the phone and arrange my mother's funeral to be the best it could [under these circumstances]. I told my sister that if I was able to go back, I would see my mother again.

Were [you] present at your mother's funeral?

Yes, [I was] because I stayed just only a day in hospital.

Were your brother's funeral and your mother's funeral on the same day?

No, my brother's funeral was earlier because his body was decomposed so I did not see him again.

So you saw your mother again?

Yes, my mother [mother's body] also was decomposed and her body got a bad smell so we had to inject preservative.

Who stays in your house now?

My older brother and my nephew cooked breakfast this morning. They all went to the farm [in the day time] so there is no one at my house now.

I mean who are staying in your house now?

Only [one] brother stays in my house but he does not dare to sleep here at night time too. He just cooks the meal in the house.

Where is your brother's house?

[His house is] in the [censored for security] part of the village.

Is it far from here?

Yes, it is.

You said police arrested the killers, did they confiscate any materials [weapons] from the killers? You said they killed [using] materials like an axe [and] the wooden handle of an axe?

Yes, the police saw two guns. The killers took my axe and my knife. Then they cut my head by this axe that I used to cut firewood and the knife that I used for cutting fish. They could take mine because we did know expect that the killers would come [so we left the axe and knife out].

The two guns that police took from the killers: are the guns long or short?

Both are short.

Did you see them?

I saw them in a picture. I saw that another one that they shot [during the examination of the crime scene] was old.

You mean you saw that gun in pictures then you saw it [one gun] when the police brought it to your house, right?

Yes.

As you said the guns' owner was a KNU/KNLA Peace Council's soldier, right?

Yes.

Do you think Ah Pyu and Maw Khin Thaw who are village leaders have guns?

No, they do not have [guns].

They would get it [guns] from Nyah Lee who is a KNU/KNLA Peace Council [member], right?

Yes. He [Nyah Lee] had a gun by selling his land [for money]. When I heard he would buy a gun, I told him *"Kyaw Lee!! You do not have to fight [in a war], what will you use it for?"* He said he would use it for guarding [something] in the village. Actually he did not guard the village, he shot us [my mother and brother].

Is Nyah Lee your relative or brother?

No, he is not [family]. One day he got a serious ulcer so he came to my mother to treat it for him. Then my mother could not treat it anymore so my father looked for a *Thara* [traditional doctor] for him. He stayed in my house for three days and three nights so my parents had to look after him because his mother left him at my house and did not look after him. One of my older brothers was not well so my parents had to look after them both. Then my mother looked for another *Thara* and he [*Thara*] pieced this ulcer [with a needle] then he got better and he went back to his own house. Then he called my mom and dad 'his parents'.

It means he kept your parents as his parents. Later on, he killed your mother, right?

Yes,

You said Nyah Lee helped you [and your mother] look for a *Thara* to treat [the mother's] witchcraft and then he created conflict. So did any authority group or village leader warn your mother that the things she did [witchcraft] were not good and [that she should] stop doing it?

No

Did any authority tell your mother not to do witchcraft, [because] it is not good? Did they tell you that *Thara's* [any teacher practicing traditional medicine which could be confused with witchcraft] have to have a recommendation letter?

Yes, Kyaw Kye did [write] a recommendation letter once. They called three of us to the monastery for drinking promissory [water]. If we did a bad thing, the promissory water would kill us three days after we drank it. Before we drank it, we had to curse [promise] to ourselves that, *"If I expect [plan] to do bad things to other people, may I die after drinking this water"* three times. I did [said] it only twice, the last [third] time I said, *"If I expect [plan] to do bad things to other people, after I die may I not become human again"*. Then I threw that cup behind me. Three days after we drank this water, he [Nyah Lee] hurried to ask my cousin about us, *"Are any of that family's members still walking?"* The man that he asked replied that *"Why not? They are walking around and looking for their cows and buffalos"*. He clarified whether we were dead or not.

Who asked this?

Nyah Lee.

Do you have any agreement letters [about drinking promissory water]?

Yes, the agreement letter was made by P'Doh P--- Kyaw Kyee. He did it in the monastery with the *Thara* and asked for them [villager leaders] to sign this agreement letter. P' Doh P--- gave them ten days [after which] they should be present and have signed this agreement letter but they did not do it.

What information was written in the agreement letter?

People told me that the letter represented [an agreement] that there would be no problems to you [us] anymore. I did not remember all the words they said; P' Doh P--- will remember it all. They would like to say [in the letter] that there will be no danger or worries for us after we drink the promissory water.

Did they write that other people do not have to say bad things to you anymore, right?

Yes. I do not remember all information in the recommendation letter but I still have it now. If you do not remember all of the information it is fine because this agreement letter is about the case that people suspected your [my] mother of practicing witchcraft. Therefore the issue in the letter would be regarding this issue [of the interview]. I think P'Doh P--- adjudicated over this conflict. I think he is KNU [Karen National Union].

He did this agreement letter [to promise that] this conflict would not happen again but the conflict still continued until your mother [and brother] were murdered. The agreement letter was made by KNU but it could not stop the conflict, so how do you feel? What do you want responsible people to do for you [now]?

I do not know what to do because I am really in fear and I do not dare to report this case or go [to the police office]. My cousin had done all of this. I think it is perfect that my cousin reported this case to the authority.

People returned some money or jewellery [that was stolen] to you, right?

Yes.

How much money did they return to you? Did they give you the entire amount of money [that had been stolen]?

I do not know yet because all of it is in the hands [of the police] and they did not give me [it] yet. They said they would give me [part of the money and gold] next [month], the 5th [Burmese month], and then they would give me [the remaining money and gold] after they had counted it again.

Police arrested the killers after the incident then took them [to the police office], right?

Yes, they took them.

Regarding guns, did the police find them on the same day [as the incident]?

Ummm, the police found the guns later.

Did the killers hide the guns?

Yes, I heard that they did that.

Did they leave the guns with someone or did they hide them?

They hid the guns. I heard they hid them in a palm tree.

Did police arrest all the killers?

Yes.

Police found out that they hid the guns in a palm tree because the police took the killers [and requested that the killers] take them to the place where they [guns] were hidden, right?

Yes. His [Nyah Lee's] son and his son's friend showed the police. It happened like this because they could not handle [torturing or the potential for torturing by police] so he asked his father and then he showed the police [where he had hidden the guns].

So no one knew the place he hid the guns, right?

Yes.

Where did the police find your gold and money from the killers [that they had stolen]?

They got it in Khee village.

Who lived in Khee village?

Nyah Lee's commander [his leader] Tho Mah. The person who returned the gold and money was the [KNU/KNLA-PC] Battalion Commander [Tho Mah].

So the money and gold was not [kept] with the perpetrators, right?

Actually the robbers shared the money between themselves, but then they [Battalion Commander] confiscated that money and gold from them.

So, the robbers shared the information [about their robbery] to their KNU/KNLA-PC Battalion Commander [Tho Mah], then their [army] general took the money and gold from them?

Yes

I heard KNU/KNLA-PC was unhappy with the police for arresting their soldiers. They said their soldiers were not involved in that incident. Did you hear that?

Yes, I did.

What did you get [hear]?

I heard they [KNU/KNLA PC] would take their soldiers [back] from [the prison].

Regarding whether their soldiers did that thing [killing and robbery], do you think their leaders know it [the truth]?

I do not know if they know it or not.

You said the police recovered your money and gold from [Battalion Commander] Maw Neh¹⁴² Tho Mah, right?

Yes, he showed the materials [money and gold] to the police on that day.

Do you think their [his] soldiers [the perpetrators] informed him about the place where they kept that [gold and money] after the incident?

I do not know.

Do you think the soldiers took it [money and gold] directly to them [Battalion Commander from KNU/KNLA PC]?

I do [not] know anything about that because police took those robbers and asked them to show them where that [gold and money] was. Then police called us to go and check the gold. They did not tell me anything so I did not know [about] it.

Regarding the murder case of your mother and your brother, police have arrested the perpetrators so what do you want the authority people or groups or leaders to do to compensate for the lives lost? What do you want them to arrange for you?

I do not know how to do [that e.g. seek legal reparations]. My cousin can do it. I did not dare to go and talk to the court.

I mean you, not your cousin. How much [money] do you want for their life compensation? Or will you just let this case end here? Or do you want any leaders or groups to arrange something [support] for you?

Yes, I would like to ask [for life compensation/support] because there are two people [who have been killed]. It hurts my heart so I would like to ask [leaders] to do something.

What do you want?

I do not know.

If you want [something] or [if you] ask the authority leader or [community] group to do it for you they would do it. I mean, will you ask them or not?

Yes, I want to ask them to do it for me regarding how much [I should request] for the life compensation.

¹⁴² *Maw Neh* is a P'Wo Karen title used to describe someone who took up monkhood for a short period of time.

How much do you want for one life?

I do not know.

If you do not know it is fine because I am just asking you in general. I just want to know if you want people in authority to do something for you or not. Do you go back [to stay] at your house?

No. I go back there every day but I do not dare to stay there at night time.

Have you seen your mother and your brother's graves?

I have seen my mother's grave but I have not seen my brother's grave.

Have you finished doing a worship program for them yet?

No.

Regarding to this case, you want leaders to resolve it for you. How do other villagers feel or think regarding your mother and brother's murder case? I mean are there any people who were happy or unhappy?

Yes, some people are happy but a lot of people were unhappy.

Did you see anything happen after your mother passed away?

Yes, one villager who is Mu Q---'s granddaughter got seriously ill when she lived in Thailand. Then people sent her back to the village. There were a lot of woman in R--- village, S--- village, T--- village and Taw B--- village who were seriously ill with shock [trauma] after my mother passed away.

Regarding these [women who were] affected by the serious illness in the past, did they suspect that your mother had practiced witchcraft on them?

Yes. All illness that happened in the village, they blamed my mother [and said] that my mother did it to them by using witchcraft. Even people who died by suicide by hanging, they said my mother did it. Now my cousin's husband has got cancer and now he is in the positive [cancer] stage in hospital. They treated it [in the village] by traditional beliefs a lot in the rainy season but when they went to the hospital, it was cancer.

So the current illnesses that happen in your village now are not [blamed on] your mother [doing witchcraft], right?

There are four people who have illness now, some are old people and some are elderly single ladies. Some of them migrated to Thailand and I heard they would come back to the village.

If your mother was still alive, they would blame your mother. Now your mother passed away so it is not related to your mother anymore.

Yes.

I have gotten to know many things about this case from you this morning as you are a witness by seeing this incident. Do you still have something more to add?

Yes. I want to meet with Ah Say and drink promissory [water] with them because they talked about me [about practicing witchcraft] so it makes me unhappy. Some of them are in Bangkok now.

What did they tell [blame] you?

They said my mother had the palm [of her hand] like an evil spirit monster and used this evil power to make money for her livelihood. They are in Bangkok, Nya Thay village and Taw Plaw village.

Did your mother have the palm [of her hand] like an evil spirit monster? Have you ever seen it?

No, she did not have it. I have never seen it. I dare to drink promissory or any spirit water to prove that I am telling the truth.

Who said that she had it [the palm of her hand like an evil spirit monster]?

They are Ah Pyu, Nya Lee, Maw Khay Thaw and Maw Kye Myint.

Did they see it or did they just suspect your mother?

I do not know. You have to ask them.

I think if your mother had it, you would have seen it too.

My mother gave all the money and gold to me so if she had it. I would have seen it [on her hand]. I asked my older siblings about it but they also had never seen it.

You have never seen it so I think your mother did not have it. Do you have anything to add more?

No

Thank you so much for giving me your time for the interview this morning. Thank you so much.

Source #155

Log #	16-94-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	

Interview Date: October 12th 2016

Kyaw,¹⁴³ what is your name?

People call me Saw UU---.

Are you Karen, Thai or P'oe [Karen]?

I am Karen.

S'gaw Karen right?

Yes

What is your religion?

In the past I was Buddhist. I got married to my wife who is Baptist [Christian] then I became a Baptist [Christian].

What work do you do for your livelihood?

I work on the hill farm for my livelihood.

Do you have family?

Yes, I do.

How old is your oldest child?

26 years old. Another one is 19 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

4 years old.

Kyaw, could you please tell me the situation of your village?

In the past, people in my village worked on hill farms and betel leaf plantations. We sometimes sold [betel leaf] down [town]. Later on, the fighting happened [in our village]. As we are villagers, we could not do anything [to stop this fighting]. Therefore, people told us that we could not stay in our village and we had to flee.

Who told you [to flee]?

The armed actors who stayed in our area.

What armed group are they?

¹⁴³ *Kyaw* is a S'gaw Karen term used to express respect when talking to a male or similar or older age. Although it translates as 'brother' it does not imply a familial relationship.

They are only the *Hkoh Hper Baw* [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] armed group.

Who is their commander?

People call him Maung So. He has a lower rank

How many households are there in your village?

In total including widows' and orphans' houses, there are #--- [censored for security] households.

What village tract and Township?

Meh Proo village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Brigade #7 [Hpa-an District]. They [DKBA soldiers] told us, "*Now the enemy is going to come [attack us] and the fighting will happen if we [DKBA soldiers] meet [the other armed groups] and then it will cause injury to you so move to the other side of the river*". After we ate rice [had breakfast], they told us to cross the river so we crossed.

What time did you cross? In the morning, afternoon or evening?

At first, we did not know if we had to cross [the river] or not so we carried our belongings to the river source. We were travelling around there til we did not know where to go because at that time we were in the state of shock. Then another group of villagers crossed the river first. People [DKBA] told us we had to cross because we could not stay here [on the river bank] yet. Then we crossed.

I travelled around [fled from place to place] for more than a month. I think it will be around a month and 12 days because I did not note it down. All [VV---] villagers have arrived here [to the village where people displaced to] now. We have not faced food shortages here because our leaders managed [distributed] enough food for us. There are some of our other [livelihood] needs [which are lacking] but [our leaders] do not have to distribute to us [any other supplies] because they also have many difficulties with managing everything for us. I feel sorry for my leaders who are managing [everything for us] so it [food supplies] is enough for our livelihood now.

Regarding the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA] who told you to flee, have they done anything for you [to help you]?

They could not do anything for us.

Who do they fight with?

They [DKBA] told us that the Border Guard Force [BGF] and Tatmadaw army would come so we had to flee.

So DKBA fought with the Tatmadaw army right?

Yes. They told us we could not stay in the village so we fled. We also did not dare to stay because we are with some women and children.

Did the fighting happen anytime in the area around your village in the past?

No, it did not.

Do the children in your village go to school?

Yes, there are a lot of VV--- students, around 30 students. The students cannot go to school now.

So they have not gone to school for more than one month right?

Yes, they have not gone to school since we started fleeing [to another area]. Now the [VV--- school] teachers are going to meet with Pu [leader] at KNLA headquarters in order for the students to be able to go to school. They [the villagers] are repairing the old school [in Klaw Teh Hta village] then they will restart the school when the teachers come back.

Were there any VV--- villagers who fled to Kaw Taw [Myaing Gyi Ngu Town]?

There are ten families who went there.

When they were going [fleeing] there, did they receive any support?

They said that people told them the relief would come for us and pick us up [to transport the villagers to Myaing Gyi Ngu]. Therefore, they went [to Myaing Gyi Ngu]. The group of villagers that I was with were really in fear so we fled to the mountain [in the jungle]. When we returned to the village, they had already left [to Myaing Gyi Ngu] by boats so we were left [behind]. We could not do anything. Then local people told us to come here [to Klaw Teh Hta village] so we came [to Klaw Teh Hta village]. Then the responsible leaders arranged rations for us.

Who are the leaders? Are they BGF, DKBA or KNU [Karen National Union]?

They are Brigade #5 [Hpapun] leaders and KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] headquarter leaders.

So they are Karen, right?

Yes, they are all Karen National Union [KNU] leaders. We brought our goats and chickens with us but we left our other [belongings and animals] that we could not bring here yet. We will ask permission to go back to get our other belongings.

Who will you ask permission from?

From the responsible leader here [in the area they displaced to].

KNU, right?

Yes

Do you dare to go back?

They told us to wait and see [the situation]. We can go back when they tell us we can go but we cannot go back if they tell us that we cannot go. After fleeing, nothing happened [in our village] then they told us we could go back so we [some villagers] went back to the village.

Are the DKBA in VV--- village?

Now? I do not know if they are or not because I have not gone back [to my village] at all yet.

What did the people who went back say?

Yes, yesterday they [DKBA] were [in VV--- village].

Did they [DKBA] tell them [villagers] something?

They did not say anything, they [only] said, *"If you need some important things [from your village], you can come back and take it"*. In the [recent] past [prior to and after villagers fled], they [DKBA] planted landmines on the hill at that part of the village.

So they [landmines] were not close to your farms right?

Yes, it was not close to our farms. Yesterday they [DKBA] asked the village head [to meet them], people who went back [to the village] said [DKBA] told them that we could go to [work on] our hill farms. There was no danger [from landmines] along the way [to our hill farms]. However, even if there is no danger, we do not dare to go [to our farms] because we are really in fear. I cannot describe how afraid we are. They did not forbid us to flee. They said, *"It is up to you, if you are not comfortable to stay then you can go [flee] because if the enemy comes and the fighting happens and it will cause difficulty [to villagers]"*. Therefore, we fled. In the past, the villagers stored their paddy for themselves but I do not know how much they have [brought with them]. Some people brought three big tins of rice, some people brought four big tins of rice, some people brought ten big tins of rice and some people brought five big tins of rice with them [when they fled]. We brought as much paddy [rice] with us as we could.

Is there some food [paddy] left in your village?

No, [the leaders] gave us permission to go back to our village so we went back to our village and brought all of our [paddy rice] with us. The distance between Brigade #5 [Hpapun District] and VV--- village is only one river [wide].

So [these two villages] are opposite to each other, right?

Yes, if we cross the river then the other side of the river is VV--- village. Villagers were doing betel nut plantations, betel leaf plantations and worked on hill farms.

Do villagers make enough food for themselves each year?

No, not enough. [If we do not get enough food] then we have to buy food [rice] from K'Ma Moh [Town]. There are some villagers who get enough food [paddy] but there are more villagers who do not get enough food [paddy].

How much did you buy [paddy] for from K'Ma Moh?

For some rice we had to pay fifteen thousand [15,000] kyat [US\$11.04]¹⁴⁴ per sack, some were eighteen thousand [18,000] kyat per sack and some were twenty thousand [20,000] kyat [US\$14.72] per sack. [For] good [quality] rice, the full sack of rice and the rice that was not a full sack were different prices.

How much did you sell betel nut leaf for, per tonne?

The betel nut leaf had different prices, sometimes we could sell it for twelve thousand [12,000] kyat [US\$8.83] per tonne, sometimes thirteen thousand [13,000] kyat [US\$9.56] per tonne and sometimes a thousand kyat [US\$0.74] per tonne.

So the highest price was thirteen thousand [13,000] kyat [US\$9.56], right?

Um...in this year [2016] it was up to fifteen thousand kyat [15,000] per tonne [US\$11.04] once.

So [when you were in your village] you always went to K'Ma Moh [Town] to sell [betel nut leaf]?

Yes, we did in the past. We had to ask permission from the BGF to buy rice. If they told us [we could buy only] one or two sacks of rice then we had to buy rice according to the number that they limited us to. They said, "*We will confiscate yours [rice] if [you bought] more than that*". BGF's checkpoints are, one at Mah Eh Htee Nee, one at Yah Po Hta and one at Meh Say.

What battalions are they [at the checkpoints] and which brigade are they in?

Meh Say [checkpoint] is in Brigade #5 [Hpapun] and the others [Mah Eh Htee Nee and Yah Po Hta] are on the other side of the river in Brigade #7 [Hpa-an].

Do you know the leader or the person in charge of the checkpoints?

They rotate once per month so I do not know it.

You had to cross three checkpoints [when you were going to get rice]?

Yes, [we had to cross] three checkpoints. One more checkpoint [a fourth checkpoint] is at Kaw Taw [Town].

Regarding these [checkpoints], do they cause any problems to the civilians?

Last time, they asked for tax for the sacks of rice.

How much did they ask?

They asked five thousand kyat [US\$3.68] per sack of rice. One boat can carry only two

¹⁴⁴ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 21st April 2017 official market rate of 1360 kyat to US \$1.

sacks of rice. If [we carried] three sacks, they [BGF] took [confiscated the additional rice].

So if [you took] more than two to three, they took [your rice]?

Yes, [if they limited us to take] only two sacks of rice then [we had to take] only two.

Why did they do something like that? What do you think?

I do not know why they did [something like this]. They did not allow us to take [more sacks of rice] so we did not dare to do it. If they told us to do it [carry more sacks of rice] and then we would carry [more]. If they told us not to carry [more than two] then we did not dare to carry [any more] because we do not know anything [any information relating to their order]. For a boat without any materials on it and only two or three people on it, [BGF asked] five hundred kyat [US\$0.37] [per boat]. If there is a boat full of betel nut leaves, some [BGF at checkpoints asked] for two thousand kyat [US\$1.47] and some [asked] one thousand kyat [US\$0.74]. Sometimes if the boat did not have passengers on it [only goods], we begged [them to not tax it] and they accepted it. Some were strict but some were weak [not strict] and allowed us to go [without paying]. Some [BGF] asked five hundred kyat per boat [US\$0.37].

There are fifty three households [in my village]. Ten households fled there [to Kaw Taw Town] so there are thirty three households or more than thirty households left here [forty three households]. We stay together and eat together.

Now, do you stay in your own living place [house]?

When we first arrived here, we did not have our houses so we had to stay in other peoples' houses. The house owners allowed us to stay with them but our children were crying and making noises so we felt *anha*¹⁴⁵ to them. Even if it [the noises] made them feel uncomfortable, they did not dare to tell us so we had to build our houses [to avoid this discomfort]. We had to borrow villagers' thatch [to build our houses]. We asked them to sell it to us but they did not sell it. They told us "*Cut it,*" [take it for free] so we cut [took] it.

As you have been displaced like this, are there any [health] care [services] for the children?

Umm...some children are not feeling well. [Healthcare for us] is from the KNU because one KNU's medical officer is based here. He helps us as well as he can. We cannot do anything if he does not have [some medicine that he has to use it here].

Does the medical officer ask you for money for health care?

No, he does not. The medical officer is kind. He said "*Do not be anha!! You can come and take [the medicine anytime] when you need it*". [We] help each other when we are in difficulty.

You said you were working on hill farms, what do you think about the condition of your paddy now?

¹⁴⁵ *Anha* is Burmese word meaning hesitancy, embarrassment or a fear of offending another person in a social situation.

I have not gone to the hill farm for more than a month so mice, pigs and many other insects will have eaten and destroyed the vegetables, cassava roots and paddy because we have not cut the grass. When I went back to my hill farm and checked my cassava last time, I could not harvest any cassava root. Now the paddy is producing seeds [rice] and it is the time that the paddy will turn yellow [ready for harvest] but there are a lot of [insects] attacking it. We do not dare to go back until our leaders allow us to go back. If they tell us we can go then we will go back. If we cannot go back, I worry that we will not have rice to eat this year. Hopefully, we will be brave enough to go back. I do not know the date that we can go back but if the people [leaders] tell us to go back and then we will. Hopefully, we will be brave enough to return and stay in our village and stay with our betel nut leaf plantation. We desire it [betel nut leaf] and we can see it turns yellow but I cannot do anything. The cats and dogs [also] do not have food to eat. When I went back [to the village], the cats and dogs were snoring and they were getting thinner because there are is no one to give them food.

How about buffalos and cows?

We do not have cows but we have buffalos. People [DKBA] told us it was not safe to keep our buffalos here [in the village] and we had to bring them the other side of the river. Therefore, we brought all of our buffalos [across] today.

How did you get out from [your village] and flee here [Klaw Teh Hta village]? Can you tell me step by step please?

When we heard Tatmadaw attacked at the vehicle road, we still stayed in [our village] there. When we heard people [DKBA] say that Tatmadaw took over [the area around the vehicle road] then we did not stay in our area [village] anymore. Therefore, we fled and carried [our belongings] to the hill. Then people [DKBA] told us to come down [to the village] [so] then we came back. Again, people [DKBA] told us [the Tatmadaw] attacked [them] so we fled and carried [our belongings] to the hill [again]. We stayed there for a few days then people [leaders] found a way for us to go to the western area [Kaw Taw Town]. [They said] people [from Kaw Taw Town] would come and pick us up, and then villagers who stayed in village could follow them [to Kaw Taw Town]. We were at the river source so we did not come back to the village on time and then there was no boat for us because they came to pick up [people by boat] only once that day. Then we went back onto the hill. [DKBA] soldiers and leaders in the village told us that *"you will not [be safe] to stay there and you have to go to the other side of the river. If you stay here, we cannot do anything [it is out of our responsibility] if something [fighting] happens"*. Then we talked with village tract leaders [about fleeing across the river] and then [we] came [here].

So you have a village tract leader in you village, right?

Yes, we have a village tract leader and village head. At first, we did not dare to return [to our village]. It takes two hours to go back to our village by motorcycle [and boat] and then we have to cross checkpoints. It takes three hours when it is flooding [in the rainy season]. It takes more than two hours in the dry season. If we are not disturbed [delayed] at the checkpoints, it will take less than one hour or half an hour but we are disturbed [delayed] by the checkpoints so it takes more time.

Regarding rations, they [leaders] told us, *"If you do not have food, come and take it. Do not be 'anha'. If you still have it [food], just tell us that you have it"*. Now we are not in our area

so we have to stay [without working] and eat. Actually, I want to do some work but it is not our area so I cannot do anything. KNU looks after us and arranges rations for us. They look after us. My children are staying with me now. My two children have stayed in the western area since before the fighting happened. My younger child studies there so my older child has to stay with him/her.

Do they stay at their own house?

No, they stay at their aunt's house. Her/his younger sibling studies there so he/she has to stay with [look after] her/him. He/she studies at the Burma/Myanmar government school.

What grade is he/she in?

Grade 4.

How much does it [the school fee] cost?

I do not know yet because this is the very first year that he/she studies at [this school]. In the past, he/she studied at P'Naw Kleh Klaw village then he/she did not like to study there so he/she changed to the school in the western area.

Where is the P'Naw Kleh Klaw [village]?

It is located in one part of Kray Hta village, P'Naw Kleh Klaw and Meh T'Ree. [This school] is supported by *Kaw Lah Wah* [foreign support from individuals or an organisation].

Do you have any other things to tell me that I have not asked you yet?

I will be happy if we are able to go back and stay in our house [village]. Now we have to stay [in another area], we eat food that our leaders find for us and some day they will also have their [other] jobs to do [so we cannot rely on them for a long time]. Therefore, we feel sorry for our leaders. It will be of some help to our leaders if we can go back and work on our hill farms. Now they have to give us food. Actually we do not want to eat [their food] but we are in difficulty and we cannot bear it [then we have to have the food from them]. If possible, we want to go back [to our village]. When we look at our paddy, we want to get our harvest; our paddy fields are not clean [they are overgrown with weeds] but we cannot do anything.

When you are in this area, have you heard about any projects that the Burma/Myanmar government to do?

I heard [about a proposed] dam.

Is [the place where they will construct] the dam close to the area where you live?

Yes, it is close. If you go down by boat, it takes around 30 minutes.

For example, if the dam is constructed will the flooding cover all of this area?

[The flooding will] cover all of this [area].

Regarding this dam construction project, what is your opinion? Should it happen or

not?

Ummm...we cannot live if the dam happens. We do not know where to run [if the village is flooded] and we cannot live [survive].

Therefore, what is your opinion and what do you hope will happen?

I hope [the dam construction project] will not happen. If this [project] happens, a large number [of people] will be in trouble and die.

Because there are a lot of ways for [civilians] to work for their livelihood in that area, [right]?

Yes, some families get one hundred thousand kyat [working on this area] per year. After we harvest all the trees, some family get two hundred thousand [200,000 kyat]. This year a lot of people have planted teak tree plantations. People in this area do not work another job, they are working on hill farms, doing betel nut plantations and betel nut leaf plantations so they plant plenty of [paddy, betel nut and betel nut leaf] for each [member] of their family. If they do not have money, they collect betel nut and betel nut leaf [to sell]. They also farm cardamom plantations.

Oh, there are cardamom plantations too. That's why you [get the fruits and leaves] from all of these [plantations] to sell every year?

[Yes, we get it] every year. This year, there are a lot people in the village who started planting yam plantations. They will get a lot of money if they sell it [yam]. We cannot do anything [make money from plantations] if we cannot sell it.

How much do you sell chicken for per viss?

We sell [chicken for] five thousand kyat per viss.

How much do you sell pork for per viss?

[We sell pork for] three thousand kyat [per viss]. We could not bring all of this [livestock] when we started fleeing.

Did they [armed group] eat any of villagers' [animals]?

Yes. In honesty, [I tell you,] they ate two [goats] last time.

Did they buy these [from villagers]?

No, they did not. They can eat these [goats] because we are also busy [fleeing] and I think we are the same Karen [ethnic group]. Therefore, it is fine [we allow them to eat our goats].

They ate two [goats] so how many [viss did the goats weigh]?

One was six viss and the another one was seven viss. One viss of goat meat is ten thousand kyat [10,000].

Are these chickens, pigs or goats?

Goats

Whose goats are these?

A female villager's goats. They [armed group] ate her two goats. The person who ate her goats is her cousin [in an armed group]. She [the female villager] lives in another village but she keeps her goats with her grandma [in this village]. They [the armed group] saw the others [animals] but they did not eat them.

How many villages are there?

Which part? In Brigade #5 [Hpapun District] or Brigade #7 [Hpa-an District]?

In the part of Brigade #7.

There is Waw Raw village, T' Maw Poe village, Bler Ghaw village, Htee Htaw Kyoe village, Khaw Htee Per village, Htee Poe Mu Naw village, Meh Pru Khee village, Meh Pru Hta village and Pah Doo Poo village [in this part of Brigade #7].

So all of those people [who are from these villages] had to flee, right?

Yes, they all had to flee.

Did they flee to here [Klaw Teh Hta village] or to another part of [Brigade #7] area?

Amm... [we] did not dare to flee to another side [to the Border side].

So where did they flee to?

They just fled to here [Klaw Teh Hta village, Hpapun District]. There were some people fleeing to another part too.

Where did they flee?

They fled to [the area] beside Thoo Mweh Nee [on the Thai/Burma border]. They could not cross it [the border] so they returned back to here.

You stay in this area so have you seen any organisation providing any donations?

Yes, two weeks ago, a Tharamu [teacher] donated fifty thousand kyat [50,000] per family. She had resettled to a foreign country. Another one is a Baw Th' Raw villager, she donated forty thousand kyat per family. [Therefore, donations happened] two times. Then another one donated six thousand kyat [6,000] per villager today.

Where are they from?

[The group that] came together with you [researcher]. They are from the eastern part [Thailand].

Have they gone back yet [to Thailand]?

Not yet, they will go back tomorrow but the other people who gave donations in the past [two weeks] went back.

Have they given a donation yet?

Today they gave [a donation to] some families; most of families got it. The money that we got, we use it for food [buying rations] because we cannot do any other thing [job]. We just stay and eat [without doing any job] so we do not have money. We buy anything that we need. We had one meeting last time [on an unspecified date], and one yesterday and we will have meeting today again. One father or mother per household has to come to the meeting today. The [meetings have therefore happened] three times already.

Do you know who the leaders of these meetings are?

No. As I mentioned [above], we have to work and serve our wife and children. Therefore, if it is possible we want to go home, work on our hill farms and do the jobs that we used to do in the past for our life [livelihoods] and for serving [supporting] our wives and children. We will be happy if we can go back [to our village]. We cannot go home [at the present time] but we cannot do anything.

What is your dream for the future?

We [I] dream for good things, that we will be able to go back [to our village] and work. We [I] dream to see each other with kindness and love. We do not like devils [bad situations] because we cannot bear it [these bad situations] anymore.

If your do not have anything [more to tell me], then thank you so much.

Thank you.

Source #156

Log #	16-94-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District

Full Text

Date Received: November 4th 2016

1. These photos were taken on October 2nd 2016 when I [KHRG researcher] arrived in A--- village, Meh Pru village tract, Lu Pleh [Hlaingbwe] Township, Hpa-an District and the photos are of villagers who must flee to other places because of the fighting between the Border Guard Force [BGF] and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA], some of them fled to B--- village and some fled to Kaw Taw [Myaing Gyi Ngu Town]. There was only one villager left in the village to breed pigs and chickens. The DKBA [forces] in the village was led by Pu K' Kyer.
2. This photo was taken on October 12th 2016 in C--- village, Meh Proo village tract, Lu

Pleh Township, Hpa-an District. This photo was taken on the boat at C--- village but villagers have not been living in their village since the fighting broke out between the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA] and the Border Guard Force [BGF in September]. Some villagers fled to D---, some of them fled to B--- and some fled to E--- in Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Brigade 5 [Hpa-an District]. When I [KHRG researcher] rode a boat to return [back to my home] on October 13th 2016, at 11:20 AM, at C--- village the DKBA shot at [around] the boat more than twenty times. They said that they shot the [my] boat because I did not communicate with them nor supply any information to them [regarding I will come at this place].

3. I took these photos on October 12th 2016 when I [KHRG researcher] arrived at D--- village, Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township. These photos show F--- villagers who [originally] lived in Meh Pru village tract, Lu Pleh Township, Hpa-an District but they had to flee to [E--- village] and they were building up their temporary huts [shelters]. They had to flee and now stay in E--- village because of the fighting between the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA] and the Border Guard Force [BGF], [moreover] the DKBA stayed in [their village] E--- village and then the Tatmadaw army or BGF came to attack them [DKBA] therefore they [civilians] had to leave their own village.
4. This photo was taken on October 10th 2016 when I [KHRG researcher] arrived at E--- village, Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township and these photos show F--- [village] students who were not able to go to school because [the school] F--- school has been closed since the fighting began between the Border Guard Force [BGF] and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA] in Brigade #7 [in September] and came close to their village. Then the DKBA told the villagers in F--- that *"If you cannot stay in the village during the fighting, you have to move to another place"*. Therefore, to date the school has not been able to open. She [student] is fourteen years old. She helped her family [parents] by making thrashed shingle for the [hut's] roof as she could not go to school. She helped her parents with housework as much as she could.
5. This photo was taken on October 12th 2016 when I [KHRG researcher] stayed in E--- village, Htee Th' Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township and met with the displaced F--- villagers who fled to E--- village. This photo shows them making thatched shingle for their huts' [temporary shelters] roof when they temporary stayed in this area. The basic issue [why they were placed people] is just because of the [fighting] between Democratic Buddhist Army [DKBA] and Border Guard Force [BGF], and [in BGF] there were included with Tatmadaw.
6. I took this photo on October 13th 2016 when I [KHRG researcher] stayed in E--- village and this photo shows villagers of F--- village, Meh Pru village tract, Lu Pleh Township who were displaced to Htee Th' Daw Hta village tract, Brigade #5 because of the fighting between the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA] and the Border Guard Force [BGF] [included with Tatmadaw]. They were afraid that artilleries would explode and small guns would be fired in their village. Therefore they left their village with their animals so that their animals would also not step on landmines.

Source #157

Log #

16-94-S1

Title / type of report	Situation Update
Publishing Information	Previously published ¹⁴⁶ in June 2017: http://khrq.org/2017/06/16-94-s1/hpapun-situation-update-bu-tho-township-september-november-2016
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>Introduction This Bu Tho Township Situation Update report was collected between September and November 5th 2016. This Situation Update includes issues concerning civilians' livelihoods, drugs, illegal logging, health, education and landmines.</p> <p>Civilians' livelihood Civilians in Bu Tho Township mainly work on hill farms for their livelihoods. When civilians plant paddy, various animals such as mice/rats, caterpillars and other tiny indiscernible insects attack their paddies. Animals have been attacking civilians' paddy since 2015 until now, 2016, and this problem is still happening in every township.</p> <p>Drugs In the period between 2000 and 2010, we did not see many [people using or selling] drugs [yaba and kratom] and we heard drugs were only used among Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA] and Tatmadaw [soldiers]. After the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between Karen National Union [KNU] and Burma/Myanmar government, people using and selling drugs has increased because people in rural areas are now also using and selling drugs.</p> <p>People planting kratom [drug used as an opium substitute] has increased since 2015. Therefore, the KNU ordered their police and the Karen Nation Liberation Army [KNLA] to go around and eradicate kratom plants. Between June and July 2016, KNU police and some KNLA soldiers in Bu Tho Township cooperated to destroy the kratom plants. KNU police and KNLA soldiers arrested some people [who planted kratom] in E--- village and F--- village, but I did not get their names. In July 2016, KNLA Battalion #102, Company #4, who patrolled in G--- area, also arrested some people [who planted kratom] and they took them to Bu Tho Township [KNU] police station. I report these drug issues exactly as they have happened in the past three months.</p> <p>Illegal Logging Logging and selling logs is prohibited by the Karen National Union [KNU] in the areas under their control. In 2016, there were some people conducting logging illegally in A--- and -B--- areas beside the Khoh Lo Klo [Salween] River, Bu Ah Der village tract. Bu Tho Township Forestry Department administrator and Karen National Defence Organisation [KNDO] officer from Bu Ah Der village tract had a meeting on September 8th 2016 and they decided to patrol and arrest those people [who were logging illegally]. Therefore, on September 12th 2016, at 7 am they patrolled the area between A--- area and B--- area. The KNU police and KNDO arrested three illegal logging conductors, but one of them died in the process. The KNDO or KNU police [who were patrolling together] accidentally killed him when he and the other loggers were fleeing the KNDO's warning shots. His name [the man who was shot] was Hpu Wah Hkoh. He was over 40 years old and he lived in C--- [refugee] camp. The</p>	

¹⁴⁶ This report was initially categorized during KHRG's analysis as unpublished. It has since been published.

other two illegal loggers, who were arrested, one of their names is Hpah H--- and I do not know the other's name, but all of them live in C--- [refugee] camp. They know the KNU's law, which forbids logging and selling logs, but they conducted logging in secret. As a result, the KNU Forestry Department administrator arrested them and sent them to Bu Tho Township office [police station]. [Bu Tho] Township Forestry Department administrator, some of [Bu Tho] Township's officials, Karen Woman Organisation [KWO leaders], and [C--- refugee] camp leaders settled this case on October 8th 2016. They settled this case according to KNU's law for people who log illegally. Regarding the case of the man who was accidentally killed by [KNDO or KNU police], they [KNDO or KNU] paid 15,000 baht [\$435.92 USD]¹⁴⁷ compensation to the dead man's family for his funeral.

Education

Regarding education in Bu Tho Township, no special things happened¹⁴⁸ between September and November. The only thing that happened in Baw Th' Raw village, Hpa-an Township [in the period between September and November] is that students did not dare to study in the village. They had to flee to D--- village, Htee Th' Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township because of fighting between Border Guard Force [BGF] and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA]. Villagers repaired the school [in D--- village] in order for the students [from Baw Th' Raw village] to study. They could not study in this school yet, but they will start to study there after they finish the school's roof and walls.

Health

Regarding health during three months [in Bu Tho Township] between September and November 2016, Emergency Relief Committee gave free medicine to the villagers in D--- village, Htee Th' Daw Hta village tract on October 13th 2016. They [Emergency Relief Committee] also gave [free medicine to the villagers] in F--- area, Bu Ah Der village tract.

Landmines

Between September and November, I did not receive any special news [about landmines] in Bu Tho Township. I only received news in October 2016 that a Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA] Battalion Commander stepped on an old landmine in his area, which was planted by his friend. I do not know if his left or right leg was injured, but I know that he has already been discharged from the hospital.

Conclusion

Regarding this three months Situation Update between September and November 2016, I would like to report that villagers responded [with agency] to many of their problems that they faced using their traditional beliefs. When insects attacked the villagers' rice, the [Bu Tho] Township officers distributed insecticide to them [farmers] to kill the insects. When [villagers] conducted logging illegally, they were punished [by the KNU Forestry Department administration leaders]. Regarding [KNU] forestry department's law, they [loggers] had to stay in prison for a month and had to pay five hundred baht [US \$14.64]. This is not too heavy a punishment for the culprits.

Civilians mainly work on hill farms and plains farms for their livelihoods. There are no other business opportunities except working on cardamom, durian, dog fruit, sesame and peanut

¹⁴⁷ All conversion estimates for the baht in this report are based on the 24th of May 2017 official market rate of 34.41 baht to US \$1.

¹⁴⁸ This is a common Karen way of speaking to express that they have experienced the same difficulties for long periods of time.

plantations, and some of them sell betel leaves for their livelihoods. In regards to health, civilians who live close to Hpapun [Town], always have to pay money when they need medicine and when they need hospital treatment. They have to pay 3,000 kyats [US\$2.17]¹⁴⁹ for medicine per dosage and they have to pay 100,000 [US\$73.17] kyat for hospital services.

Source #158

Log #	16-95-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: November 4th 2016</p> <p>This photo was taken on October 14th 2016 at Si Pin K'Lay village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. It shows KNU checkpoints, where the KNU has been checking the motorcycle taxis that are going to sell, such as food and vegetables in the rural villages. This KNU checkpoint is mainly checking for security and drugs. It also shows a KNU tax collector at the checkpoint, who smashed the bottles of alcohol that civilians brought to sell in the rural villages.</p>	

Source #159

Log #	16-103-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is Saw A---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I am 56 years old.</p> <p>What is your ethnicity?</p> <p>My ethnicity is Karen and I believe in Christianity.</p> <p>Do you believe in Karen Christianity or Catholic Christianity?</p> <p>I believe in Karen Christianity.</p> <p>Where do you live? Can you tell me your address?</p>	

¹⁴⁹ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 24th of May 2017 official market rate of 1377.37 kyat to US \$1.

What do you mean by address?

Which township is your village located in?

I live in Daw Pa Hkoh Township.

Which district is that in?

Taw Oo [Toungoo] District.

Where is your village?

I live in D---. In Burmese we call it 'C---.'

What do you do for a living?

I work on the plain farm and on the rubber plantation.

How many family members do you have?

I have nine family members because I have seven children. If you include the parents there are nine members.

What is the age of your eldest child?

My eldest child is 30 years old.

What is the age of your youngest child?

My youngest child is 12 years old.

How many households are there in your village?

There are [censored for security] households in my village.

What do villagers here do for their livelihoods?

They work on the hill farms and on the rubber plantations.

Is there any school in your village?

No, there is only a church.

Has any hospital been built in your village?

No. There is a clinic called Ko Pin village tract clinic.

Where was it built?

It was built in Ko Pin village.

Who built that clinic?

The clinic was built by villagers.

It was not built by the [Burma/Myanmar] government?

No, but the government transferred it to be their clinic after it was built.

There is no hospital in your village?

No, there is no hospital in our village.

What kinds of illnesses do villagers currently face?

Their main illnesses that villagers face are malaria and the flu.

Have any NGOs come to provide support after the ceasefire was signed?

Yes, they came and provided healthcare support but they did not also provide financial support.

Are they providing medical support?

Yes, they are.

What about education?

Some people came before but we do not have a proper school in our village.

You do not have any schools in your village?

No, we do not have any schools.

Where do children go to school?

They go to school in Kyauk Lo School also known as Ler Pler Doh School.

How many standards are taught in that school?

Up to ten standards are taught. It was upgraded to ten standards this year but in previous years only up to nine standards were taught.

Do you face any challenges regarding livelihoods?

Yes. In September 2016 the Tatmadaw artillery battalion confiscated our land.

Did this happen in 2016?

Yes. It happened in September 2016.

This month is August so are you sure that it happened in September 2016?

Ohh, I am so sorry. It happened on August 10th 2016. It started in the month that villagers were facing the land problems.

What kinds of problems did you face?

Do you mean the problems regarding the Tatmadaw?

Yes, the problems that you faced in 2016.

In 2016 the Tatmadaw troops confiscated the land and told the villagers that they were living on trespassed land. The villagers became very stressed and heartbroken. Currently, the villagers are attempting to meet with many groups to discuss how we can receive compensation and escape this stressful situation. We were encouraged and very happy after meeting with many groups.

Where does the Tatmadaw base their army camp?

At the present time the Ba Yin Naung troop is based there.

Where does Ba Yin Naung troop base their army camp?

They are Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #124, Ya Ka Tha [under the control of Ba Yin Naung battalion] Aye Min.

Who is Aye Min?

Aye Min is not the name of a person. Aye Min is the name of the telecommunication group. There is also a LIB base there with artillery and armed forces.

Where is this LIB based?

Their army camp is based in Thandauggyi [Town] and is known as Ba Yin Naung army camp. They recently put out a sign on which they wrote that around 1521 acres of land had been confiscated. After researching the 1521 acres of land, we found that this land was not located in the military reserved compound. This was land where villagers were working on their livelihoods outside of the villages. Although it was the resident's grandparents' land, it was confiscated. We were therefore considered to be land trespassers. The rubber plantations and other plantations that we were annually working on all have land grants. I have received information about the different types of land ownership such as land grants Po Sa #105 and Po Sa #7 that land owners have to complete in 2017. Therefore, the villagers will not be able to get land grants because they have prohibited the villagers from accessing [confiscated land from the villagers] or using the land for their benefit. If they [the Tatmadaw] use the land as a Tatmadaw military training ground it will not be very useful for them because it [the confiscated land] is very near to the villages in the eastern part of the land, including E--- [village]. F--- and G--- villages are also situated in the northern part of the land. If they open [fire] the guns during training, it might impact those villages because those lands are being used [farmed]. If they set up the military training ground in the middle of villagers' living places, the superiors' leaders [from the Tatmadaw] should reconsider whether or not that would be an appropriate place.

How many village tracts are included in the area which they restricted for use as a military training ground?

Shauk P'Nyaw village tract, Ywa Gyi village tract, Nway Daw Gyi village tract and Ko Pin village tract are included, so in total there are four village tracts that are included. Bo Daw Pin was not included as the area is under Ta Shet Tho Pin control in Karen State.

Have they ever set up that area as a military training ground in the past?

In 2006 they prohibited villagers from traveling [through that area] by land as it was restricted for use as a military training ground. We were told at that time by *Bo Mu Hla Way* that they would temporarily confiscate the land for military training [purposes]. In 2007, 2008 and 2009 they no longer used the land as a military training ground, although in 2014 and 2015 they practiced military training there.

How many acres of land did they restrict for use as a military training ground in 2006?

I think the restricted land was around 19,000 [acres] but I am not sure exactly how many acres of land in total.

So, is it around 20,000 acres of land?

Yes, it would be around 20,000 acres of land. I think it might be around 19,950 acres. In that year Nyway Daw Gyi and Ko Pin village tract were included. They stopped using the training ground for a while.

How did they come to establish the training ground on August 10th 2016?

To tell you the truth they did not consult with any villagers. They just established it as they wished. The villagers asked them who gave them permission to establish it but they could not provide any response. They [villagers] also asked if the Ma Ya Ka [Township administrator] gave permission but they could not confidently say if the Ma Ya Ka had given permission. They confiscated the land by themselves. After the land confiscation, they built fence posts and on the signboard [government] the Ministry of Home Affairs wrote that this was "confiscated land and trespassed land." Later, on August 22nd, they removed the previous fence posts at the border of H--- village and set up new fence posts.

What did they set up?

They set up the posts and the signboard.

What did they write on the signboard?

The Ministry of Home Affairs wrote that villagers had trespassed on the land but I have not yet read the signboard from beginning to end. On the signboard, they also wrote that 1521 acres of land had been trespassed [by the villagers].

Did the villagers' land that was included in the area include limited or uncultivated land?

The villagers work on the plantation so there is no uncultivated land. They [villagers] owned seven or eight acres of land on which they had planted rubber trees.

What were the main crops they planted?

They mainly planted banana, rubber and bamboo. They planted the bamboo trees on the border around the plantations. They planted them on the border beside their plots of their plantation. They work on one, five, seven and fifteen acres of land.

Do they all have land grants?

Yes, they all have land grants. During that situation, we could change our land grant to Po Sa #7 because it would be more legal. We would like to change it to Po Sa #7 but land department [officers] did not permit any Po Sa #7 land grants because the land was in a confiscated area.

The land department did not make land grants for you?

Yes, they did not make it [land grant] for us because we were told that it was in a confiscated land area.

Did other departments come along with the military?

Yes, they came along with the military, including three small cars and four trucks. The next day, they came along with one truck and three small cars. They came along with land department responsible people and land surveyors Bo Mu and Bo Gyi.

Do you know their names?

I do not know their names.

Which battalion is Bo Mu from?

Bo Mu is from the Tatmadaw Artillery armed forces which is the artillery tank group.

Do you know his name?

I do not know his name.

Were there any responsible people [authorities] included?

No.

How many people came?

I think there were around 20 people who came, including four responsible people [authorities]. Some of them dug up holes, set up posts and carried water for cooking.

Do they have any plans to continue working on that?

I do not know because they did not tell us anything before they left.

Did they call to meet with any village head, vice village head and elder people in the village?

They went to meet with the village head but because the village head was not at his home I personally showed them the land.

Did they firstly limit the land [decide which areas were confiscated] from the border of the village and then set up the fence posts?

Yes, they limited it as trespassed land then set up the fence posts.

Why did they set up the fences posts outside of the village?

We went to meet with Moe Ma Ka to assess the villagers' situation and phoned people who work for country development. After they [development office from government] came here we told them about the incident then we asked them to deal with this issue for us. The way that Ka Ma Ya [LIB] and Hka Ya Ka [village tract administrator] acted was not right.

What did they tell the villagers and the village head after they set up the fence posts?

They did not inform the villagers and the village head.

What do villagers think about this situation?

The villagers think that this will cause them to face major challenges to earn their livelihood. We are in a situation of living from hand to mouth; also, the current market price of rubber is very low so we cannot produce rubbers. They used to ask us to pay 500 kyats per rubber tree and if we calculated the total cost for the entire year we would have to pay 500,000 kyats. We would pay 500,000 kyats but when we asked for receipts they could not provide it so therefore we did not pay them money.

Are you able to access electricity here?

No, there is no electricity here. They are in the process of setting up electric posts. We were told to set up the electric posts from Thaut Yin Khat village to Leik Tho [Town] and that they would install 3500 electric-power posts and provide cable wires for use.

Have they started the project?

Yes, they already started processing it and have been setting up electric posts for a month already. They plan to finish the project in 2016.

Do you have anything you want to add that I have not asked you about yet? Do you want to report anything special?

The way that they are doing things now is not good because they set up military training grounds in the middle of villagers' working places. I would like to say that it will be more beneficial if they do not set up training grounds.

Do you want to say anything else?

No.

Thank you.

Yes, thank you.

Source #160

Log #	16-105-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thayatchaung Township, Mergui-Tavoy District

Full Text

What is your religion?

I am Christian.

Can you explain to me what for you the most important human right is?

The most important human right for me is freedom.

Why freedom?

Because when we have freedom we can do the things that we want to do.

What do you know or think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area?

Even though I have not experienced or been involved in the process mostly the outcome is: those who have more money win, those who have less money lose. It doesn't matter how you defend your rights or whether you are acting in accordance with the law. This is how the law and justice system is practised; it does not operate according to the law.

Do you think this is fair for everyone?

It is not good to act like this; it means that people who have authority or power can do whatever they want. It is not fair and not good practice.

Have you ever had to flee your village? If so, when and why [did you flee]?

When I was young, around 1996, there was heavy conflict and fighting in our area. The area where we live is a bit far from the city as it is a hiding place. Whenever the KNLA came they relied on us and stayed in our village. As the Tatmadaw discovered this, when the conflict happened they [the Tatmadaw] came to the village and troubled the villagers because they saw us as threats. For this reason, we can't live and have to flee any fighting happening in our village; some of the village houses have been burned and villagers' rice stores were also burned. Villagers have been forced to flee to many places. Some people fled to the deep forest; some people had to go and live in the neighboring villages. Between 1996 and 2000

we have moved and relocated to many places; we then tried to move back closer to our village.

Where did you live before?

I lived in B--- village.

Where did you flee to?

First we fled to a forest that is far from our village. We stayed there for around one year and then we moved to other villages' fields and stayed there for around one year. When the situation improved we moved to another place. We have already moved and relocated four or five times.

Do you stay in your village now?

Yes.

When did you move back to your village?

I came back to my village twice. The first time was in 2001. After that a conflict arose again as our village is located on the border between Myit and Tavoy Townships [Mergui-Tavoy District]. Villages located in the townships were persuaded to stay on their sides. As the Tatmadaw knew that the village was not unified, the Tatmadaw took advantage of this to cause conflict amongst villagers. So, in 2003 we had to move to another place.

Is that correct, in the past there was only one village which was located on the border in between two districts on two sides of the river and this has since become two villages?

Yes.

One village became two villages?

Yes. The village that I live in now is called C--- in Burmese.

Can you describe your experience during the conflict when you had to flee?

Firstly, since I fled my village I have lost my right to study. Due to the conflict I had to move and did not have any opportunity to learn. Secondly, when we fled we had to stay in the forest and the jungle. Consequently, people became sick with diseases such as malaria and there are neither medicines nor medics available to cure the disease. Another challenge that we face is that even though we do not have any enemies, we have to be afraid of all armed groups which hold guns.

What do you mean when you say that you have to be afraid of armed groups?

We have to be afraid of both KNLA and Tatmadaw soldiers; KNLA soldiers came to village and depend on the village and even live in the village. Therefore, when the Tatmadaw found out that we had let KNLA soldiers stay, they [the Tatmadaw] came looking for trouble with the villagers; we felt guilty about what we did.

What are the main challenges you faced when you rebuilt your life when you moved back and settled in your village?

While I still lived in the other village I took the opportunity to learn and study more. In 2010-2011 I moved to another place to study KNU basic strategy and how to build youth capacity programs in Mergui Tavoy district. I studied there for 2 years.

Did you graduate from a Myanmar high school?

Yes.

What are the main root causes of the human rights abuses that happened in your area in the past?

During the conflict period I was very young. Based on the testimonies of older people, in around 1996-1997 the Tatmadaw destroyed our village. At that time, some villagers were serving as KNLA soldiers so when they came to village they caused conflict with some family members. They arrested some of the elderly women and gave them hard punishments, which I think is the biggest human rights abuse that happened here.

Do you have example of any human rights abusers being punished? Has there been justice for the abused?

I have never experienced or seen it in person but I heard that anytime someone faces justice and judgments in court, the Karen people always lose. For example, when I was child I saw a family member who abused his son. The son wanted to a soldier but his father did not want him to. When his son was in the KNLA army base his father went and took him back. I say that this was a human rights abuse because when the father took his son back, during rainy season, he tied his son's hands behind his back with a rope and violently punched, kicked and hit his son. Personally, I think a father should not be so violent and should not treat his son this way.

Do you have any examples of people who have authority or armed groups committing human rights abuses?

I never experienced or saw it.

What are the root causes of human rights abuses in your village?

In our area right now the root cause of human rights abuses is the cooperation between domestic wealthy individuals and companies, cooperating with wealthy Chinese individuals. The development projects taking place in our area are palm oil plantations, rubber plantations and some other areas where a Thai company was conducting coal mining. Other human rights abuses include drugs creating a lot of conflict among villagers, property seizures and land grabs among villagers. This is a major issue within the community because it causes villagers to become enemies with one another.

What do you want to be in the future?

I have decided to use and sharpen my skills so that I can help everyone who lives in my area

regardless of their ethnicity, religion or race. The main things that I want to improve are education and other management skills in order to be able to solve issues effectively. I want to see more job opportunities for the people who are less educated; we also want to promote their skills and improve their ability to contribute.

What are the main challenges for your community's future?

Right now there is no more land for us. I am really worried for young people regarding livelihood and job opportunities as there are fewer lands to work on. It will be very hard for the next generation to overcome this challenge.

How can we overcome this challenge and who should be responsible for protecting the villagers?

The main people who have to be responsible for this are local authorities, the KNU and the Myanmar government. They should oversee what the future will look like for the villagers and they should arrange things for villagers so that they will have a brighter future in terms of having a place to stay and a place to work. Because the company confiscated our land there are very few lands remaining in the plain area; the remaining land is located in the hill. Therefore, we want the leaders to protect the remaining land for villager's next generation and stop companies from confiscating more of the remaining land from villagers.

Do you think the youth in your community are interested in taking on leadership roles?

Yes, many youth are interested, but there are fewer opportunities to learn and gain experience. Even though some people are strongly interested in the leadership role because they do not have real life experience they lack confidence and lose motivation. If there were opportunities to gain more learning experience then this would not be a problem. Most of the youth in our community are doing regular jobs working in the field and helping their parents.

Most of the youth are staying in the village?

Yes. As technology influences people nowadays many youth strongly desire what other people have. In order to be able to buy those technological gadgets some youths, who have family financial issues and come from poor family backgrounds, have to go and work in other countries such as Thailand.

Do most young people still live in the village or work in other countries?

In my community more youth are in the village than work in other countries.

What is your plan for the next 5 years?

I want my community to be treated as equally as other people and communities.

What is the biggest concern for your future?

The main challenge for me is going to be the relationship with other ethnicities. The differences of perspective between other ethnicities and me will clash. As I am Karen the relationship can be very different with each ethnicity. I also have met and have good

relationships with people of many different ethnic backgrounds including Bamar, Mon, Muslim and Karen. Sometimes it makes me worried as other people might not like me and might harm me one day. The current situation in Myanmar right now is complicated and conflict among Buddhist and *Kaw La Thu* [Muslim] is very high as they are competing for power. One of my *Kaw La Thu* friends told me that one day the conflict between Muslim and Christian will arise. On the other hand, the relationship with Mon ethnicity might also be difficult as we have different perspectives. As I am a middle man and only have two eyes, sometimes mistakes can happen when I deal with different ethnicities.

What is your thought on the current status of ethnic and religious discrimination in Myanmar?

This is a big concern for me. The Myanmar government does not want to recognize Muslim people as citizens. But if we look at the history of Muslims, they have been settled in Myanmar since long ago. Personally, I think that if the Muslim people follow other people and respect and practice the rules and policies like other ethnicities they can become recognized as citizens.

What suggestions do you want to make to youth about how to live a better life?

I want to encourage them to continue their studies because education is one of the most powerful weapons to help people fight.

How many standards are taught in your village?

Some villages only have primary schools whereas some bigger villages have high schools.

Where do the students in your area continue their study after primary school?

They have to go and continue to study in others nearby villages that have schools with higher standards.

What type of school does your village have?

It is a government school.

Do they allow the Karen language to be taught in this government school?

Yes, they allow it.

What type of organisations should come and work in your area?

Organisations should work to benefit the local people so that they can get a better life and should not harm villagers. The main challenge for the local people in my region right now is the road for transportation and travel. There are no issues for people who live close to the main road. However, villagers who are located far from the main road have more problems traveling. The situation is still fine during the summer season but the situation is very difficult to travel in during the rainy season, so the main need for our community is a better road for transportation and travelling.

Do you know about the ceasefire process and how does this relate to you?

I know they already did [the ceasefire process] but the fighting is still ongoing in some areas. I think that it is important to improve their promises and responsibilities. Yes, it does relate to me. It is not for only one person; it is for every citizen. It relates to everyone.

How do you feel about the peace process between the KNU and the [Myanmar] Government?

I do not feel like it meets the goal of a genuine peace process. There are a lot of conflicts that need to be solved in the country; if they cannot solve those existing problems I do not think the peace process will last for very long.

What should the KNU and Government prioritise when working in your community?

Firstly, they should prioritise the protection of villagers and stop large scale development projects, as many villagers still doubt the peace process.

What do you think about people who migrate to work in other countries?

Personally, I experienced working in Thailand, and as we are not their citizens there are no guarantees for us. We have to live under fear. We cannot go and do what we want. We have to work and get the things that we want under fear.

Do you think the situation of your community is developed?

Some parts of the situation in my community regarding communication and healthcare services have improved but they are not fully satisfactory yet.

What are the main major issues that emerged from 1992 to the present?

In the period between 1996 and 1998 major fighting took place, causing thousands of villagers to flee and displacing many innocent villagers and causing many villagers to be violently killed as bystanders during those years. In our region, land confiscation has been ongoing since 2001. During the heavy fighting period both the KNLA and the Tatmadaw used landmines for their protection. When the Tatmadaw attacked the KNLA, they grabbed villagers and used them as human minesweepers and asked villagers to carry things. Some people were hit and stepped on landmines. Some of these people died and some of these people were seriously hurt and their bodies were torn apart.

Are there any development projects happening in your area?

Yes but I do not know much about it.

Did the company or any organisation try to do consultations when they arrived into the community?

Mostly, as far as I know they did not consult with villagers when they came. They just came and did it [the development project] by themselves.

What kind of development projects do you want to see in your community?

I want to see projects that improve the transportation, provide a higher living standard related to skills and ability and improve community relationships.

Do you want to say or suggest anything to me that I have not mentioned to you?

Nowadays, in our region, there are a lot of things happening and many challenges faced by villagers related to the economy and job opportunities. Sometimes the activities between the two enemies put villagers in a very difficult position and large scale development creates problems for villagers which can lead to land grabs. The Myanmar government and KNU government should seriously consider overseeing the challenges that villagers might go through when they let development projects happen in the area when villagers live. The decision should not negatively impact civilians; they should be treated equally.

Thank you for answering my questions.

Source #161

Log #	16-106-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

What is your name?

My name is Saw A---

How old are you?

I am 24 years old.

Which village tract, township, and district are you living in?

I live in B--- village, Ler Wah village tract, Hsaw Htee [Shwegyin] Township, Kler Lwee Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District.

Do you have your own family?

Yes I have my own family.

How many children do you have?

I have one child.

Is the child a girl or a boy?

A girl.

What is your religion?

Christianity.

What is your ethnicity?

Karen.

What is the most important human right for you?

The most important human right for me is to know our rights. If we know our rights we would also have to respect other peoples' rights. If we want people to respect our rights, we also should respect other peoples' rights. The most important thing is to know our rights.

What kinds of rights do you need?

I need freedom of speech.

Do you think health, education and freedom of movement are important for you?

Yes, all of them are important for us. The most important thing is healthcare. If we are healthy we can do everything and get opportunities.

Are there any clinics or hospitals in your village?

In Ler Wah village tract there is no hospital. Therefore if we become sick with an illness or need emergency health services we have to go to Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Township's hospital because we live close to Ler Doh Township. In the lower parts of Ler Wah village tract and across in other townships clinics and hospitals were built. The buildings were built but they lack adequate medical supply. The health workers were appointed to work for the health service but they are not well trained and [they are] unqualified to treat serious patients so the villagers have had to face significant health challenges. Most of the villagers who face serious diseases go to town to get medical treatment. Medical treatment is expensive [in the town] and they also have difficulty communicating. Going to treatment in the towns has become difficult for villagers who live in the rural area.

Who built Ler Doh Township's Hospital?

As far as I know the hospital was not built by Ler Doh Township [leaders]. We named it Kwee Lah Clinic. If I am not mistaken it was built by Backpack [Backpack Health Worker Team]. It was built in Kwee Lah village tract. We call it Ler Doh hospital because it is located close to Ler Doh Township.

Was it built by the KNU or the Burma/Myanmar government?

I think the KNU arranged for it to be built.

Is it called Kwee Lah?

Yes it is called Kwee Lah Clinic. I forgot the other name.

Where do villagers mostly go for medical treatment?

They mostly go to Shwegyin Town. If they cannot treat the patients, the patients have to go to Nyaunglebin [District], Yangon City and Toungoo Town.

Can you estimate how much medical cost they have to pay?

I cannot provide exact information because it is taking place at the town level. We have not reached all the places so therefore we do not know the detailed situation. When we go for medical treatment we have to take motor boats before we reach Nyaunglebin District. If we have an emergency and need to go for medical treatment we have to pay between 15,000 kyat and 20,000 kyat. After we reach Nyaunglebin dock we have to pay 8,000 kyat as a boat fee in order to continue to go to Shwegyin Town. The cost of the medical fee depends on how serious their disease is. If they need to stay longer for treatment they are required to pay a higher medical fee.

You said that you have to pay 15,000 kyat for a boat fee if you go to town. Is this the cost for a round trip or is this the cost for a one way trip?

This is only the cost for a one way trip. If you go back and forth within a day you have to pay 15,000 kyat. If we take a long time for medical treatment we have to hire another boat for the return. We have to pay at least 15,000 kyat.

Are they well-served when they go for treatment in the town?

I cannot provide exact information because we do not usually go [to town]. The leaders who go there are well served by the health workers in the town but it is very hard for the villagers because if we do not know anyone in the towns or know any health workers they charge us very high prices.

What do you know/think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area?

I have not experienced the justice system at all where I live, in Ler Wah village tract because the issues that arise are not issues that can be solved in court.

What about in your township or district level?

In the township level especially in terms of economics, I think the leaders cannot strictly take action as the peace process is still ongoing. It can bring conflict to the area.

What do you think about the economic situation?

I want to tell you about the cases happening in Ler Hta Kwee village. Before the water level rose [due to flooding from Shwegyin Dam], Ler Hta Kwee was located at the bottom of the mountain. After [the water level] rose up the village moved down near river bank. The Bamar villagers who live in Shwegyin or in other places came to conduct gold mining and live there when they were conducting gold mining. They were not permanently allowed to live there; they were just temporally allowed to live there. They have continued to live there until the present and they have even expanded the amount of areas in which they live. They recently built a monastery there and the Burma/Myanmar government has also built their department buildings there. If the KNU force them to return it may cause a conflict. They were forced to return once but I do not remember which years they were forced to return. They were ordered to return because the place in which they are living is not their original place. They

were only allowed to live there during the gold mining period. They were not recognised as villagers who could live there and control themselves. If we look at this situation it will cause problems if they are forced to return.

When have they begun the process of gold mining?

I think since [Shwegyin] Dam was constructed and the water level moved up. I was not in my village at that time so I do not really remember which year they started the process of gold mining. This situation has continued since I came back from being a refugee between 2012 and 2013.

Can you guess which years?

I think the dam was constructed in 2010. I guess that this process started between 2011 and 2012.

Did they come as a company or did they come individually?

They came as labourers because in previous years they conducted gold mining by hand. It does not seem like company but they conducted a huge amount of gold mining.

Did they come as wealthy individuals?

Yes. They applied to buy the plots of land and conducted the gold mining on the land that they bought.

What do you think about people coming to conduct gold mining and living there permanently?

I think many villagers lost their land because of gold mining. The water flooded and destroyed their land and villagers want to return to live their lives but it is not easy for them to rebuild their life. I really feel for the villagers who lost their land and their villages. If they return they would not have land to build their houses on. The gold mining took place on their land so therefore it would cause huge problems for them to work on the plantations if they return. The other point is that they dig holes when mining so if they do not refill the holes it also can be a problem for the villagers.

You mentioned that they were once ordered to return. Who ordered them to return?

As the place is located in Shwegyin areas the people were ordered to return [by the Shwegyin leaders]. I do not remember the date when they were ordered to return. They applied to build their own village and have their own leaders manage them. They submitted their request to Shwegyin leaders but they were not given permission. [The Shwegyin leaders] asked [the villagers] to return but they did not return. Later the leaders permitted them to stay and asked them to run their villagers well. The leaders also said, *"We did not allow you to stay and did not force you to return. You are only allowed to stay temporarily. You are allowed to stay because of your work. We did not permit you to stay because of the letter that was submitted [to you]. If you are able to control your community you will be allowed to stay temporarily."*

Who are the Shaw Htee [Shwegyin] leaders? Are they KNU or Burma/Myanmar

government?

They are the KNU leaders and the KNLA leaders.

Do you know the KNLA battalion numbers?

Yes, the KNLA battalion #7.

Do you know who their battalion commander is?

I know they submitted their request to Battalion Commander Lah Poe but I am not sure about his rank.

Is he the battalion #7 commander?

Yes he is.

Were there any human rights abuses that happened in your areas in previous years?

There were many human rights abuses that happened in the past. Which years do you want to know about? In our township a lot of human rights abuses happened.

Can you talk about what has happened since 1992?

Yes, there were many kinds of human rights abuses that occurred between 1992 and the preliminary ceasefire agreement [2012].

Can you tell me more about the human rights abuses that occurred?

Yes. The human rights abuses that occurred include forcing the villagers to do forced labour and killing them. Villages were set alight. The villagers' hill farms, plain farms and rice were set on fire by the Tatmadaw. They violently committed human rights abuses.

Are you talking about the situation from 1992 to 2012?

Yes.

What were the reasons behind these kinds of abuses?

The reason was the fighting. The Burma/Myanmar military came to the rural areas to provoke the villagers. If they did not see villagers they burnt their houses and rice on fire. They set the hill farms on fire when the paddies were producing the fruits. They also cut the paddies off.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village?

Since I was little boy, my parents had difficulty supporting our studies. The other reason was the fighting. Because of the fighting we had to live one day in this place and another day in other places. At that time we did not do anything as a child.

How old were you at that time?

I think I was seven or eight years old. At that time I was not able to study. I went to the refugee camp to study between 2002 and 2003. I saw that my relatives who were left behind in the village had to flee because of fighting. They oppressed villagers again and again. They fled two to three times within a month.

Are your relatives able to come back to live in their own village at the present time?

Some of them went to the refugee camp and have not returned yet. Many of them have not returned.

How do you feel about your experience?

Based on my experience the children who were old enough to go to school were unable to study because of the civil war. The parents also could not earn a living to raise their children peacefully and therefore they could not send their children to get an education. The children who were of a suitable age to study do not get opportunities to study; they only know how to cultivate farming land. They do not have the opportunity to study like other people.

Have you experienced war/conflict?

I have never experienced war but there were many conflicts in the townships.

Can you explain more about the conflict?

As I mentioned regarding gold mining, after the preliminary ceasefire the gold mining issues have increased. The hydropower dam has also caused big problems for the residents. They also have their own processing system to smelt the gold. When they are processing the gold, they also use many different kinds of chemicals to smelt the gold. If they do not use them properly it also can affect our health.

Who processes the gold?

The companies but I do not know their names.

Where have they been processing the gold?

They have been processing the gold in two places. The gold processing has taken place in my areas and in the other area. They were allowed to examine [test initially] 20 baskets of raw gold. When we use water from the river it can also affect our health, because when they are processing the gold they also use Paw Teh.

What is Paw Teh?

Paw Teh is a kind of chemical to smelt the gold.

Who permitted them to conduct gold mining?

The KNU and the KNLA permitted them to conduct gold mining.

Do you know which numbers of the KNLA battalion gave them permission?

In the township and district levels they have their own economic committees. In order to get permission they have to inform the township level and the district level. I think the permission was given by the district level. Permission was granted based on their request.

You said they process the gold in two places. So you know the first place where they process the gold but you do not know the other place, right?

Yes.

So can you tell me the name of the first place?

The place is not so far from Ler Hta Kwee. I do not know the exact place name but when I travel I always cross that area. I do not know the other place in which the gold mining has taken place. I have only heard from other villagers who know the information.

Why did district and townships administrators and military leaders permit them to conduct gold mining?

I do not exactly know because I have never discussed this issue or asked for information from them but I think they allowed them in order to generate income. Sometimes people already know where the gold is and therefore some villagers and other people from other places secretly conduct gold mining. They [the District, township administrators and military leaders] later allowed them to conduct the gold mining. I think the wealthy individuals submitted a formal letter asking permission so therefore they licensed them. Even if they did not get permission, they illegally conducted gold mining.

You said they gave them permission because of their funding opportunities; do you think it will benefit the villagers?

As far as I know based on the present situation, the money they received is not being used [to benefit] the villagers. Some villagers sold their land to people who conduct gold mining. Some other villagers who can do their own business personally requested other wealthy individual people to conduct gold mining.

Do you think there is justice for human rights abuses that happened in the past?

I think there was no justice for those human rights abuses. I think in the future it can cause problems because there is no justice process for [human rights] abuses. In the townships and village tract levels the leaders are trying to solve these issues in order not to [give a gold mining] license [to] more people in the future. The people submitted the issues to the township and the district to solve the problems.

You mentioned that the villagers were displaced and their hill and plain farms were set alight so what do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

Many things are needed and desired by the victims. The villagers are not able to work freely because they have had to leave their villages and have lost their land. Some villagers fled and died in the jungle and some of them fled to the refugee camps. For the villagers who were left behind inside [Karen State], we recommend that people arrange places for them to

live, working places and agriculture to work on their livelihood. We also would like people to arrange to return to them any land which was confiscated. We want people to ensure that they can live together on the land and rehabilitate their lives.

What do you think should be done for people who committed human rights abuses related to the gold mining that you have mentioned?

As I previously discussed regarding gold mining, the people have been conducting gold mining beside the island [Shwegyin Dam]. We heard that people examined the waters and said that 70% of water has been polluted and can affect our health condition. We recommend that people arrange medical treatment opportunities for opening clinics and increase the amount of medical supplies in the hospitals and clinics. We also would like them to build schools in village tracts and increase the health awareness of the villagers in order for them to defend themselves from diseases.

What do you think should be done for people who committed human rights abuses during the conflict/fighting?

“During the conflict period and before the [2012] preliminary ceasefire had taken place, many civilians and leaders died. Many villagers fled to refugee camps and to other countries because of the war. We recommend that both governments open more livelihood opportunities for villagers. We recommend that both the KNU and Myanmar government build trust between each other and do not break their promises. We do not want to see human rights abuses happen in our grand-children’s generation.”

You said many villagers had been killed by the Tatmadaw during the conflict so what do you think should be done for people who committed human rights abuses during the conflict?

I do not know what should be done for those people but as they committed human rights abuses I think they should resign from their positions. I think resignation from their positions would be best because newly elected-leaders have already taken on management roles. Thus, if they do not resign, newly-elected leaders would learn from their negative example and they would be more confident to commit human rights abuses [in the future]. We recommend that future leaders in the next generation improve the living standard of villagers by finding them job opportunities. If local residents’ need support they should also try and improve their living standards.

Are there any displaced people and landmine victims in your area?

Yes.

What do you think should be done for those victims?

The landmine victims and villagers injured by gunfire should be supported as needed. Prosthetic body parts should be provided for those victims. Livelihood opportunities should also be provided for them even if they are physically disabled. They can still work based on their skills. The women also should get job opportunities for earning a living such as by providing vocational training to them. Sewing training should be taught and provided to the women villagers. They will then not become depressed because they will be able to do what others can do. These trainings should be provided depending on their situation. There are

many things that landmine victims can do and we have seen many different kinds of work different disabled people are able to do. The people who resettled to other countries and some people inside [Karen State] also said that we do not deeply rely on the Burma/Myanmar government even after the ceasefire has been signed between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government. If we think about the situation, it also true because in the other ethnic areas the fighting is still ongoing. Because of Burma/Myanmar military [Tatmadaw] attack the ethnic groups the people were not able to build any trust with the Burma/Myanmar government. During the peace talking process we also cannot fully trust the Burma/Myanmar government. Therefore some migrants do not want to come back as it is still an unstable situation. We recommend that ethnic leaders build the peace in their own areas in order to build trust in their ethnic areas. The governments also should keep their promises as they have signed the NCA agreement. They should also sign ceasefire agreements with other ethnic groups and implement everything based on the agreement. The displaced villagers also cannot return at the same time as a group because they also need to have their own land to work on their livelihoods and build their houses. Access to healthcare and education should also be considered for the displaced villagers at different levels if they return to their own village.

Who do you think should be responsible for providing vocational training to conflict victims? For example: the KNU or the Burma/Myanmar government?

The KNU was not the main actor committing human rights abuse during the period of conflict because the KNU did not set alight rice barns and did not destroy villagers' land. The key actor committing human rights abuses was the Tatmadaw so therefore we strongly demand that both the Burma/Myanmar government and both governments [KNU and Burma/Myanmar] take responsibility to implement the training. The expenditure should be paid for by the government [the Burma/Myanmar government] to the KNU in order to rehabilitate local community standards.

What do you want in the future?

I want peace, freedom and equality in the future.

Can you tell us why do you want those things for your future?

I want them because we have been experienced many risks in the past; even our parents and relatives have been killed and raped because of the conflict and the war. There were many kinds of human rights violations that happened in the past so therefore we do not want those kinds of things to happen in the future. As other people have opportunities to improve their life we also need independence in our country to live in the future. We should be free from conflict and human rights abuses in our country. We want to see signs of peace in our future.

What do you think are the biggest challenges your community will face in the future?

I think the biggest challenges will be conflicts because of fighting which cause the biggest worries for the community in our townships and in our district. During the ceasefire period people mainly focus on the economy as well as the business activities coming up so therefore I think the biggest challenge in the future will be economic crisis. Villagers can be negatively impacted by development projects that are not implemented according to the needs of the residents. How will it impact them? It will impact their livelihood because their

lands can be destroyed at any time and they might not have any land for themselves to work on their livelihood. My main concern is [also] that businessmen do not consult villagers before they implement the projects.

What should the government (KNU or Burma) do to improve the situation for people your age?

Some of the people around my age are still learning and some have not finished their studies so I would recommend that they [the government] build schools for them to study. The current situation in our areas is that those who finish their ten standards do not have any colleges where they can continue their studies. We want governments to promote a high education level and build schools for those who really want to study. For the youth who are not eager to study we would like to provide them with job opportunities so that they can be free from livelihood problems. Ever if they are not zealous with their studies they might be interested in working in the workshop as mechanics.

What do you want to say to the Karen youth to improve their community in the future?

I mainly want to encourage the Karen youth to continue their education. If we do not have education we have to work according to the orders of other people. I encourage them to prioritise education because education is extremely important. In the past our great-grandparents told us that we can eat rice if ever we are not educated. This simply means that if we are healthy, work very hard and are patient in our work we will be able to earn enough to survive. This will never work in the future, however, because technology is constantly improving and therefore the youth should respect the value of education. To improve our community they should prioritise and value education in their life.

Have you ever seen villagers in your village or areas go to work in other countries?

The youth who are not able to study mostly go to work in other countries. I think 60% of the youth have gone to work in other countries and towns.

What do you think about migration to other countries or cities to find a job?

The leaders in their areas cannot find any job opportunities for them to work and earn their living. The daily wages are not enough for them to use as their income and expenses are not balanced. Therefore they have to migrate to other countries in order to find jobs.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of: health and education, communication, transportation, living standard and administration?

In terms of those things we cannot say whether it is developed or not because if we compare the situation from 1992 until the present time we could not find medics easily when we need emergency treatment in previous years [before the 2012 preliminary ceasefire]. In the present time even if clinics or hospitals have not yet been built in every village, some clinics or hospitals have already been built in two to three places. In terms of education we can say that the situation is improving but it has not [fully] developed yet.

What were the years, do you think, that human rights abuse occurred the most from 1992 to 2016 in your area?

The most human rights abuses occurred in 1997.

What were the human rights abuses?

In 1997 the Tatmadaw forcefully recruited villagers to serve as soldiers. If they saw male villagers they arbitrarily arrested them and forced them to go to the frontline even if they did not want to go. The houses of villagers were burnt down and their farms and hill farms were also set alight. Innocent villagers were murdered.

Do you know about any development projects that happened in your village/community/areas?

We have not seen any development projects taking place for the benefit of villagers.

Has there been any development projects regarding road construction?

Road construction has been implemented after permission was granted by the authorities. It [permission] was not given for the purpose of benefiting the villagers but instead for the purpose of improving travel.

Who constructed the road?

The roads were constructed by the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government.

Did they inform villagers before they implemented the project?

Regarding development projects, especially the Burma/Myanmar government does not prioritise consultations to inform villagers. They do not care whether villagers agree or not. They target roads to upgrade and put signs in place but they have not yet informed villagers. They only consulted people with authority and villagers have to follow their decisions. When they upgraded the roads they cut down villagers' trees which are lined down in front of their houses near by the roads. They said that the roads would be used by the villagers in order to make travel easier so therefore villagers agreed with their decision. From the KNU side they have their own plans to construct the roads as villagers cannot travel very far to anywhere. Some parts of the roads do not include villagers' land but some parts also destroy villagers' land therefore before they construct the road they should hold consultation with villagers and get permission from the villagers to construct the roads.

What kind of development do you want for/to see in your community? How do you want development projects to be carried out in your areas?

We want many different kinds of development to be carried out in our areas but if we analyse the current situation, the political situation is unstable. We would like healthcare and education projects to be carried out in our areas. The villagers' livelihood and working places should be provided and villagers should be trained in order to improve their livelihood situation. Villagers will know how to do agriculture to earn their living and children also will be able to study. The clinics also should be built in our areas to resolve health problems. If clinics are built we would not need to go to the hospital when we face common sicknesses.

Will you permit us to use your information in our upcoming thematic report?

If the information needs to be included in the report and is relevant for the readers to know, I permit you to use the information.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

Source #162

Log #	16-106-A3-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District

Full Text

On November 4th 2016 I came to meet with a villager in B--- village. I would like to interview you and I want to record your voice. Could you please allow me to record your voice?

Yes. You can.

I would like to know your name. What name do people call you?

When I was a child, my parents named me A---.

What is your age?

I am 48 years old.

Where do you live?

I live in B--- village, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have four children.

How many daughters and sons do you have?

I have two sons and two daughters.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is 25 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 19 years old.

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

I would like to ask you about human rights. What is the most important right for you?

As we are human beings, the most important rights for us are human rights.

What kind of human rights do you want to have? Could you please tell me?

I will tell you about human rights as far as I know. As we are Karen people, we want to have the same civil rights as other people [citizens] in other countries. We do not have a country but we want to have civil rights nonetheless.

What about the rights of health, education, security, and land rights? Do you want those rights?

Yes. We also want to have the rights to livelihood, health, education, land rights and security.

Why do you want to have those rights?

I want those rights because we need the right to livelihood in order to survive. We also need land rights because we need lands to cultivate in order to earn our livings.

Is there any issue that you face regarding lands, education or healthcare in your area?

You mean currently or in the past?

I mean from 2000 to 2016.

Yes. We have had healthcare problems in my village because our village is located in the jungle so it is difficult to get medical treatment if our villagers become sick. We also have problems regarding education because it is hard for us to find school teachers in our village. Currently, most of our Karen people from the border study in the refugee camp schools but they do not come back to help their villages after they graduate because they move to other countries. The other Karen people in our village do not have a chance to study so it is hard to find schoolteachers in our village. Also, the Burma/Myanmar government could not send schoolteachers to every village in our area. There are also land issues in our area due to the population increases but I do not know much about this. Some of the villagers left their lands when they fled so their lands became a jungle [overgrown]. Some people from other areas came to live on their lands so it became a problem when they [displaced people] then returned to their lands.

You told me that there are school buildings in your area. Do you know who built the school buildings in your area?

Most of the school buildings in our area are constructed [funded] by the community. They [schools] are self-funded schools.

How many schools are there in the District that you live?

I think there are more than 1,000 schools in the District that I live.

Where do they [those schools] get funds or support?

Some of the schools receive support from the Burma/Myanmar government. Some of the schools like the self-funded schools receive support from the Karen Education Department [KED] of the Karen National Union [KNU]. However, there are some challenges for schoolteachers as the Burma/Myanmar government cannot support every school. Nevertheless, local villagers work together in order to support school teachers so that they [teachers] can run their school year after year.

You previously mentioned that some local school teachers have faced challenges. Can you tell me what kinds of challenges they faced?

Some of the local teachers faced challenges because they did not get enough support [salary] to provide for their families' livelihood.

Can you tell me how much [money] a teacher receives per year?

You mean the support they [teachers] get from the villagers [community]?

Yes. I mean from the Burma/Myanmar government, the KNU and the community.

The teachers at the self-funded school receive three baskets of rice from villagers [parents] per year if their children study at the school. From the parents of children who do not study at the school, they [teachers] receive one basket of rice per year. The KED provides 6,000 or 6,500 baht to schoolteachers per year.

Did the villagers give the teachers rice or rice seeds?

They just gave the teachers rice seeds.

Was this rice that was ready to cook?

No. They only received rice seeds [to plant].

Do you have the rule of law and justice system in your local area?

We have the rule of law in our area because we live in a community that is under a village tract. This village tract is under the Township. The Township is under the District. There are different sets of rules according to the different categories of places where we live [village tract, township, district] so everyone has to follow the rules our leaders [at each of the different categories] set. If someone breaks the rules, he or she will be punished in

accordance with the rules for punishment.

What do you think about the rule of law?

In my opinion, the rule of law is good because it is good to punish someone if he or she breaks the rules. As we are human beings, sometimes we do not believe that it is right to punish others. Some people see that the rule of law is not right because of the different punishments imposed [by some leaders]. If someone loses [in the court], he or she will conclude that the judge is not good. If someone wins [in the court], he or she will conclude that the judge is good. Different conclusions will be reached depending on the decision made [in the court].

Can you provide one example of a right judgement [punishment] and a wrong judgement [punishment] you have seen in your area?

I do not usually see wrong judgements [punishments] in my area but I have seen some cases processed in court. Both the victims and the perpetrators have friends that argued with one another in court. In the court, I once witnessed a case in which a young girl was raped by a boy. The boy claimed in court that he did not rape her but that actually another boy raped her. At that time, the leaders gave him a chance to confess to what he did to her but he refused to confess. Therefore, they had to gather DNA evidence. The results of the DNA analysis proved that he raped her. However, the boy would still not confess to the rape so he had to be kept in jail. When he was in jail, he confessed to the leaders that he raped the girl but he did not confess to the rape in front of other people. The person who analysed the DNA evidence is a foreign doctor and he tested it carefully. It was clear that the boy raped the girl. However, the villagers close to the perpetrator blamed the leaders for issuing a wrong punishment and said that the punishment was unjust. Villagers argued that [the doctor] had only taken the boy's hair and saliva so it would not be possible for him [the doctor] to conclude that he [the boy] raped her. That's why they [villagers] wanted to blame the leaders.

Can you tell me where and when the rape incident happened?

I do not remember the exact time but I remember that it happened in C--- village at the west of Kawkareik Township two years ago.

How old was the perpetrator?

He was 26 years old and had a family.

Did the victim have a family? How old was she when the incident happened?

Her mother told me that she was 17 years old when the incident happened. She is single and also has mental health problems.

Has the case been completely solved?

Yes. The case has been solved. The perpetrator was sent to jail. If he can pay compensation, he can get out of the jail because she became pregnant and gave birth [as a result of the rape] to a baby girl. So he [perpetrator] has to support the child until the child is 18 years old. He had to pay compensation to her and her daughter. The total amount of

compensation, including the DNA test fee, is almost ten million kyat.

How old is that baby now?

That baby is now two years old.

Was the victim satisfied with this punishment?

The victim was satisfied but the perpetrator was not satisfied.

Why?

Because, as I told you before, the perpetrator had friends from the mountains who wanted to dismiss the case. They did not believe the DNA test. They believed that the test was false and that people [leaders and victims' relatives] wanted to bully the perpetrator. The girl who was raped admitted that she was raped by the perpetrator. I know this because I was following the case closely. The girl always said that that boy raped her whenever she was questioned.

Did the victim report the case or did her parents report it?

The victim reported it herself. After the first time she was raped did not tell anyone because she was threatened that she would be stabbed with a knife if she told the truth to anyone. After she was raped for the third and fourth time, she secretly told her mother what happened.

Can you please tell me the name of the victim?

Her name is Naw E---.

What is the name of the perpetrator?

His name is Hpa Kyaw Eh.

Can you tell me who decided the punishment? Was it the KNU [Karen National Union] or the Burmese government?

The KNU.

Were there any human rights abuses in your area in the past?

In the past? When?

Since a long time ago; since 1992?

In my area, there were some human rights abuses that happened in the past.

Can you please tell about each one [human rights abuse]? Please explain how it happened.

In our area, both KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] soldiers and Tatmadaw soldiers are

active. As a result, fighting sometimes broke out between KNLA soldiers and Tatmadaw soldiers. Tatmadaw soldiers would sometimes grab and beat villagers because they accused them of being KNU [KNLA] soldiers. Sometimes they tied these villagers up for three days and would did not give them any rice to eat.

When did this happen? Can you tell me what year this took place?

It happened in 2001 and 2002.

What other human rights abuses happened between 1992 and 2002?

Many human rights abuses happened between 1992 and 2002. The Tatmadaw were active in our area at that time but they did not dare to come by themselves. Instead, they called on the local villagers to accompany with them and asked the villagers to be their porters. At that time, male villagers did not dare to go with them. If male villagers did not want to be their porters the Tatmadaw soldiers would beat them. It was slightly better for female villagers because Tatmadaw soldiers only asked them to carry small items and would not beat up the female villagers. Many villages were forced to be their porters. In our area, we called on other villagers from nearby villages to act as porters for the Tatmadaw soldiers because no village could carry all of the Tatmadaw military supplies and equipment by themselves. We had to work together to carry the Tatmadaw military supplies and equipment.

Do you remember in which area the Tatmadaw soldiers were active?

They were active in the Kar Lee Khee Mountain and Kyaik Doe areas. They based their camps in these two places. If they went to their army camps, the villagers had to go with them together. If villagers did not travel alongside them, [the KNLA soldiers] would shoot at them [the Tatmadaw]. So they did not dare and travel to their army camps without villagers.

When villagers carried Tatmadaw military supplies and equipment, did they beat male villagers or female villagers?

They only beat male villagers and they did not beat female villagers. Because the village head followed the female villagers, they only scolded and shouted at the female villagers. If the village head did not follow them [the female villagers] they would probably have also beaten the female villagers.

Were most of the villagers who acted as porters for the Tatmadaw female or male?

In our area, female villagers mostly carried their military supplies and equipment because only female villagers were village heads. Male villagers did not dare to become village heads.

Have you or your family ever fled from your village?

My family and I fled from our village after many Tatmadaw soldiers arrived in our area and forced villagers to relocate to the places along the vehicle road. So we had to move to stay on the road.

What do you mean by the road?

We lived in B--- village, so we had to move to close to B--- village. For other villagers, they had to move to stay on the road beside Htee Ghu Thaw village.

When did Tatmadaw soldiers force villagers to relocate? Can you tell me the year?

I cannot remember what time exactly but I think it must have been August or September in 1997.

At that time, how many villages did Tatmadaw force to relocate?

In that area I think twenty villages were forced to relocate.

In which Townships are these villages located?

In Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township. Different villagers from different villages had to gather and stay at the relocation site because they could not remain in their own village any longer.

Did the villagers have to gather together to stay in one place?

Yes. In one place because, for example, villagers from F--- village, G--- village, H--- village had to relocate in B---. We all had to stay in the same place. The Tatmadaw would not allow us to stay in our own village.

What about now? Have the villagers returned to their old villages?

Yes. They have all returned to their old villages.

When did the villagers return to their old village?

Some people returned to their village after they were relocated for more than one year. Some returned after three months. Some returned after three years.

You said that you fled from your village, right?

Yes.

Can you please tell me what you experienced when you fled from your village?

You mean the challenges that I had faced when I fled?

Yes. You can tell me about any challenge that you had faced.

I faced many challenges because I was not single. I had a family so I had to carry many things such as clothes and food from my house because the Tatmadaw wanted us to relocate within three days. Some villages had to relocate within six days. The Tatmadaw gave different time-limits for different villages to relocate. It [the time-limit] depended on how far the villages are [from the relocation site]. However, every village had to be relocated within ten days. Therefore, we faced the challenge of needing to carry many necessities from our house. We had to carry as much as we could because we needed a lot of things to survive.

What other challenges did you face?

We faced health challenges because when we relocated we had to drink water from the stream. Therefore, our children would sometimes get sick because the water was impure and unclear.

Did some villagers die when they fled from their villages?

Yes. Some villagers died.

Why did they die?

Because they did not have good food or medicine. Sometimes they got diarrhoea and then died because they did not have any medicine.

Have you ever experienced war in your life?

Yes, when the fighting broke out between Tatmadaw soldiers and Karen soldiers.

What did you think about it then?

When we saw the fighting our only concern was about where we should flee to. Where should we stay? We did not know where we should flee to.

When you fled from your village during the fighting, did any organisation or other villagers help you?

At that time, some villagers from other villages advised us to stay and hide in their village if fighting broke out in our village.

Who advised you to hide in their villages?

Some of my friends.

Have any human rights abuses been solved?

I had never seen any human rights abuse solved.

Can you give me any example?

No. How can I give you examples if I have never seen it? If the perpetrator violated villagers' human rights, the village head told them [perpetrator] not to violate them again but they did.

You mean there were human rights abuses in the past but nobody took action?

Yes. Nobody took any action.

Do you think that there was any justice for human right violations?

No. There was no justice at that time.

So what do you think about it [justice]?

At that time, if we knew about any organisation which could help our villagers, we would ask them to resolve our problems. We wanted them to tell the perpetrators not to force villagers to be their porters again.

Did you see any way to report it, as you were a villager at that time?

We tried to find a way to report it but we did not know who to submit our case report to. Some villagers were unable to report it because they forgot [the case details]. We tried to find out how to report it. We talked to our village head and asked if we could report it to the Tatmadaw leaders. At least, we tried to find out where to report it to.

Did anyone help villagers who experienced human rights abuses go to the court to get justice? How did they address it?

No one came to help villagers go to the court to get justice. For example, the Tatmadaw arrested young villagers who had tattoos on their bodies because they thought that these young villagers who had tattoos were Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] soldiers. However, these young villagers were not Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] soldiers. They just liked to have tattoos. The Tatmadaw then arrested them and took them to court. Even though the villages said that they are not Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] soldiers the Tatmadaw refused to listen to them. The Tatmadaw then put them in the jail and asked the villagers to give them money in order to get the young villagers out of the jail. For one young villager, they asked for 500,000 kyat.

Can you guess how old these young villagers were?

They were only 16, 17 and 18 years old.

Who arrested these young villagers?

Burmese government's soldiers.

Who are those soldiers? What did people call them?

People called them the *Na Aa Pa* [State Peace and Development Council].

What do you think should be done for the victims?

We wanted [leaders] to bring justice for the victims because they were falsely accused of being Kaw Tho Lei [KNLA] soldiers.

What kind of justice do you want for them?

We want justice because they were falsely accused. These young villagers are not Kaw Tho Lei [KNLA] soldiers so we want the truth to be known.

What kind of punishment do you think should be issued to the perpetrators?

We want the perpetrators [Tatmadaw soldiers] to be discharged. We want them to become

ordinary villagers so they could not bully other villagers anymore. If this happens it would be slightly better for villagers.

You mean the Tatmadaw soldiers who are perpetrators should be discharged?

Yes. They should be punished like their leaders and have their position removed.

They should be discharged and became villagers?

Yes.

You previously told me that the people who committed human rights abuses should be punished? Can you give me any example of what this would look like?

What example?

For example, they should be punished like this and then like that. Can you explain it to me step by step?

OK. Those who committed human rights abuses should be punished and should acknowledge what they did. They should acknowledge their faults and mistakes. They should be discharged. Otherwise, they will forget what they did.

What do you mean by forget? Are you talking about perpetrators or victims?

The victims also cannot forget but nobody can help them. If the perpetrators don't remember what they did they will continue to commit human rights abuses.

What do you think should be done for the victims of the conflict?

We want people to support them in order for them to live peacefully.

Can you give me any example of the victims' suffering?

Do you mean how people supported them?

I mean both how they suffered from the human rights abuses and how they received support afterwards.

They suffered and had to flee because of the fighting. They faced many problems during the conflict because their children were unable to go to school. They did not have enough food and they also did not have enough time to make money to earn their livings.

Did they suffer until they died or were they injured during the conflict? Can you give any examples?

One of our villagers suffered seriously but nobody had hurt him. He got very sick and had to take medicine from other villages. While he was on the route to the other villages Tatmadaw soldiers arrived and Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] soldiers were hiding on the way. He did not know anything about it [the positioning of the Tatmadaw and the KNLA] and when fighting broke out along the route [he was taking] he died because of the gunfire. His wife became a widow

and she suffered a lot because she only had one child and had to take care of her child. It caused her many problems as she was living alone because she did not have any parents.

When did this happen?

It happened in 1999.

How did his wife and his son survive?

They had to live with their relatives and their relatives supported them and took care of them.

What is the root cause of human rights abuse in your area?

The only root cause of human rights abuse in my area is the fighting.

Only fighting? What about other root causes?

No. Fighting is the only root cause of human rights abuse in my area.

What kinds of human rights abuse happened because of the fighting?

If we had to go to our farms, we had to hide when Tatmadaw soldiers came because we did not dare and stay in the village if they came. If the Tatmadaw saw that we lived in the village, they asked us to be their porters and forced us to carry their military supplies and equipment. Therefore, male villagers had to flee but female villagers remained in the village. We raised our animals but they came and ate our animals. There were so many abuses that they committed.

What challenges did male villagers face when they acted as porters for the Tatmadaw?

Yes. They [male villagers] faced challenges but different villagers faced different challenges [as porters]. Some villagers had to carry heavy loads and were beaten. Some villagers had to carry heavy loads but were beaten because the Tatmadaw would kick them and slap their faces if they were unwilling to be their porters.

When the Tatmadaw travelled, did they use landmines?

Yes. They used landmines because when the Tatmadaw came to the hill in 1969, they put landmines under the ground. One villager died after stepping on a landmine when traveling.

Did the Tatmadaw take any action after the villager died because of their landmine?

No. They did not even know that a villager stepped on their landmine.

What do you want in the future?

I want to see peace and improvements in my village.

Can you explain to me why you want to see peace and improvements in your village?

Because we have lived in times of great difficulty and suffering. When we look at other countries, they live in peaceful places and have good roads. They can go to work peacefully and they can stay with their families happily. We want to have good roads and good schools. [We want] something like that.

Is there anything special you want to see in the future?

I want to see our village improve so that our children can go to school like other children. We want to see our children become educators.

You mean you want educational improvements in your village?

Yes. I want to see improvements to education and also to leadership. If our villagers are educated, they will be able to lead their people to success.

What are the biggest challenges facing your community's future?

What do you mean by the biggest challenges?

I mean the challenges that you face which will make it difficult to improve in your community.

OK. The challenges that we face in our community, right?

Yes.

We worry about armed groups. They have signed the ceasefire agreement recently [October 2015]. If there is renewed fighting we will suffer. We fear fighting the most.

As you said, if there is renewed fighting you will suffer. How will you suffer?

If the fighting breaks out again, we will have to flee again.

What should the government [KNU or Myanmar] do to improve the situation for people at your age?

I want both the KNU and the Myanmar government to come to help us [at our age]. They have to give us livelihood opportunities. We want the lands to work on freely in order to support our livelihood. They should open up opportunities for us to work freely.

Are young people interested in leadership roles in your community?

Some young people are interested in leadership roles but some are not.

Can you give me examples on why they are interested in leadership roles?

Some young people are interested in leadership roles because they want to be like other people who have jobs and responsibilities but they do not have any chances to learn about leadership and management skills. There are a small number of organisations who employ these young people but not a lot. We do not have many NGOs [non-governmental organisations] in our area. We have Myanmar government's organisations but young people

cannot work with them because they are unqualified as they did not graduate from high school or university.

Do you mean they are not qualified to work because they did not finish high school? So does Myanmar government set the education level [that applicants must have completed]?

Yes. They set the education level [that applicants must have completed].

What education level should young people have if they want to work for a Myanmar government organisation [e.g. department]?

Young people should at least finish 10th standard and hold a high school certificate. Some people have only finished 9th standard but they can teach the children in the local school in the village. Some people did not finish [pass] 10th standard even though they attended 10th standard for three or four years. However, [young] people should at least finish university if they want to work for the Myanmar government.

Source #163

Log #	16-108-A1-I1
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Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Interview Date: November 4th 2016

What is your name?

I am Saw PP---

Your age?

I am 37 years old.

Where are you from?

I am from Dooplaya District, Win Yay Township.

How about your village and village tract?

Currently, I live on the Thai/Burma border and I am working for [censored for security].

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many children do you have?

I have three children.

How old is the eldest? Is [he/she] boy or girl?

The oldest one is a girl and now she is eight years old.

How about the youngest?

The youngest one is one year and seven months old.

So you are Karen [ethnicity]?

Yes, I am.

What is your responsibility in your region?

I am working in [censored for security].

Where is your field operation area?

In Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District.

Now, I would like to ask you about human rights perspectives. My first question is; what are the most needed human rights?

To me, the first thing is education. It is important to be educated. Even if [there are educated people], administration and economy are also important. [Secondly] I think we also need healthcare and safety for civilians and so many other things.

Could you elaborate in more detail about the rights? Like you said earlier, for example, right to education.

By saying right to education I mean we want freedom of right to education as well as school that is free of charge for primary school students no matter if they are from rich, poor, widowed or orphaned [families]. They [students] should have equal right to access education. If that [free education] is raised to middle school students also it will be good. So that they can write because mostly our [ethnic Karen] people living in the hills are under the oppression of capitalism and people who are in power because they are being uneducated.

How about the [right for] healthcare that you mentioned earlier?

Healthcare is important as well because, even if you are educated, if you are not in good health you will not be able to do anything for your livelihood. Healthcare [services] are essential and both the Burma/Myanmar and the KNU [Karen National Union] government are responsible for this by supporting [providing] medicines, clinics or hospitals. We want those services. Currently, there is a hospital but there is no medics and medicine. And sometimes there is medicine but they are not enough different types of medicines so that [villagers] have to buy [the correct medicine from outside of the hospital]. For some widows, they do not have money therefore they sell their land or borrow money from others and they are in a situation of debt. They receive medical treatment and then have to repay their debts as well so they cannot be free from debt. We need support. From the KNU side, it is not that

they do not help us, they do but it is still [not] enough. The Backpack Health Worker Team [BPHWT] comes down [to the village] only once or twice a year. In hilly [remote] areas it is [difficult] for them to go so they reach there only once a year.

So you mean [there is a need] to improve the [healthcare] services?

Yes, if we look at current situation, it will be better to improve the services from both sides [KNU and Burma/Myanmar government].

So how about the rule of law? What do you think of it?

This is a [Burma/Myanmar] government-power influenced area but it is not controlled by the [Burma/Myanmar] government. It is controlled by the KNU. If we look at the rule of law, it is quite weak from the KNU side because if there is any case caused by a man or a woman, there is no lawyer [in court] therefore the police investigate the case and report the information to the judge and the judge delivers the judgment. People do not feel happy with the current court system. Civilians do not say that the court is corrupt but the people do not really feel happy with their judgments. There are some civilians that are in my area that stated about that. They want equality and they also report to us that it is time to amend the system of law and that people should follow the law.

Is there any activity that is done to improve the situation for the rule of law from the government [KNU and Burma/Myanmar]?

I have not seen such activities. I have seen neither activity like township administrators coming and giving awareness to the children [civilians] nor like KNU sharing their laws to the civilians. Currently, they [KNU] have produced local laws that can be judged [if they are broken] by the local village leaders but it [this system of local law] does not reach to every village. Some villagers from some villages are not able to read and they do not understand even if they use books. They have no person who can give them awareness. Now, the law books, like the ones about drugs and the laws related to witchcraft, have been distributed to them [villagers].

What is the witchcraft law?

It is like for example, [if] I do not like someone and I do [witchcraft to] them. They have laws for that now. Like someone does witchcraft on someone and if there is evidence in a case that it truly happened [they will be punished]. They have laws for that in our township now.

Laws that are specialised for witchcraft?

Yes. They produced that [specialised] kind of book and they just distributed it in the villages. The villagers just keep them [books] as they are [they do not use them]. They do not use it. Maybe it is because they cannot read or maybe they do not know [that they should] read [it]. Because they do not know about it and they do not know how it was developed and they have never seen the [witchcraft] case maybe [so they cannot use the book]. It happens like that. I mean it [the system for informing villages of laws] is still weak.

Now, my question will be about the past abuses related to human rights abuses as well as about what types of the abuses they were. In your area, could tell me about past abuses that you can recall. What happened? When? The abuse was committed

by whom?

If I look at the time since 1992 [when KHRG was founded], I was not a local civilian here. I have been living in this area for about 15 or 16 years already. I will tell you as far as I know.

From 1992 to when?

From 1992 to 2016. The civilians that faced that time period, they are quite pitiful. In the past, [they] faced multiple kind of problems. In 2007, the SPDC Tatmadaw officer called Gyun Ko, he killed villagers and merchants and looted villagers' property and in the village areas there were outlaws and they [SPDC Tatmadaw] killed them as well, accusing them of rebellion. There were people who faced such things. There are also demands on the village head to provide porters [forced labour] in the past. In the past in Mel Sa Li village, in Mel Sa Li village tract, the village head himself have to go with them [the porters] and lead them [SPDC Tatmadaw soldiers] as a human shield. When they were on the way, the KNU ambushed them with timed [land] mines and the mine blew up and he [the village head] died. Our civilians had to suffer like that.

You said it was in 2007 and it was done by Officer Gyun Ko.

Yes, it was Officer Gyun Ko and he came [to the village] with the column commander.

Do you remember the battalion's number?

I can't remember the battalion's name [and number].

Do you know where the battalion was situated?

That battalion was in Lay Naung. They came through Hka Lel Ta Khwun Taing.

Where is the place [Lay Naung] situated?

The Operations Command is in A Nan Kwin. It [Lay Naung] is situated in Win Yay Township, Dooplaya district.

Is A Nan Kwin the name of the village?

Yes, it is. It used to be a village and now it has changed to village tract. There is a village next to it [A Nan Kwin] called Taung Son village also known as Lay Naung. It is in Kwee Hser Gyi village tract. There is a battalion in Kwee Hser Gyi and they came to replace that battalion. He [the Officer] came with the name 'Gyun Ko' from [the direction of] the Taung Dee road. In the past, there was a [Tatmadaw] military camp in Taung Dee. Now, the Tatmadaw army camp in Taung Dee village is no longer there anymore. They have gone already. Only the area of land is left. Now, the land is taken over by the villagers [lands' original owners] but their [Tatmadaw] flag stand, water pot and water irrigation are still there. The land is quite wide but they did not say that they were gone and that the villagers can go back and work on the land. They did not tell the villagers anything. The land was originally taken from the villagers and now they are gone and the villagers are happy that they could take their land back. It was Officer Gyun Ko at that time.

Yourself or your family member or your relatives, have they [or you] have ever flee

because fighting?

I grew up in the town so I have never faced fleeing because of fighting but my parents did. I used to live in A--- and I moved to Thaton [District]. I grew up in Thaton. In Thaton [District] we had problems with schooling in 1988. When we were school-age children we had to flee and we could not sleep well and we had to stay in a hiding hole. When I grew up, when I was 15 years old I moved to Dooplaya [District] and since I moved to Dooplaya [District], I did not have to run anymore. But I still had to when [commander] Gyun Ko came. At that time, my wife had a newly delivered baby and it was in cold season. I had to stay on the farm alone and I did not have time to go back and take care of them. After delivering the baby, the baby caught a cold and I was not around therefore the baby passed away.

So that was the conflict that you faced?

That was the problem that [we] faced. For the things that [other] civilians faced, I mentioned them earlier.

What is your opinion on the experience that you had? Why do you think that it happened? Was it because of the rule of law or maybe because of discrimination, etc.? Why do you think it happened and what is your opinion on that?

In the past, this [Dooplaya District] was the 'black area' [KNU controlled area].

When was your "in the past"?

During the conflict time.

Do you remember the year?

Since 1964 up until now. It changed after the 2012 [preliminary ceasefire]. It was a black area before 2012. According to the Myanmar [military] government's recognition, all people living in black areas are *Nga Pway* [rebels, literally 'Karen ringworm'] including children. They discriminated [against us] in that way. At that time I did not know what rule of law was. I only knew that it [the classification of black areas] was discrimination against us.

For the human rights abuses that happened in the past, was there anything that has been done for justice?

At that time, I did not understand that [human rights] thing.

How about the time [after] when you understood? Was there anything that has been done for justice? Have you seen any kinds of those [actions]?

Since the time I know about human rights, I have faced [stood up for] human rights, compared to my life in the past, I don't want the civilians to face [human rights abuses] like I faced in the past. They must know about human rights like I do, like knowing what are the basic human rights and laws like national law. You have to know about others' rights as well as your own rights. As you are civilians, you have to follow the country's laws and even if you have not done anything against the law, there might be some people who might oppress or bully you therefore you have to fight against them by [using] human rights [based on] as much as you know. I want them to act like that.

When these human rights abuses happened, based on a judgment, there might have been some people who were punished or maybe just placated for what happened. Have you ever faced things like that?

Mostly in my area, they placate [forgive] the things that they have done in the past [for peace for both sides] so that the issue does not grow bigger and bigger by fighting against each other. If they take the path of revenge and fighting against each other, the issue will be endless. But if we look on the side of the rule of law, all human beings have human rights therefore if we could give the proper punishment to the person who committed the abuse that would be better.

Have you ever encountered with a case related to punishment given like that?

No, I have never encountered [a case of punishment like this in the past] but I have seen like that nowadays, in 2014. A school girl in my township was raped by an [ethnic] Mon man. He hit the [school girl's] head and he raped her as she passed out and he then killed her and then he raped her again. Finally when he got arrested, he was sentenced to death according to the law. It is bad to give the death sentence to someone because instead of sentencing someone to death [such as someone having to shoot them], they should hang them. It is like someone [innocent] has to kill someone [who has been sentenced to death] and it doubles the crime therefore it is better to sentence [people to death] with hanging.

So that was your opinion [on the 2014 case]?

Yes, it was.

Related to human right abuses, have you ever seen that the armed actors got punished?

Yes, there were [cases]. A human rights violation is like this; I did not see it with my own eyes in the past, I heard it from the civilians as I lived [in the community] with them. There are human right violations but it is rare that the perpetrator was punished. They just placated [the abuser].

For example like, the officer [who committed the human rights abuse] was discharged from their position or put in jail.

There is nothing [no cases] like someone being discharged from their position. Like the case that happened between [within] the KNU. In the case, the person who killed [someone] was killed [by someone else]. Their leader was not discharged from the position. He was made to resign from the position.

How about things like giving compensation for abuse?

There is nothing [no cases of] compensation for abuse. They [the perpetrators] do not look back [to the victims] after what has happened.

Depending on the timing [of when] the abuse happened in the past, how do you think action should be taken?

It depends on how big or small the case is. It should be proper [action that is proportionate] for the abuse that they committed and they [the actions] should be fair.

Like you mentioned earlier, during the conflict time, what years do you think the abuse happened most?

From 2000 to 2010.

Do you think that the people who have their rights violated should be supported, and how?

If they have their rights, it [the support] depends on the gender or age and type of abuse. For example if the victim is a woman, they should be safe and the community should inspire her and she should be compensated for what she has lost as well, in order to help her feel satisfied. She should be educated related to the law. For forced labour, this is usually done by groups that hold arms and I want that to decrease. Even if they do [make villagers labour], they [villagers] should be provided with proper wages. Every group including the government [Tatmadaw] group should provide wages.

What do you think is the main cause of human rights violation?

At the current time, if [we] look back to the human right abuses [that happened in the past], the reason why they [Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups (EAGs)] fight is because of land; [they] fight over land and territory. It is because of fighting over land and [because of] ethnic discrimination.

So you mean fighting over land as well as extending territory?

Yes.

Now my question will be about the youth in your area. How do you want your community to be in the future?

I want the young and elderly people in my community to understand human rights. They should follow rules [be disciplined], [they should be in] the community that exists [in order for] the things that they want to be developed. Nowadays, the youth are connected to drugs. Some people are not interested in [human] rights. They [think that] they have the rights they do what they want to and they go with [using] drugs. Now, our Karen people are in having problem with drug issues.

So that is the main problem?

Yes, that is.

What will be the challenges to having a peaceful future?

The current challenges are: currently, we have concern and that is not only me, it includes civilians as well. Challenges are increasing after the ceasefire because companies are coming in and it is like we have to move away from our land. We are farmers and if we do not do this work what else [is there] that we can do? If they do their business operations on our land, where are we going to live? Someday, our new generation will no longer know our

traditions and if that goes on longer and longer our Karen people will be gone. And the young people will not have the chance to see the nature environment. If that happens we will no longer have happiness in our lives. There will be more challenges.

What do you think should be done by the Burma/Myanmar or KNU government for future development [for civilians]?

People who are the same age as men, some are handicapped; for them in order to have equality, there should be support from the [Burma/Myanmar] government or the KNU. For the KNU, they do not get salary but they still should help them [handicapped civilians] financially or verbally [inspiring them] as far as they could. I have seen former soldiers who are handicapped, when [I] asked them about the salary; they said they do not have salary. I want them [military] to take care of them [handicap]. There are many people who are handicapped at a young age and they are supporting their family livelihood. For the government, they rule the whole country therefore they are more responsible. [It is] not only the elders [who need support] but also the old people. The old women who are over 100 years of age, I would like them [governments] to support them every month with a certain amount, even if they [country government] cannot reach [the place where the old ladies live]. [I] want them to support [old ladies] for their mental and physical health as well as for their livelihoods.

In your opinion or according to the current situation, are they [young people] interested in leadership?

In my opinion, the youth are not leaders yet. They are still the followers because the top leaders are not leaving [their position] therefore they [youth] have no chance to become a leader.

What do you mean by the top [leaders] are not leaving?

Their leaders are on the top and they do not push up the youth and they block the way [for young people to progress as leaders]. If they do like that, the youth will not go up, they will just remain where they are. Actually, if they push up the youth and advise the youth like this and like that, there will be leaders that are from youth. Now, there not many young people leading. The youth do lead but only in KYO [Karen Youth Organisation].

Based on the changes during the new government [National League for Democracy (NLD)] that have taken place, or the ceasefire [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)] that was done in October 2015, what do you want to do in your future, [for example in] five years' time?

What I would like to do is not about my personal things. For the civilians in order to have peace, in the next five years, currently Tatmadaw that take [occupy] places, I am not saying that I want them to remove [their camps] because they are taking the security of the country but I want them to remove [their camps] from religious land. If they do not remove from religious land, the civilians will have [problems] with going onto the hill [where there is religious land] to worship.

Like you said before, they [Tatmadaw] stay in the area of monasteries. Could you give a [real] example of it?

There - Na Ga Taung [Statue or Pagoda] in Ba Ya Thon Su Town. The military [Tatmadaw] fenced the whole hill [off]. Sometimes the artillery troop stays there and sometimes military [soldiers] go and stay there when they do troop rotations with any group that they replace. On October 28th 2016, in Win Yay Township, Mel Sa Li village tract, B--- village, I have been informed by phone that the military fenced the land and that they currently stay near the monastery there. I travelled here now so I am not sure about the information yet, like if it is confirmed or not yet. If I go back there I will confirm the information. For things like that, it will be good that if they [Tatmadaw] remove [their base] from the place.

What are the concerns that you have in the future?

There are concerns because like I said before, the first thing is, why have the military [Tatmadaw] extended their military [camp area]? And the second thing is, after the 2012 preliminary ceasefire, why do companies come into civilian areas by associating with an organisation [armed group]? Because we civilians will have to lease land [to the development projects], be oppressed, their land will be in [their] control. Why has the military [presence] increased in local areas? If they want to defend the country, they should go and live in the country [towns and cities, not rural areas]. For the operations command it is fine, [but] for the troops [military camps] that are in between, they should be removed. They should open the way for the civilians [to travel to these areas safely]. [Therefore,] the main concerns are that they [civilians] will lose their lands, and concerns over fighting in the future.

For [future] change or development, what message do you want to pass to the youth?

For the youth of this generation, I would like them to maintain our culture, environment and not shirk away from participating in leadership activities. If they [youth] become leaders, I want them to lead in the right way.

Okay, so now I am going to ask you general information. Is there anything that you know related to the [Nationwide] Ceasefire that was signed in 2015 October?

In my opinion, related to the Ceasefire, everyone wants to live in peaceful way. That [peaceful intent] should be the true ceasefire and if it is, it will be good for the civilians as well as for us and for the whole country. After ten years, if the ceasefire results in restarting the fire [fighting], like if fighting happens again, [then I have] concern for that. [I do not have] full trust [in the 2015 Ceasefire] yet because the new government cannot control the military well. That is what I think.

What do you think of the ceasefire between other ethnic [armed groups] and the Burma/Myanmar Government?

We cannot view [the entire situation] from one side. There are conflicts between the [ethnic] armed groups and the government [Tatmadaw] as well as between the [ethnic] armed groups themselves. We do not know well the cause [of the fighting] but what I know is our civilians are not able to stay well [peacefully] therefore [I] do not trust [the 2015 Ceasefire] much because the military is out of control.

Have you ever seen people in your area migrate to Thailand or Malaysia for work?

Yes, I have. There are many kinds of problems for civilians in our area. Currently, there is stone mining and as a consequence the land has been damaged but there is no one who

will take responsibility for the consequence, therefore there are people who migrated to Thailand for work [because their land was damaged]. There is no one who will come to solve the problems [for the civilians]. They [civilians] face many problems therefore they migrate to other countries.

What is your opinion on that?

They [civilians] have land in their own country but they do not have chance to work on it as their land has been damaged [by development projects] therefore they have to migrate to other countries and work, but that does not mean that they want to [migrate and feel] happy working [in another country]. They migrate because of their livelihood situation and maybe for some people they just want to go and live in Thailand.

Are there things that you have seen that have been improved related to healthcare, education, communication, transportation and social management?

Yes, there are. During the conflict time...

When is the conflict time?

Since 1992, 2000 and up to nowadays, there has been improvement related to healthcare because in the past, the civilians did not have chance to use medicine. Nowadays, there is medicine from the KNU side, as well as other services [that are provided for civilians]. And there are also foreign NGOs that come in like Backpack [BPHWT]. They come and support and they have tested blood for malaria. In the past, malaria was the common disease but it is decreasing these days. For the old people [who] suffer diabetes mellitus and [problems with their] blood sugar, there is no medical service [available] for them yet. For the education, it has improved as well. After the 2012 preliminary ceasefire, schools in my township have improved and they [students] are getting the chance to learn Karen language but in some areas they do not have it yet. [It] could be because of the lack of teachers to teach Karen language. Nowadays, we get to learn Karen language; there are more schools in the area with more [financial/material] support. There are self-reliant schools and schools that open in monasteries. Some people do not trust the [Burma/Myanmar] government therefore they do not want to the government teachers, they only [want the] teachers chosen from their local areas. The reason that they do not trust [Burma/Myanmar government teachers] is maybe because they have something [prejudice] in their minds. I do not know what they are [thinking], they are stereotyping and they are still doing this in some areas.

Related to refugee issues, education issues, administration issues or land issues, livelihood issues, drugs issues and landmine issues, after 1992 what issue do you think happened the most based on your experience?

I do not know for the whole Dooplaya District level.

I mean as far as you know.

Now, the current issue is [not] about landmines because it [the area] is clear but currently, land issues [are the main problem]. They are the main problem.

Do you know anything related to development projects in your village?

There is none so far but now there many organisations that are coming into the area. They give financial support for people-centered organisations [to help civilians]. They support with 20,000,000 [US \$14,713.95]¹⁵⁰ kyat for 3,000 people in a year. For 5,000 or 6,000 people, they support with 40,000,000 kyat [US \$29,429.53]. They formed committees for that [type of support] at the village level, [to organise] who [is responsible] and what they want to do, [for example] they can do road construction in the village [or] a water project. There are organisations like that that are coming in.

Could you tell me what they are [called]?

I don't know in English but they call them *Lu Hto Ba Ho Pyu* [people-centered] organisation in Burmese.

So that is the organisation's name?

It is the organisation's name in Burmese.

As a local civilian, do you think that it is beneficial?

If they do not ask [the civilians] to return the money and [if they] help out of good-will, if they do not make profit from the civilians, I believe that that is beneficial for the civilians. But if they say that you [civilians] took this [money] from us already [and therefore you] permit us [to do a development project], if that happened I think it is not a beneficial thing [for civilians] because that can cause problems.

How about things that are related to current development projects?

With current development, there are two things which are good and bad. At this moment, development projects are good for everyone. [Firstly] for the communication nowadays you do not need to travel in secret, you can travel publicly with cars or motorbikes to the town and hospital but [secondly] the bad thing is the land damage.

What kind of development projects have impacts like land damage?

As far as I know, [the projects with land damage include] the place that the government Tatmadaw recognised as their target practice field, and the international [Asian] Highway [that was built]. The [Asian Highway] is not qualified [good enough] to be at the international level and the [road] that they constructed is only between 60 and 80 feet long. Now, they [the government construction department] said that up to 230 feet away from [wide of] the main road is recognised as the road area. That is threatening our civilians, the civilians who live there are working on rubber plantations, betel nut plantations and farming for their livelihood. They work on only three things. They cannot work on any other things. The road goes through their farms, their rubber tree plantations and betel nut trees and [the lands] are gone [destroyed]. If they do not have those [lands], how can they survive? If their houses or lands are destroyed, it costs a lot to rebuild them as their value is high. Who will compensate them? They are facing problems like that these days.

¹⁵⁰ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 21st April 2017 official market rate of 1359 kyat to US \$1.

Before they implemented the project, did they do consultation or did they pay compensation for [land that was damaged] when they carried out the road construction?

I did not know [about the road construction] when they started the project but [I know about it now] according to what villagers have said and what I have researched.

Where?

In Win Yay Township, before Bo Tin Hlaing [former KNLA's Battalion Commander of Win Yay Township] resigned from his position.

When was that?

In 2013. They held a [consultation] meeting [about road construction] but they invited only village heads and village tract leaders from the village and said that they will construct the road, [they] did not [offer compensation] for trees or bamboo [that were damaged by the road construction]. They are valuable [trees and bamboo]. They did not guarantee that they will compensate or not but they said that they will report it [to leaders from Burma/Myanmar government]. The civilians allowed them [to do this] as they were happy with what they said but in 2014 or 2013, before he [Bo Tin Hlaing] resigned, he said, *"we constructed this road for you to travel [so you should not ask for more]. What do you want? You will need nothing."* and the civilians did not dare to say anything. Some village heads, they went to the meeting and they are not well educated [so] they did not share information with the villagers after attending the meetings. Some village heads did share the information with villagers. Some villagers did not attend the meeting. Those kinds of things caused problems. After he [Bo Tin Hlaing] resigned, the Roads and Communications Officer Si Thu Htun, and Managing Director Maung Maung who is also a local resident [became active on this project]. He [Maung Maung] came in [to the local area] with Mya Lin Aye company in the past. Currently, he is an advisor in the local area. He is leading the project [road construction] and he also has members [supporters/staff such as] KNU Battalion #16 officer Poe Pa Le. They are the members. Si Thu Htun is a KNU Roads and Communications Officer. They are the people in charge but when I asked [about the road construction], some officers said that compensation will not be paid. The township administration has also said that same sometimes. But when I asked them if they have reported [the need for compensation] for the civilians or not, they said they have not reported to the leaders and they also said that he [Maung Maung] will not provide compensation.

So you mean in the past they said something and as time goes by, longer and longer, they do something different to what they said?

Yes. The civilians have to face [this situation] based on those changes. That is the problem.

In your area, what kind of development projects do that you expect?

If they do development projects, [I expect there to be] compensation for damage and compensation [for other issues caused]. You also have to consider if the project is from the government or [from] a private company. If it is from a private [company], there is law for private companies], you have to act according to the law on this. They should pay both for the compensation and for the damage with current market [prices]. If it is from the

government, the government will only pay with the price that they set [not current market prices]. Compensation for [land and plantation] damage should be provided differently. If they [the actor doing the development project] can take care of that, they can do whatever business they want to do and they have the rights [to do this]. You have to look forward [plan the project effectively], it should neither damage the environment nor disadvantage the civilians. If [the project] damages the river and civilians' housing and land, you cannot do [a project] like that. If you want to do something, you have to discuss with everyone [in the community]. After the consultation, if there is no damage [predicted], it is good for any kind of development project to be carried out.

What I noted from what you said earlier was related to compensation. That was compensation [for land] and compensation for damaged [crops], is that right?

Yes.

When developments take place, you want these things to happen?

Yes, it will be good if they do consultation before they do implementation. And if they are permitted by the [local] civilians, they have to do it properly with collecting villagers' signature [for permission]. I would like them discuss [consult with villagers in order] to have transparency about their funding and the process, as well as giving awareness [information].

Thank you. Thanks for the information that you have given me. Is there anything that you want to say that I missed from my questions or that you want to say personally?

With the current situation, I would like to highlight the land issue. Civilians from my area, since the conflict time, they have lacked knowledge therefore human rights group especially KHRG give them more awareness. We open their ears [give them knowledge] so that they open up [feel confident] to speak. With the activities that we do related to land, we want them [development projects] to provide compensation [for land damage] and compensation for crops, even one tree or one piece of bamboo. Even if they do not get compensation for crops, we want them to provide compensation [for land damaged]. That is what I want to say. What can we do and how can we do this for them [civilians]? We want to show them the way.

If I use this interview for writing a report will you allow me to use it?

Yes. Thanks.

Ok, thanks!

Source #164

Log #	16-109-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
Date Received: November 9th 2016	

What is your name?

My name is Saw A---

How old are you?

I am 41 years old.

Where do you live?

I live in B--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District.

What is your occupation?

I am a gardener.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many children do you have?

I have five children.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is 17 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is seven years old.

What is the most important human right in your life? What human right do you need the most?

As I am a gardener, I want to work on the garden freely. That is the most important thing [human right] for me.

What do you think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area?

In my area, we have the rule of law but I think the justice system is weak.

Were there a lot of human rights abuses in your area in the past?

Yes, there were a lot of human rights abuses in my area in the past.

When did it happen?

[Some] human rights abuses were committed between 1992 and 2005. At that time, some of the villages, including young children, were forced to relocate. [Some] human rights abuses also were committed between 2006 and 2011. Most human rights abuses were committed in 2006.

What happened in 2006?

Human rights abuses were committed due to [Tatmadaw] military operations because they forced the villagers to relocate. The innocent villagers were killed by Tatmadaw soldiers.

Did fighting break out at that time?

Tatmadaw soldiers killed villagers when the fighting broke out. They also killed villagers even when there was no fighting.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village?

Yes, we had to flee our village.

Why did you flee your village?

We fled our village because of the fighting. The men especially had to flee in order to avoid being porters. The women also had to flee and some of the women were arrested [by the Tatmadaw] to be their porters. Sometimes women died because they stepped on landmines while they were porters for the Tatmadaw.

When did you return to your village?

It was dependent on the situation [military operation]. Since the Tatmadaw soldiers were not active in the village we returned. If they remained in the village, we did not dare return.

Was this B--- village?

Yes.

Was the situation good when you returned?

Yes. The situation was good when I returned because there were no military operations in the village. This was before 2006.

What did you experience during the conflict [fighting]? What do you think about it?

I directly experienced the fighting. During the fighting I was a porter for the Tatmadaw. When the fighting broke out for the first time, they [Tatmadaw] put us in the frontline and we had to carry their bullet boxes while they stayed at the back and shot. They then asked me to carry their bullet boxes into the field where the fighting broke out. I ran away on that day and injured my waist while I running away.

If you were not satisfied with those actions, did you go to the court in order to punish them [the Tatmadaw]?

Although they killed a lot of innocent people no case was solved [in court]. No one could punish them.

So there is no justice?

Yes. There is no justice. They [the Tatmadaw] are above the law.

For people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict, did they get justice when they went to the court?

I have never heard of a situation in which the people who were victims of human rights abuses went to the court and received justice. Even if they went to the court they did not get justice.

Have any of the human rights abuses been solved or been forgiven?

No human rights abuse has been solved or forgiven because... how can I explain this... it is like the expression, *"If there is more water, water wins and if there is more fire, fire wins"*. People who have more power can do whatever they want because most of the perpetrators are Tatmadaw soldiers. Thus, we cannot do anything. We have reported the case [what they have done to villagers] to the people who are responsible for human rights abuses but nothing happened. For example, one villager from my village was killed by the Tatmadaw. His name is Saw Ba Oo. When his wife finally went to ask for compensation from the Tatmadaw they only gave her one bag of rice.

Where did the villager who was killed live?

He lived in B--- village.

After he was killed, did the Tatmadaw only give [his wife] one bag of rice?

Yes. His wife frequently went to ask for compensation from the Tatmadaw. Finally, the Tatmadaw gave her only one bag of rice.

Did a group of Tatmadaw soldiers kill him [Saw Ba Oo]?

Yes. Tatmadaw soldiers came to the village and they saw Saw Ba Oo while he was returning from his garden. Then, they killed him. Also, they killed another man named Saw Maung Gyi. No matter who they [Tatmadaw] killed, the case was never solved. No one knows how to punish the perpetrators. We heard they [soldiers who killed villagers] are from Military Operations Command [MOC] #7.

When did they [Tatmadaw] kill those villagers?

They killed those villagers in 2007.

Where are the Tatmadaw soldiers who killed the villagers from?

They are Myanmar government soldiers. They are under MOC [Military Operations Command] #7.

Have those soldiers received any punishments?

No, I have never heard that they were punished. In my area, we have never heard of a situation in which the Tatmadaw soldiers who committed human rights abuses were punished.

What do you think should be done for people who committed human rights abuses during the conflict?

As I told you before, it is not the case that they often [Tatmadaw] killed people. In the summer of 2016, there was an accident in which a villager driving a motorbike in Toungoo District was hit by a Tatmadaw military truck. The military truck driver then ran away – his name is Ko Ye or Maung Ye – I cannot remember his exact name. At first, they [Tatmadaw soldiers] lied and told people that he [truck driver] did not crash into the motorbike. After local villagers investigated the incident they found evidence that the wheel of the military truck had crashed into the villager's motorbike. First, he [driver] tried to run away and his colleagues also argued that he did not crash into the motorbike. Later on, the driver came back and was arrested but he was not kept in the police station even though he was arrested. He was kept in the military army camp. So we still do not know whether or not he was punished.¹⁵¹

Why do you want soldiers who committed human rights abuses to be punished?

They are an armed group so they follow their own rules. However, everyone must be under the law. Although they are armed soldiers, they should be punished according to the law if they commit human rights abuses.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

In 2006 and 2007, there were many killing cases committed by Tatmadaw soldiers. They also forced villagers to be their porters. Related to Tatmadaw soldiers, there were a lot of human rights abuses. We cannot count how many abuses they have committed.

Did human rights abuses happen in Thandaunggyi Township?

Yes, it happened in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District. We cannot count how many human rights abuses they committed. They committed human rights abuses in many different ways. We cannot say how many kinds of abuses they committed. Human rights abuses regarding development projects are still happening despite the fact that the primary ceasefire agreement was signed by Myanmar government and ethnic armed groups in 2010.

What do you want to be in the future? What kind of human rights do you want for your future?

In my future, I want to be recognised as a human being. I want to be treated as equally as everyone else. It is not about power and money. I want to be someone who is recognised as a human and I want to live under leaders who will provide justice for everyone.

¹⁵¹ For more information on this case see, "[Collision between Tatmadaw military truck and a villager's motorbike in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District, May 2016](#)," KHRG, September 2016.

You want the Myanmar government to recognise you as a man who should be treated by everyone equally? Is this right?

Yes.

What are the biggest challenges your community will face in the future?

The biggest challenge facing my community is the rule of law because it is very important for all of us. We are not able to [participate in] politics in order to get justice. We need people who study law abroad and are recognised by the government and law experts who are willing to protect our people. Also, international communities should pressure the Myanmar government to reduce the amount of human rights abuses they commit.

So the biggest challenge you face concerns the rule of law?

Yes.

What should the government (KNU or Myanmar) do to make the best situation for people at your age? Can you please tell me what you want for them?

There are many people who are wise at my age. Some of them are willing to help people by solving human rights issues in their communities but it is difficult [for them] to solve human rights issues. If something [human rights abuse] happens, people talk to their village administrator about it but the village administrators cannot submit the case to the leaders above them. There are many village administrators who are my age but they could not do anything for the people in spite of their position in the government administration. They have to follow what the Myanmar government demands them to do. Even though they are recognised as part of the Myanmar government's civil service they do not have any authority to act.

Are young people interested in leadership roles in your community?

There are many young people who are interested in leadership roles in my community. They take part in many different aspects of leadership such as politics and social issues. They have faced many challenges because of the human rights abuses and therefore are passionate about improving their community.

What do you hope to be doing in five years?

In five years, I am not sure what I want to do but I really want a true civilian government for my people. I also want the rule of law so that my people can be protected. In my country, a ceasefire agreement has been signed but I want a true ceasefire agreement that will build peace.

You want true justice for people in five years so that you can travel freely?

Yes.

What are you most worried about for the future?

When we look at our future the political situation is very important. We will be worried as long

as there is fighting in our country because whenever the fighting breaks out between Myanmar government soldiers and ethnic armed groups, it will affect the people. There are no guarantees [of safety] for the people. I am afraid that fighting will break out in the future.

So you are worried the most that fighting will happen in the future?

Yes.

What do you want to say to the Karen youth to improve their community in the future?

We want our new generation to receive an education in order to improve their community. The Myanmar government should ensure that teachers effectively teach children in school. I want the education department of the Myanmar government to improve the lives of children by building schools and supporting them. I also want the Myanmar government to allow our children to learn our Karen language in school.

What do you know about the ceasefire in 2015?

Regarding the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement], I know that they [the authorities] distributed magazines and booklets to the people about the ceasefire agreement that they signed in which they say that the ceasefire agreement is for the whole country. This is just their agreement but fighting can easily break out at any time. We do not know whether or not this will stop the civil war in the long term because not all of the ethnic armed groups are included in the ceasefire agreement. So we cannot say that the fighting will not break out in the future. There are no guarantees for the people because after the ceasefire agreement was signed, fighting broke out between the Myanmar government soldiers and the Kachin soldiers and then fighting broke out again between Tatmadaw soldiers and DKBA soldiers. This is the current situation. They said that the NCA is for the whole country but they did not practice [follow] their NCA.

You said that the NCA cannot give any guarantees and that it is unstable. How does it relate to [impact on] your life?

Yes. I am a Myanmar citizen. They both [Myanmar government and KNU] only fight each other for themselves. They do not benefit the people. If they stop fighting, it will be good for them [civilians]. If they continue to fight, they will die. This NCA is not for the people but for them.

Who are 'they'?

'They' are the Myanmar government and the KNU [Karen National Union]. Most of them are the Myanmar government. The KNU is revolutionary. Although they [KNU] want to do something for the people, if the Myanmar government does not accept, they [KNU] cannot do anything.

What does the KNU do that the Myanmar government will not accept?

For example, if the KNU comes to my area and wants to provide healthcare to my people they first have to ask permission from Myanmar government. They could not act without permission from the Myanmar government. Therefore, the KNU have less authority to act.

What is your perspective and feelings on the peace process between the Myanmar government and ethnic armed groups?

Regarding the peace process, the Myanmar government tried to offer ethnic armed groups a chance to make peace but they are still fighting. There is no genuine peace. They [Myanmar government] gave them a chance because of the difficult situation they faced. In my opinion, the Myanmar government tried to offer peace talks with ethnic armed groups in order to stop the fighting because they first wanted to solve their difficult situation but I am not sure whether or not it is true.

Do you mean that the peace process is not genuine?

Yes, I think so because, for example, it is too broad, so if I discuss the whole country I will not be able to discuss [specific issues]. When we just look at our Karen State, the fighting is still happening despite the NCA. Because of that, villages were destroyed and villagers died. I only heard about it from Facebook. The villagers tried to help the DKBA but the DKBA soldiers shot the villagers. This is inappropriate. It is not possible to work together with DKBA according to [what I saw] on Facebook.

How do you feel about it [peace process]?

There will only be peace when we [civilians] can feel peaceful and secure. The current peace process that they [Myanmar government] have put in place only stops the fighting temporarily due to the difficult situation. The meaning of true peace is when women, children and everyone live peacefully. That is what we would call peace.

What do you think about the people in your area that migrated to other countries or cities in order to find a job?

In Thandaunggyi Township, it [migration] is related to land confiscation. In the past, the Myanmar government came to local villages in Thandaunggyi Township and confiscated local villagers' lands. Besides, they [Myanmar government] built a dam; consequently, local villagers did not have lands on which to stay. Therefore, they became jobless. As a result, it became difficult to support their livelihoods. Then, some of the villagers, including women, went to other countries in order to find jobs. Some of them never came back to their villages.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of health and education, communication, transportation, living standard and administration?

I did not see any improvement regarding health and education because we do not have enough school teachers in our local school. It is free for children to study in the primary school but the Myanmar government does not support students with books, pens or school materials. That is why school teachers ask for money from their students when they need something for their school. Regarding healthcare, we have clinics in our area but we do not have adequate medicine in the clinic. However, I do not see any signs of improvement.

In which year between 1992 and now do you think there were the most human rights abuses?

There were the most human rights abuses in 2006 in our area.

Could you please give me any examples of human rights abuse in 2006?

It is related to Tatmadaw military operation. Light Infantry Division [LID] #33, #66 and #88 came to villages in Thandaunggyi Township for military operations. Tatmadaw soldiers from LID #66 killed many villagers in the rural area during Major General Ko Ko's administration period. Therefore, villagers had to be relocated. Some villagers had to flee from their villages. Some people had to leave their homes and they went to refugee camps in Thailand. Some villagers could not go to refugee camps and they just stayed in the jungle with their families so they often confronted hunger issues.

Who is that Major General?

He is Major General Ko Ko.

Which army [Tatmadaw] did he serve?

He is from Southern Command Headquarter in Toungoo District.

Did he come to your village [B--- village]?

No, no. He did not come to my village. In 2006, he was the military operation commander from Southern Command Headquarters in Toungoo District. He commanded LID #66 to come to villages in Thandaunggyi Township as part of a military operation but soldiers from LID #66 killed many people in Thandaunggyi Township. They also killed prisoners. I do not know why they killed people. It might be an order from their leader [Major General Ko Ko] but I am not sure.

What do you think about that [murder committed by Tatmadaw]?

I heard that they did military operations like clearing territories and cleared minority ethnic people as part of their 'Four Cuts' strategy. In my area, if villagers wanted to go to their farms in the morning, they had to go and get a permission letter from Tatmadaw camp. If they came back home from their farms in the evening, they had to show this permission letter to the Tatmadaw because villagers were not allowed to sleep overnight in their farms. If the Tatmadaw found villagers who did not have a permission letter in the jungle, they tortured and beat villagers.

Do you know about any development projects that happen in your area?

If I hear about development projects, I will be afraid because they are not coming to improve our villages but only to come and make money [business]. When they constructed the road, they confiscated villagers' lands but they did not pay any compensation. They did not discuss with villagers before they began constructing the road. Besides, the quality of the roads they constructed is very poor. Villagers are unable to use them during the raining season. We confront these difficulties in our area.

So the villagers did not get any benefit from the development projects that happen?

No, the villagers did not get any benefit. For example, there is a dam constructed by Shwe Swan In Company and Asia World Company in Toungoo District. Due to the dam construction, many of the local villagers' land was lost and destroyed. However, local

villagers did not get one flower of light. They just had to live in the dark. Especially, villagers from in Toh Boh village, they had to live without homes.

“Local villagers did not get one flower of light.” What do you mean by that?

They [company] said they would provide electricity to local villagers but villagers did not get access to electricity.

Did only Asia World Company do development projects?

Not only Asia World Company but also Kaung Myanmar Aung Company.

Did they [Asia World Company and Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] discuss with villagers when they conducted their development project?

No, they did not discuss with villagers. They just conducted their development project together with Tatmadaw soldiers.

As you are a villager, what kind of development do you want in your community?

If we talk about development in my community, we have to go step by step. Local villagers should understand about development projects. They [company] have to discuss with villagers and explain the consequences of development and why they are doing it. They should only do development if everyone agrees with it because I think there could be advantages and disadvantages if they do development. I mean they might have rules or code of conduct as a development project. I want to suggest that they have to practice the rules on an international level. They should do it step by step.

So what kind of development do you want?

All development should benefit villagers and villagers must agree on it. That is what I want.

How do you want it to be carried out?

They [company] have to explain and educate local villagers if they do development projects. They should let everyone know what they are going to do. I mean, for example, some villagers could not understand Burmese [language]. So they [company] have to call interpreters to explain to those villagers their plans. Business people from companies and local villagers have to discuss the consequence of development. What advantages and disadvantages are there for the company and for the villagers? They have to negotiate with each other. I want development that will give more benefits to the villagers.

OK, what do you want to say regarding my questions?

Businesspeople, soldiers, Township leaders and everyone should be under the law because if they want to do business, they have to abide by the business laws. I want everyone to be recognised as humans and treated equally. As a human, everyone should have human rights. We have lost our rights and properties because the rule of law is very poor. Whatever we do, wherever we stay, the rule of law must be just and fair. It should not only be for a group of people but for everyone.

Thank you very much for answering.

Yes. Thank you too for letting me speak.

Finally, I want to thank you for sharing your experiences and knowledge about the human rights abuses which happened in your area. Do you allow KHRG to use everything [all information] you told me today?

Yes. I really want KHRG to use it.

OK. Thank you.

Source #165

Log #	16-110-A6-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously published in September 2017 http://khrq.org/2017/09/16-110-a6-i1/nyaunglebin-interview-naw-c-december-2016
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
<p>Ethnicity: Karen Religion: Christian Marital Status: - Occupation: Student Position: Villager</p> <p>On December 5th 2016 I came to meet with a young female villager in B--- village and interviewed her about the future for young people like her.</p> <p>What is your name? My name is Naw¹⁵² C---.</p> <p>How old are you? I am 24 years old.</p> <p>Where do you live? I live in B--- village, Khel Ken Koh village tract.</p> <p>In which township do you live? Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Township [Nyaunglebin District].</p> <p>What ethnicity are you? I am Karen.</p> <p>What is your religion? I am a Christian.</p>	

¹⁵² Naw is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

What do you do?

I am a student.

What is the most important human right for you? For example, health, education, freedom of movement and security?

I cannot say that only one human right is most important but I also cannot say that every right [is the most important].

No. You can talk about every human right [that is important for you].

I want to have the freedom of movement and the freedom of work. Every right is important to me but as I am a student the most important human right for me is the right to education. This is just my opinion. I do not know what to say.

Yes. I mean what is the most important human right for you?

Every right is important but you have to be healthy if you want to gain education. Therefore, the right to education can [only] come after the right to healthcare. Things are like that. You must be healthy if you want to study. If you are healthy, you can work to earn a living. To be able to earn a living, you need to [also] have freedom of movement and the right to work. Thus, [if you have these] there is no barrier to block your rights. As a human, we have to use our rights in an appropriate way. Nobody should disturb [take away] our rights. We have to take our rights fully [not one right without another] and we have to do our best. If we can work, we can get [enough] food. If we get food, we are healthy. As long as we are healthy, we can study. If we can study, we will be educated. If we are educated, we can improve our community.

What do you know or think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area or in your village?

My village community has not improved a lot. Regarding the rule of law and justice system [in my village], I am dissatisfied and personally cannot accept it yet because it is not fully practiced.

In the past, my village was not a peaceful place. My village was both a black area [rebel-labelled area] and a mixed control area [between Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups]. That is why we do not have a proper justice system in our village. We rely on ourselves to solve problems between different ethnic groups but we do not currently have a proper justice system yet. We are now trying step by step to develop a proper justice system. We want to improve the justice system in our village but there are other important issues or concerns that we need to address first.

Freedom of movement is [also] very important for us. If we were to go back to our village there would not be the proper and official laws in place that would allow us to manage our affairs and lead others. We can currently travel slightly more freely [than before] but we cannot go everywhere [we want to go]. We are able to travel freely in order to earn our livings so it has become easier to support our livelihoods even though we still do not get enough food when we work. This has improved our lives and will prevent disagreements or arguments from breaking out and social conflicts and friction from spreading. There are still disagreements between villagers but we are now trying to address them [social conflicts between villagers]. In the past, nobody would confront you if you got drunk in the village because the alcohol would have been bought with your money. Now, village elders have become open-minded [changed their perspectives] after the ceasefire agreement. They

[elders] now understand that education is essential for everyone. Therefore, the number of students has increased in the village. In the past, we only had a primary school but we have recently added a middle school so many more students can go and study at school. The education situation in the village has improved. In the past, village elders did not think that education was important. However, those who believed in the importance of education convinced the elderly of its importance. Therefore, they [village elders] came to understand the importance of education.

In the past, they [village elders] would not speak up if other people [in the village] were too loud. Even if they wanted to speak out [complain] they just kept silent. Now, however, they talk openly and explain that if it is too noisy, it will disrupt their children's studies when they [their children] have to read books. If some people want to use loudspeakers, they [village elders] will stop them because they think education is more important. That is why [it is important for] our leaders who are lawyers to improve the justice system in the village. In the past, we did not have any rules for using loudspeakers in the village but we now have rules for using loudspeakers. In the past you could use loudspeakers whenever you wanted to. Now, villagers can only use loudspeakers until 9 pm. Similar changes have taken place in the village. In the past, there were a few instances of theft but because such cases were rare we did not care much about this issue. However, there [is now] a lot of cases of theft in the village so we have had to try and reduce these problems by making [our rules] stricter. Therefore, the past situation is different from the current situation in the village.

So villagers must solve the problems in their village on their own? Or do they work together with the village head to solve problems?

Yes. They solve the problems in the village and also work together with the village head to address issues.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

Yes. Human rights abuses happened in our area. Do you mean human rights [abuses] related to land or [human rights abuses] related to individual villagers?

I mean human rights abuses related to individual villagers. I am asking about everything related to human rights abuses.

Villagers were unsatisfied with the human rights situation in the past because of the conflict. Even if we wanted to go and work on our hills [hill plantations] we would not go because we did not feel safe due to the fact that Tatmadaw soldiers were active around the village. That is why we cannot know exactly where they [the villagers] are. Villagers were afraid to go outside because if Tatmadaw soldiers saw villagers outside of the village, they would call the villagers over and ask them many questions. Because we were not able to work on our hill farms, it seemed as if they [the Tatmadaw] had taken away our right to livelihood. That is one thing [human rights abuse]. In the past, if we finished primary school in the village, we had to move to the Myanmar government's middle school in the town to study. However, unpleasant things happened during that time. Sometimes the Tatmadaw closed the route [to the school]. At other times, the KNU [Karen National Union] closed the route [to the school]. Consequently, we were not able to return home when we had summer holidays. After we came back and stayed at home we were not able to go back to our schools. Therefore, we were unable to follow [continue our] school lessons and classes. When we were students we lost our opportunities to study.

When did this start to happen?

It started when I was studying at Standard Three.¹⁵³ When we studied, it [fighting] happened. Thus, we were afraid and we had to stop our studies for one month. Later on, we were forced to flee and return home to our village. Our school had to close because our school teachers also were afraid of staying there. None of our teachers lived in B--- village; they lived in Ler Doh Town so they went back home there. Our education was delayed because teachers were afraid of the fighting and were unwilling to come and teach at the school. And then... what were you asking me about?

I was asking you about the incident date.

Yes. The fighting happened when I was studying at Standard Three. At that time, I was just nine years old. Therefore, the fighting broke out in 2004. Other people probably faced difficulties during the fighting. As for me, I started to face difficulties in 2004. In 2007, I came back to visit my home and then the fighting broke out again. As a result, I was not able to go back and study in the town, which caused my studies to be delayed. Then, I asked the leaders whether I could go and study in the town. In 2008, I was not allowed to take this opportunity to study in the town because the road was closed. That is why I could not study at the school again. In the end, I had to work in my village. Actually, I did not want to work. I just wanted to continue my studies. We lost our chances to study. Our studies were delayed because of the fighting.

Which government closed the road? Did the Tatmadaw close the road?

At that time the Tatmadaw closed the road because they thought that the villagers were involved with the fighting and they would shoot anyone who travelled on the road. They did not want to shoot villagers if they travelled on the road. That is why they closed the road and did not let any villagers cross through. As a result, I lost my right to education.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village?

We have never fled our village but we did have to hide secretly. What I mean by this is that the fighting happened near our village. Tatmadaw soldiers shot in B--- area. We were not sure whether they were shooting at us. We did not know whether they were shooting at the people. We were afraid of their gunfire and we hid underneath our houses. Tatmadaw soldiers said that they shot people on sight. Other people also probably had to flee [from the village]. As for me, I have never fled my village; we just hid under our house in order to avoid the fighting.

Have any of the human rights abuses been solved?

No. I mean some human rights abuses have been solved and some human rights abuses have not been solved. I was very young at that time so I did not know what happened. I cannot remember the exact date as [more than] six years have already passed. At that time, the Tatmadaw leader did not let villagers work on their farms. He stayed at his army camp and tried to oversee the village with binoculars but it was not very clear to him what was going on in the village. Because he was not able to see with binoculars what villagers were doing in their huts, he ordered the villagers to dismantle all of their huts in order to clearly see what condition the villagers were living in on their farms. Therefore, if villagers wanted to go to work on their farms, they had to get a permission letter from the Tatmadaw. Villagers nicknamed the Tatmadaw leader "*Par Ghoe Del*" [which means Mr. Hut Destroyer] because

¹⁵³ A standard refers to a school year in the education system of Burma/Myanmar. The basic education system has a 5-4-2 structure. Primary school runs from Standard 1 to Standard 5, lower secondary school is Standard 6 to Standard 9, and upper secondary school is Standard 10 to Standard 11.

he ordered villagers to destroy all of their huts.

Do you know the name of that leader?

No. I cannot remember his name because it happened when I was young. I just remember what older people called him: "*Par Ghoe Del*". I do not know what his real name was. In addition, our father had to take his children if he wanted to go out because he [*Par Ghoe Del*] was more likely to give you permission [to go out] if you took your children with you. If you were alone, he would doubt you and would not believe that you were a local villager. The Tatmadaw would not call on [disrupt] villagers who were accompanied by their children. They only let villagers who were with their children travel freely. Therefore, if village elders wanted to go out, they had to bring their children alongside them. If their children were not able to go and work, they had to go and walk with their parents. The children did not have any choice. Thus, it created barriers for the children.

You said that the leader was known as "*Par Ghoe Del*" because he ordered villagers to destroy all of their huts. Did their leaders punish those who committed human rights abuses?

No, but not all of the soldiers were doing inappropriate things. In the black area¹⁵⁴ where we live, if we reported the information to their leaders, their leaders would punish the soldiers who made mistakes. Some leaders did not act like that. If the head [army leader] is not good then the bottom [soldiers] will also not be good. Even if the bottom is not good, it would be slightly better for us if the head is good. We will suffer a lot if both the head and the bottom are not good.

Can you give me any examples of punishment for those who committed human rights abuses?

Tatmadaw soldiers arrested Karen villagers who visited us in the village. They [the Karen villagers] were just guests and were not coming to fight. Their leader said that there would not be any problems so long as they were not holding any weapons or guns and not causing any trouble because the guests were only trading things in the village to earn income. People outside the village heard about [what was happening] and came to visit their friends' houses. Tatmadaw soldiers arrested both the outside people and the house owners. The soldiers also confiscated their [the guests'] gold and their money. In addition, they slapped the guests' faces and beat the guests. Villagers reported what happened to their leaders in order to resolve the case. Then, their [Tatmadaw] leader ordered the soldiers to return the money and gold to the guests and punished the soldiers. I only saw this happen once but I cannot remember on what date it took place.

What do you think should be done about the people who commit human rights abuses during the conflict? For example, if a Tatmadaw officer beat and hit a villager

¹⁵⁴ Tatmadaw expert Maung Aung Myoe explains that the three-phased Tatmadaw counter-insurgency plan, developed in the 1960s, designates a territory as black, brown or white according to the extent of ethnic armed group (EAG) activity. Phase one transforms a 'black area' into a 'brown area,' meaning it transforms from an area controlled by EAGs where the Tatmadaw operates, to a Tatmadaw-controlled area where EAGs operate. The second phase is to transform the area from a 'brown area' into a 'white area,' where the area is cleared of insurgent activities. The final phase is to transform a white area into a 'hard-core area,' during which more organisational works are necessary and the government forms pro-government military units for overall national defence. See Maung Aung Myo, *Building the Tatmadaw: Myanmar Armed Forces Since 1948*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009, p. 31-32; see also *Neither Friend Nor Foe: Myanmar's Relations with Thailand Since 1988*, Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Nanyang Technological University, 2002, p.71.

what do you think should be done? What kind of punishment should he [the Tatmadaw officer] face?

The type of punishment he [the Tatmadaw officer] receives should depend on the type of abuse he commits. It is like the saying 'you will have a big footprint if you have a big body.' It does not matter whether he makes a small mistake or not. He should be given a big punishment because he is a Tatmadaw officer. Therefore, he should be more responsible than other people. He should act according to a higher standard than other people because he is an officer. He should think critically about whether he should make a mistake or not and should be a role model for his followers. Therefore, he should be given a big punishment even if he only makes a small mistake because he is a leader. However, if his soldiers make a small mistake, they should only be given a small punishment. If they make a big mistake, they should be given a big punishment. For the leaders, they have to think wisely and carefully before they make any mistakes because they are regarded as honourable role models. Therefore, because they are leaders they must be given big punishments even if they only make small mistakes.

Do you have any examples of [appropriate] punishments such as prison sentences, paying compensation or loss of power?

For example, if there is a leader and his soldiers steal our chicken and ducks that leader should punish his soldiers. We do not [only] want compensation [in this case] as the leader who is responsible should punish his soldiers properly so that they will not steal again; also, they should repay [the owner] more than double the original cost [of the chicken]. If the chicken is priced at 5,000 kyat [US\$3.62], they should repay 15,000 kyat [US\$10.88] as compensation. That way, the [soldiers] will know that they will have to pay 45,000 kyat [as compensation] if they steal 15,000 kyat [US\$10.88]. They will then fear [the punishment] and will not steal again. In addition, they [the soldiers] should pay 800,000 kyat [US\$580.49] if they steal 400,000 kyat [US\$290.24] which is equal to the price of the animals]. Therefore, they will be afraid [of the consequences] if they keep stealing. If they continue to steal our animals, they should have to pay a compensation of double or triple the original price of the animals. In addition, their leader should also be removed from his leadership position and should be demoted to a lower position because leaders must be held accountable for their poor management or leadership. As I previously said, you will have a big footprint if you have a big body. The [leader's] mistake is bigger than his soldiers' mistakes because if he cannot lead or manage his soldiers or if he supports his soldiers [in that situation], he will not be a good leader in the future. That is why he [the leader] should be demoted if he makes a mistake; [he should be demoted] because it will be better for us if he [and his soldiers] do not commit further [human rights] abuses again.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict? How should we support or heal them?

It is natural for humans to be greedy. Even if they already have land, they will want more. As a citizen, they will probably want support. What I mean by this is, some people have suffered desperately from the war but the situation has improved. However, we should support or help them [those who suffered from the war]. Helping them and supporting them does not require a big commitment. We are all human and we all have the same human rights. Some people cannot use their rights so they cannot improve their lives. Other people can use their rights so they can improve their lives. However, even if they are able to use their rights now, they are at a disadvantage compared to those who have been able to use their rights for a long time. Therefore, we should support them. If they want to work on the garden, we have to help them by buying vegetable seeds for them to grow. If they want to work on the farm but they do not have any tools to work with, we have to help them by providing tools or

materials for them to work with even if we cannot buy a buffalo for them. Or we can help them by lending other people's buffalos to them. If they can work, they will improve their lives step by step. If we cannot help them, we have to give them rights or chances [to improve]. We should not prevent them from accessing their rights. If their rights are taken away, they will never see the light in their lives [achieve their potential].

Do you think they should be supported with donations of money or should they be provided with machines that they can use to work on the farm?

Regarding the issue of livelihoods, in the past I was not able to access the same rights as others so I was not able to improve my life like other people. I can now use my rights like others so I have to take advantage of this opportunity and try and improve my life. If I am able to do this I will be satisfied. Furthermore, we also have to reflect on whether the new generation is able to go to school or not. If the new generation cannot access their rights they will not be able to improve their lives and may not send their children to school. However, we have a responsibility to support those who have had their rights taken away from them. We should help these people find employment or make them work as daily workers [in order to meet their livelihood needs]. In the past, oppression took many different forms and so it was difficult for these people to improve their lives. Recently, the educational situation has improved a lot, but maybe they cannot send their children to school even if they want to because they do not have money. Even if this is the case, we have to help their children attend school. This will help heal the new generation's suffering.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause of human rights abuse is the fighting; many different issues and problems emerged as a result of the fighting. As citizens, we live under the management and leadership of the government and our leaders, but they also have to rely on us citizens. Therefore, we are related and connected. They [government and leaders] say that if fighting breaks out their goal will be to protect citizens. That may be their goal but that does not reflect the reality in which our rights [as citizens] are abused. It is true that they [KNU and Myanmar government] do not fight with civilians but with each other. Yet as I previously discussed, [this fighting] caused them to close the road which civilians travel on. Actually, they did not close the road [directly] but because they did not stop fighting [it became too dangerous to travel on the road]. I do not know what the political purpose of their [government and leaders] fighting was or who the soldiers are. We civilians are not involved in the fighting and only want to travel freely. Yet even if they did not want to fight the civilians they both [Karen soldiers and Tatmadaw soldiers] said that if they saw villagers outside, they would act as if they [the villagers] were the enemy and shoot at them. Therefore, the fighting prevented villagers from going outside; that is why the fighting is the root cause of human rights abuses [in our area]. If there was no more fighting, even if we were not able to access all of our [human] rights we would at least be able to access half of our [human] rights.

What kind of future do you want for the other young people in the community? For example, do you want improved education for children, improved employment options for young people, a safer community, a stronger Karen society and increased access to land? What do you want in the future?

There are many things that I want in the future. Education, healthcare and development are very important for me. As a Karen person, we want our [Karen] people to lead us. To be able to lead and manage people, we should have education and knowledge. If we do not have education, we will not be able to improve our people. We want to travel freely. Personally, I want my [Karen] people to lead me but in order to lead people they should first receive an education. That is why education is very important. To get an education, we have to be

healthy. There are many things that we need but education and healthcare are very important. We also want our [Karen] people to lead us. The other important thing [that we want in the future] is for there to not be any more conflict or fighting [in our area].

What are the biggest challenges your community, and in particular young people, will have to face in the future?

I think the biggest challenge facing our community is war. If war breaks out again, our community will be forced to relocate, our families will be separated and some people will be killed. There are no bigger challenges than war. If war breaks out, we will be forced to flee and we will suffer from hunger in the jungle. This is what will happen if there is war. If there is peace we will be able to travel and work freely.

However, in my village small land issues and arguments may arise between villagers regarding the right to land possession. These land issues need to be resolved by those who are arguing with each other. It would be good if land issues were resolved. If we have peace, another important challenge is healthcare. There is no real doctor who will give us medical treatment if we are sick in our village so we have to travel, with difficulty, to [the hospital] in Ler Doh [Kyaukkyi] Township. Healthcare is very important in our village. Another challenge is education. As the situation improves, we will have to compete with each other regarding education. Another challenge is that people from other villages will migrate to our village as the situation improves so there will be a lot of people in our village. This will cause a lot of conflict and arguments regarding land and materials between people. Moreover, wealthy individuals will enter our village to pursue business activities. If our leaders are willing to support us, I hope they [business people] will not take our ability to secure our livelihoods away and destroy our lands. If our leaders are not willing to support us or if they do whatever they want to do, it will cause big problems for us because then the business people will cooperate with our leaders to take away and work on our lands. Our leaders will probably justify it [business activities] by saying that [their activities] will benefit the people but I do not foresee that it [business activities] will actually benefit our villagers.

What should the government (KNU or Myanmar) do to make the best situation for people at your age?

The people at my age who are between 20 and 25 years old are the future bright stars [of our community]. Even though some of these people are not educated, they should still be considered the future bright stars because they are still young and because they have their own natural abilities. We cannot know what special talents they might have. We have to give them a chance to work. If they have the potential to improve their community, they should be considered the future bright stars. That is why we have to show them the way to be useful for their community. In order to improve their lives, we have to find them jobs and make them follow the community rules. Some young people are very bad and their behaviours are not good. Some young people want to try bad things; therefore, we have to punish them if they do bad things. If we do that, young children will learn lessons from their lives and experiences. Some young people think that because the situation has improved and they are now able to access their rights, they should be able to do whatever they want to do. They should use their rights appropriately and should be punished if they misuse their rights. We need to find jobs for the young people who are educated and qualified. We should guide them, train them and show them the right way [to live]. We should not ignore them because they can do many amazing things in their lives. They are neither too old nor too young. That is why our leaders and the Myanmar government should find them jobs that they deserve or [other jobs] for them to do if they cannot find any jobs.

Are young people interested in leadership roles? What do you think of it [leadership roles]?

I am personally interested in leadership roles but this does not mean that I just want to be a leader who takes power. For now, I am not a leader. I am just a follower. I do not know when I will become a leader. I will just try to do the best I can as a follower. Even though some of the current leaders now are not educated I just do what they [the current leaders] ask me to do. I follow them because I want to be a good follower. You have to be a good follower if you want to be a good and respectful leader. I want to be a leader but I do not want to take power over people. This is not because I do not want to lead my people. It is because I have to wait for the right time and place to lead my people. If some people are smarter than me, I will let them be my leaders and I will follow them. If there is no leader, I will take a stand for my people as a graceful and respectful leader. For other young people, they are also interested in leadership roles but they are not very eager to be active. I heard that they [other young people] said they will act differently because they saw some people [young leaders] acting wrongly. In reality, I do not see them [other young people] taking on leadership roles. This is just the word [rumours I hear]. They [young people] have a desire to take on leadership roles but not all of them want to take on leadership roles. Some young people do not say that they want to take leadership roles but actually they are energetic about becoming leaders. This is what I see [regarding young people who are interested in leadership roles].

What do you hope to be doing in five years' time?

In five years' time, I will be trying to secure my livelihood. Even though I will be trying to support my livelihood, I will also try to help the people in the environment around me. I will not only consider how my business will benefit myself but I will also try to help the people that live around me if they need help. I am currently trying to help the people around me and have not yet started my own business. I have been prioritising the people [around me] rather than myself. I have not married yet as I am young. Thus, it is not hard to secure my livelihood. As I am single, I have many opportunities to help my people. If I get married or if I get a family one day, it will not be as easy to give my time to my people. At that point in time, I will work to support my family's future but also I will try to help the people as much as I can if it is necessary to do so. As a human, I will try to fulfil all my duties and responsibilities. All people should be responsible for helping [other] people's health, religious and social needs. I will help people regarding these three things [health, religious and social needs] as a young person in the future. This is what I am thinking [planning] but I will definitely do it. It would be better if I am healthy. If I was to die an early death, I would have to let it [my plans and desires] go.

What are you most worried about for your individual/personal future?

As a citizen, I am most worried about the fighting. If there is no fighting, we can improve our community with our own abilities even if the leaders do not support us. If they [leaders] cannot support us, they should at least let us access our rights and give us opportunities. If we are able to use our rights in the right way, our lives will be improved. If fighting breaks out, we will not be able to do what we hope to do. We will not be able to access our human rights and our future will be bleak. It will not be possible [for us young people] to become future bright stars. I do not want war. For example, there are some people who have not passed Standard Ten and [other] people think that they are not smart, but they do not understand the situation. Everyone may have rights but not everyone has a chance to use their rights. My siblings and I had to live in [several] different places during the fighting period. I lived in B--- area so I was not able to access all of my rights due to the fighting. My brother, on the other hand, was able to access all of his rights because there was no fighting

in the place where he lived so he was able to travel freely in his area. Thus, he was able to work and improve his life. As for me, I was not able to travel freely to school or to work. That is why [I believe that] everyone is naturally smart but we do not all have a chance or right to use it [our natural abilities]. I was not able to improve my life a lot [due to the surrounding circumstances]. That is why I do not want the war. Some people think that villagers in B---area are very lazy and that they therefore cannot improve their village. It is not like that [those beliefs are incorrect]. Our village was not improved because we did not have a chance to use our rights. During the fighting, we dared not go [outside] to study or work. So how would it be possible for us to improve our village? If we went outside, we would be shot and killed. That is why it was very difficult to support our livelihood. If there is no fighting, we would be able to use our abilities to improve our lives. If our [individual] lives are improved, we can improve our village.

What do you want to say to the Karen youth about how they can improve their community in the future?

I want to tell the Karen youth to keep their hearts beautiful. There are a lot of people whose hearts are not beautiful even though they are educated. Personally, I feel that a beautiful heart is a person's most important characteristic. If you have a beautiful heart, your thoughts and attitudes will be good and the work that you do will also be good. That is why good things will happen to those who have beautiful hearts. How do I explain this? I just want to encourage educated people by emphasising the importance of having a beautiful heart. Currently, the situation has improved and education has become essential for everyone. Due to these changes, we have become educated and can now access more of our rights than other people. We should not only use our rights to benefit ourselves and our families. For example, when we finish school we might only want to teach if we get a salary. We are not supposed to act like that. Even if we do not receive a salary, we should be satisfied with what we already have. We should keep our hearts beautiful so that we can share our education and knowledge with the community. If we do this, our community will be improved and we will also receive merit. If you have a chance to donate your education and knowledge, you should just donate it [without demanding a salary]. Do not hide it [your education and knowledge]. You should not avoid teaching or sharing your education with others just because you do not receive a salary and believe that without a salary you will be unable to improve your life. You should not only teach in order to receive a salary. You may believe that if you receive a salary then you can buy whatever you want and your life condition will improve. But that is not what should happen. You should instead keep your heart beautiful because even if you do not receive a salary if you teach the children [properly], then they will become literate. If they [children] are well-educated, then they will become future bright stars. As they grow older, they will become smarter than you. If we do not teach them when they are young, their lives will not improve when they grow up. How can I explain this? If we teach them while they are still young, then when they grow up they will be smarter than us. Therefore, the future will be bright. But if we do not teach them, their [bright] futures will fade away. That is why I do not want young people to behave or think like that [only working to receive a salary]. Just keep your heart beautiful.

Some people have had opportunities to study medicine and healthcare so they should advise village elders how to take care of their health. They should educate young children and guide them so that they can take care of their health such as by teaching them how to keep their body clean and how to maintain their hygiene. If these children are healthy then they will get a chance to study and their lives will improve. We should explain [healthcare issues] to village elders clearly if they do not understand healthcare. We should not blame them for lacking knowledge about healthcare because they did not have any chance to learn

or study when they were young. We should explain [healthcare issues] to them with love and with kindness. We have to explain [healthcare issues] to them until they understand and accept our thoughts; we have to be patient.

Some people do not want to send their children to school because they do not understand [the importance of] education; however, we have to explain to them clearly the importance of education. For example, we should explain to them, *“You have to send your children to school. If your children do not study at school, their lives will not improve. Also, you should not ignore them after you send them to school. You have to guide them towards the right path and you have to be with them.”* This is what teachers have to do [explain to the elders].

As for those people who were not educated, they should not be lazy as the situation improves. They should learn as much as they can. They should not believe that just because they were unable to attend school when they were young and do not know how to read and write that they should live like this [a simple life]. Actually, they should not think like that. How can I explain this? As the situation improves, we have to also improve ourselves. Even if we cannot improve at the same rate, we should know what is going on. We have to find out [what is happening]. If we do not understand [what is happening], we need to ask people who understand it [what is happening]. Some people think that people who understand things [because of education] are younger than them so they do not want to ask younger people [to explain what is happening]. That is not the attitude they should maintain. We should adopt an attitude in which we acknowledge that we are not educated and do not understand some things so we have to ask others to explain to us what is happening, even if they are younger than us. We have to study things around us. If we see that something [that we study] is good, we have to follow and do it [the good thing we have studied]. If we do not learn or if we stay in our own place, we will never know [learn] anything [new].

There is a saying, *“You will never become a good person if you never move to another village.”* According to this saying, we should not close our eyes and just stay in our village. We should learn and study as much as we can. We should go and study in other towns and cities if we are given the opportunity to do so. If we only stay in our village and work here, we will never know [learn] what is going on in other towns and cities. We will never know [learn] how they were able to improve and develop their cities and towns. So we should know [learn] how they improved. I do not mean to say that our lives will [only] be improved if we go to work in foreign countries. We can also improve our lives in our village but we have to recognise that we need to study and learn in order to improve. We should not close our eyes and ears. We should not think that we will be fine if we do not study or that our brothers and sisters will be fine if we do not send them to school to study. We should not have that kind of attitude. We need to explain to our sisters and brothers the importance of education by providing different examples to them. If we give them opportunities to study they will be able to improve their lives and communities.

What do you know about the ceasefire in 2015?¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see [“Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups,”](#) Reuters, October 15th 2015. Despite the signing of the NCA prompting a positive response from the international community, see [“Myanmar: UN chief welcomes ‘milestone’ signing of ceasefire agreement,”](#) *UN News Centre*, October 15th 2015, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe’s decision to sign has been met with strong opposition from other

I just know that it was an agreement to stop fighting. I think even though we cannot fight with our guns, we can fight with our words or pens.

What do people call that ceasefire?

I heard that people called it the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement]. This is just the name of the ceasefire. The leaders call it the NCA.

What do you think about it [NCA]? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

I think that the NCA is supposed to signal the end of fighting throughout the country because they have already signed an agreement to stop the fighting. However, a lot of fighting is still ongoing. This is how I understand the NCA. This NCA is relevant to me because I am a [Myanmar] citizen. Regarding the [risk of] fighting between the Myanmar government [Tatmadaw] and Karen armed groups, my concerns for my [Karen] people have been reduced. Prior to the NCA, there was fighting between the Myanmar government [Tatmadaw] and ethnic armed groups including Karen armed groups. Therefore, I always wondered and worried about my Karen people who had been killed and shot. Now, since they [the KNU] have already signed the NCA the fighting between the Tatmadaw and Karen soldiers has decreased but at the same time, fighting has increased between the Tatmadaw and other ethnic armed groups. Thus, my concerns for my Karen people have decreased. Because of that, I am happy and satisfied. This happiness and satisfaction will [hopefully] last until I die. I hope it [lasts]. It [happiness] should not only last for a short time. This happiness and satisfaction about the NCA will continue until our new generations see and taste it [peace after the NCA]. I do not want our new generations to see [experience] fighting.

What is your perspective and feeling about the peace process between the Myanmar government and the ethnic armed groups?

As I am a young citizen, I do not completely understand the peace process. I do not know how successfully it is being implemented. I only know about the NCA that they signed and I do not want any more fighting in this country. I do not want them [the Myanmar government] to ignore the voices and demands of the people. The people suffered from the fighting prior to the NCA but this suffering may disappear after the NCA was signed. Therefore, the people will make demands and requests to the Myanmar government. The Myanmar government should not blame or criticise the people. They should instead discuss and negotiate with the peoples' requests and desires. I do not want anyone to start a war. If somebody makes a mistake, he or she should be punished based on that mistake. If we can forgive the mistake he or she makes, we should also forgive him or her. If they make a big mistake, they should be punished in accordance with the law in a fair and just way. Even though the NCA was signed, there may still be a lot of conflict among the people as the population increases. These conflicts can be about anything but should not lead to fighting with guns. That is why the local Myanmar government should try their best to solve these issues. I do not want non-violent conflict to become violent conflict.

Do you mean they are still fighting even though they have agreed to the NCA?

members of the Karen armed resistance and civil society groups alike, who believe the decision to be undemocratic and the NCA itself to be a superficial agreement that risks undermining a genuine peace process, see "[Without Real Political Roadmap, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Leads Nowhere...](#)," *Karen News*, September 1st 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014.

What I mean is that the biggest solution [to prevent further fighting] now is the Myanmar government. There are no issues with the Kachin, Shan and Kayah armed groups. We only have to deal with the Myanmar government. When we signed the NCA, we only had to deal with the Myanmar government. It [the fate of the peace process] depends primarily on the Myanmar government. Other ethnic groups like the Shan and the Kachin have suffered from the fighting prior to the NCA. In order to sustain the peace process, the Myanmar government has to stop the fighting and agree to a ceasefire. Therefore, before they can sustain the peace process, they have to first make sure that the fighting has completely stopped. After the NCA was signed suddenly, the people probably were unable to forget how they suffered during the fighting and also may have still had concerns in their mind. When they [ethnic armed groups] spoke to the Myanmar government, maybe they sometimes said the wrong things. If they have conflicts or disagreements during the discussion, they should not let it [disagreement] turn into a war or into fighting. We have to solve it [the conflicts] step by step.

Do you mean that other ethnic armed groups have agreed to a ceasefire with the Myanmar government for a long time but that our Karen armed group has only agreed to a ceasefire recently? Is that right?

In the past, the Karen armed groups agreed to a ceasefire but the fighting still continued afterwards. You know that. Do you not understand what I am saying? The Karen armed groups signed a ceasefire agreement with Myanmar government in the past but they both argued and disagreed with each other when they later discussed what they wanted to do next. This disagreement caused the fighting to restart. Now they have signed a ceasefire agreement again. They will probably have disagreements when they negotiate with each other. It would be better if they do not have any disagreements, but if they do I do not want those disagreements to lead to fighting. They should try to figure it out step by step. I do not want war. I do not love war. If we have issues, we must try and solve them. Small issues should not escalate into war.

Are there people in your village who went to other countries or cities to find jobs?

There are a lot of people in our village who go to other cities to find jobs. Some people really wanted to go to other countries but they did not have any opportunity to leave [the village]. As for me, I want to go to other countries but I do not have any opportunity to leave [the village]. There are many reasons why we are unable to go to other countries. Some people do not have enough money to leave. Some peoples' parents prevent them from leaving. Some people cannot go because of their bad health conditions. While there are a lot of people in our village who go to other cities to find a job no one from our village has gone to another country.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of health, education, communication, transportation, living standards and administration?

There are no big improvements to our community but we are still trying to develop it. We have only just started to improve our community. In the past, we only had a primary school with a few teachers in our village. After our headmistress reported it to Myanmar government, more schools and more classrooms were constructed and the number of school teachers increased. Although our educational situation is not perfect, we can say nonetheless that it has improved slightly. Regarding transportation, in the past a lot of people did not travel to our village because of the fighting and only travelled from their places to our village once a month because of transportation difficulties. After the ceasefire, a lot of people travelled to our village so we can conclude that the transportation situation has slightly improved. Regarding administration, it is not very effective but people are still trying to

improve it. Regarding healthcare, in the past it was difficult to call Myanmar government doctors if we were sick but recently Myanmar government doctors have entered our village. Since our Karen people are usually only health workers, if we get serious illnesses, we have to call for Myanmar government doctors. In the past, when we became sick we did not feel safe calling for a doctor at night. This caused some sick people to suffer until they died. After the ceasefire, we were able to call for the doctors to come and provide medical treatment any time we needed it. These changes are due to the decrease in fighting. In the past, people would only come to our village by motorbike. Now, cars are used to travel to our village. This has made it easier to send sick people to the hospital in the town. In the past, in order to send sick people to the clinics we had to carry the sick people [on foot]. So the situation has improved slightly even though it still has not changed dramatically.

In which years, from 1992 until now, do you think the most human rights abuses were committed in your area?

The most human rights abuses happened... I think it happened because of the fighting.

In what year [were the most human rights abuses committed in your area]?

When the most furious fighting happened, other people suffered more than I did. I suffered due to the war for two years. We villagers did not suffer a lot from human rights abuses during the fighting because soldiers killing one another are not human rights abuses; they have to kill each other because they both willingly chose to fight.

I did experience a human rights abuse, however, in 2010. In 2010, I was sitting for my exam. I took the exam in the summer of 2010 and fighting broke out next to the village during *Thingyan* festival [in April]. We therefore had to cancel the *Thingyan* festival and so it seemed to us that we had lost our rights. This was the only time I saw this happen with my own eyes. We put *Thanaka* [traditional makeup]¹⁵⁶ on our faces and we were ready to celebrate *Thingyan* festival but suddenly fighting broke out and we heard the sound of gunfire. We had to flee. During that time, we were not able to travel or work freely. This made it difficult for villagers to support their livelihoods. I clearly remember this. At that time, [Infantry Battalion¹⁵⁷] #53 [from Tatmadaw] was active around our village. They [Tatmadaw] said that the Karen soldiers shot at them first and so they shot back at them [the Karen soldiers]. As we are villagers, we did not feel safe speaking up. When we were preparing to celebrate *Thingyan*, the Tatmadaw saw Karen soldiers on the way [road] and they started to shoot. The fighting happened because they did not inform or notify each other about their traveling plans. Although villagers directly witnessed the fighting they dared not say anything.

You mean the Tatmadaw fought [with the Karen soldiers] by accident? Not [because of the activities] of Karen soldiers?

Yes. We knew that Karen soldiers did not come to our village. The Tatmadaw said that they saw Karen soldiers and so they started shooting. Actually, this is not true. They [Tatmadaw]

¹⁵⁶ Thanaka is a yellow-white paste applied to the face and sometimes arms by Burmese women (and less commonly men). It comes from grinding the bark, wood or roots of a thanaka tree with a little water. The paste is believed to protect and cool the skin in the sun, as well as to improve one's complexion. See "[Beauty That's More Than Skin Deep](#)," *The Irrawaddy Magazine*, August 5th 2011.

¹⁵⁷ An Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Yet up to date information regarding the size of battalions is hard to come by, particularly following the signing of the NCA. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

just shot without justification. We wanted to speak the truth but we dared not speak out. It seemed that our rights had been taken away.

Are there any development projects happening in your village/community/areas?

Yes, there are development projects underway in our village. Our village head is trying to work with villagers to improve the water system to get easier access to water. If we get water easily, it would be a small improvement for our village. Villagers are also starting to raise goats for the village charity. Also, we are growing cardamom plantation for sale to raise money. All of the money we raise will be spent on community development projects such as education, healthcare and so on.

Who came to organise those projects?

CIDKP (Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People).

Do they benefit the community? I mean do these projects benefit the villagers?

We cannot say whether it will benefit [the villagers] or not. We will have to wait and see. You will not be able to know the result [of the projects] right away. However, I can say that these projects are good for our community. For instance, let us examine our water system [project]. It benefits villagers because we do not need to carry water from faraway places. However, with regards to the issue of raising goats and growing the cardamom plantations, we cannot know when we will profit. We have to take actions step by step and we have to wait for months [before we can find out if we have benefited from the projects]. Therefore, we cannot say for the certain whether it [the projects] will benefit [the villagers] or not. However, I personally believe that it will benefit [the villagers].

Did they [CIDKP] inform and discuss with the villagers [the details of the development projects]?

Yes. They [CIDKP] informed and discussed with the villagers [the details of the development projects]. They told the villagers that community development should be according to the villagers' desires. If villagers do not approve, then they should not do it [community development projects]. They only gave advice to the villagers about what they should do. They work together with villagers and request permission from the villages before doing anything.

So they [CIDKP] will act if villagers think that [the development projects] are good and villagers will also act if they think [the development projects] are good for villagers?

Yes.

So it [the situation in terms of development projects] is good. What kind of development do you want to see in your community? How do you want it [the development projects] to be carried out?

If any development project is implemented, it should be clearly marked whose lands belongs to whom. [People] must measure the lands [beforehand] to identify which land belongs to whom and then land grants should be given [to those who own their land]. The lands should be measured systematically and land grants should be provided to those who own land. For example, if somebody knows the area of his lands, he or she would be responsible for cleaning the trash on his or her lands. This is not what currently happens. Trash and garbage are left on the land and nobody takes any responsibility to clean or get rid of the garbage because nobody knows which area of land belongs to whom. This is just an example. If they knew [who owned the land on] their land area, it would be easier for the local authorities who take care of the environment because people would not throw garbage

on the land and not clean it [afterwards]. This would affect the environment so people should be punished if they harm the environment.

Also, education and religion are important for basic community improvements. Regarding religion, religious buildings should be properly constructed in the village. Education, religion and the economy are very important for village development. We cannot only improve the education situation. We cannot only improve the economic situation. We should improve all of them [education, religion and economy]. That is why we should also improve the religious situation. Honourable religious leaders should be in the village and schools should also be repaired. The school we have now is not very good. School buildings should be firmly constructed. School teachers should know how to run the school and how to keep it clean. The image or structure of a school should be decorated with beautiful flowers. I think that the school should have a compound and should be fenced. It would be better for teachers and students to teach in the school. Teachers should not only teach children with schoolbooks but also other different things [about the world]. The school building is essential. It would be good for students if we have a good school building. For example, if we do not have a good school building and the roof is poor, the students will not be able to concentrate on what teachers are teaching when it rains. To be able to improve the village, lands should be measured systematically and schools should be firmly constructed in order to have a good and safe class. Also, religious buildings should be constructed better. Religious leaders should be educated and honourable. If the education, religion, economic and healthcare situations are improved, the village community will improve.

OK. Do you want to report anything that I have not asked you?

What do you mean 'I want to report'? What kind of case would I want to report?

You can report what you want to report. It can be anything that I have not asked you. What are your views and feelings? Anything you want.

I want to report many things. Will you listen to me?

As you are a citizen, you can report what you want to report.

You mean what do I want to report as a citizen or as a woman?

You can report what you want to report as a woman.

As a youth, I want to report that we have to improve our community. If some people do not know how to improve, we have to train and educate them. If we train and guide them properly, they will know how to improve their community. This applies to the people who want to help and support [us villagers]. Some people [donors] said that they give support [fund] to [the villagers] but [villagers] did not do anything [for community development] and so they said they will stop supporting and helping them. If that is how you act, then you do not really want to help people with your heart. You are acting as if you want to test people. If you really want to improve the community, you have to help people with your whole heart. You also have to come and check whether it [the situation] has improved or not. If things do not go well, you have to discuss with the people how it should be improved. This applies for any organisation [who wants to help people].

There is something [else] that I do not feel happy about. In March [2016], Karen social workers came to donate rice to villagers that were funded by Japanese donors. However, they [Japanese donors] had to get permission [from the Myanmar government] before they came to donate rice to villagers which took a long time. People had to wait until 4 pm [to receive the donated rice]. When I went there by car and saw the situation like that and I did

not feel happy.

I also want to say that the Myanmar government and ethnic groups have already signed the ceasefire agreement and started the peace process. Burmese people [in the city] can have freedom and rights if they report [something to the Myanmar government] but as for the Karen people in rural areas, they do not have rights and freedom because they have to get permission [from the Myanmar government] if rice is donated to them. I am not happy about that.

Oh, are you saying that if Japan donors want to donate rice to villagers the Myanmar government will disturb them?

Yes. The local Myanmar government said that they will have to report it to their leaders [if Japan donors want to donate rice to villagers]. This is what they report but I think that this is a means of disturbance.

So you mean anyone who has power should not disturb people who want to help and support communities?

Yes. If it is fine for them [people who have power] to not provide help or support but they should not disturb us. I am not happy if they do disturb us. As a citizen, I do not want any actor to disturb the people who want to help or support communities. I do not want anyone to disturb these people, not even for one minute.

What time did it happen?

Maybe in March or May [2016] but I am sure it did not happen in June [2016]. If you want to know more details [about what happened], you can ask the leaders in the village.

OK. Do you have other things to say?

How can I explain this? I do not like the leadership of our Karen people. It [administration] does not work systematically. I do not mean that I want to blame and criticise them. It does not mean that I look down them. I just want to say that the leadership is weak. If possible, I wish that it would be strengthened. If the leadership is weak, our people will not be able to improve. As we are Karen people, we want to rely on Karen leaders. If our leaders are weak in leadership, our dignity will be degraded. If other [ethnic] people want to say bad comments about us, they will say them. Also, our punishment system should be improved. For example, people fight with each other and report the case in court but [the legal system] does not solve the problem and does not punish people. I am not sure but I want to say that people who have power [judges] should give fair and just punishments if people make a mistake. If we go to the court, the [judge] does not want to properly solve the problem. It seems other people want to look down our people. For people who make a mistake, if they should be punished; our leaders should punish them properly. If they should not be punished, they should be forgiven and our leaders should solve the problem [diplomatically]. People who have rights or the power to judge should do the best [they can]. If they do not want to solve their problem, people will not be willing to do anything [go to court and report their cases]. We should respect each other. Otherwise, people will not want to rely on them [leaders or judges].

Thank you.

Is that it? Thank you too.

Source #166

Log #	17-3-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Date Received: January 22nd 2017</p> <p>Photo number: 268- 0125</p> <p>This photo was taken on November 11th 2016 in Tha Main Dwut village, Tha Main Dwut village tract, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. It shows members of the Backpack Health Worker Team (BPHWT) trying to help sick villagers by giving them medical treatment for free in Tha Main Dut village.</p>	

Source #167

Log #	17-4-A3-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Interview Date: November 8th 2016</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>My name is Naw He---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>I am 46 years old.</p> <p>Do you have a family?</p> <p>Yes, I do.</p> <p>How many children do you have?</p> <p>I have five children.</p> <p>How old is your eldest child?</p> <p>My eldest child is 25 years old.</p> <p>What about your youngest child?</p> <p>My youngest child is eight years old.</p> <p>What is your religion?</p>	

I am Buddhist.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is the meaning of human rights?

Human right means equality. Everybody must have equal rights. Our Karen people must also have equal rights, as other countries preserve their rights. Every human being must have adequate equal rights.

Do you encounter any issues with health and education in your community/area/village?

Do you mean in the current situation or in the past?

I mean the current situation.

There are still many difficulties with education. It is very difficult to find the teachers because the village is small. For health, there are also problems. We still do not have a hospital. When there are urgent and serious sicknesses, there is a problem with transportation to get to the city/town [to get treatment]; we do not have a car or a motorbike and we have get [help] from others.

Which city/town do you usually go to get treatment?

It depends on the stage and situation of the disease. We go to Mu Don Hospital first, but we have to go to Mawlamyine (Mon State) Hospital if the disease cannot be treated at Mu Don Hospital.

You said that there are difficulties with education as well. What kind of problems are there?

The school is a primary school and it has classes until fourth standard. After they finish school in the village, the students have to go to school in another bigger village, which has a high school. The educated people in our village are rare, so not many people become teachers. As a result, we have to find and hire teachers from other places/villages.

How much do you pay the teachers per year?

I am not sure about that. We have not tried to understand the details.

Who do you think is supporting the school? Is there any special organisations supporting the school? [Is it the Burma/Myanmar] government or self-funding?

The villagers are supporting some parts, as well as our mother organisation [KNU] and the Burma/Myanmar government. They [Burma/Myanmar government] do deliver teachers but there is still a scarcity of teachers.

You said it includes [your] mother organisation. What is that?

It's the KNU.

Do they [KNU] have any association in collaboration with the students' parents, as there is a shortage of teachers?

Yes, they do.

What do they do to help?

They provide rice.

Has the rice been processed or is it raw [with the husk still on it]?

It is raw rice.

How much do they give to each parent?

I am not sure how much they give.

What do you know/think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area?

We do have a system of law and justice, but it is not enough and does not take effective action.

Is the system of law and justice too complicated, so that people cannot follow it, or do people not want to follow it?

It is not too much; it is affordable. Nevertheless, the responsible people do not comply with it fully.

Can you tell us more, with examples, why they are not able to apply it effectively? Are they not accountable or not educated enough?

It is not like that. They do have education. If I tell you honestly it will damage our leaders' dignity because some people just follow money; as well, some do not value the villagers.

Are they KNU or Burma/Myanmar government?

I think mostly KNU because we live in Karen State.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past, regarding land issues? If yes, when and what happened?

Yes.

What kind of abuses? Were they arbitrary land seizure, road construction, or land confiscation?

It included road construction. They [Burma/Myanmar government] said that they would

construct the road but they did not do it in the past. Despite having a lot of problems with road construction, they have started improving the roads.

So you mean they are unlikely to take land for their own homes or to sell?

Yes, not like that. They did it for the purpose of building a road.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village?

Yes, we did.

When?

We fled from our village in 1997 when the Tatmadaw [Military Operation Command] #44 came.

Did you encounter any hardship when [MOC] #44 came and you had to flee?

As my family members were connected to the KNU, we had to flee when [MOC] #44 [arrived] because they were our enemy. So, we didn't dare to live in our village anymore.

Did your family have to struggle [against] any difficulties when fleeing?

Yes. We had to seek shelter in other people's houses and stay with relatives as we had lost our home. We would not have faced many difficulties if we had had our house.

Where did you seek refuge? In which village?

We sought refuge in A---area.

In which township is it located?

It is located in Win Yin Township, Dooplaya District.

Have you ever experienced wars/conflicts in your life?

Yes. I experienced it in our home village.

When?

It was around 1989-1990. At that time, wars happened frequently and it happened among our home/village. Our Karen soldiers (KNLA) placed their troops in the east and the Tatmadaw troops took their place to the west of our village.

Did you think of how to escape from the battle, when you were trapped between the fighting?

I did not even have a time to think about it. I immediately jumped down from my house [as soon as] the clash started.

Do you think there is justice for the human rights abuses that happened in the past?

There was nothing done to solve the human rights abuses.

What kinds of human rights abuses were committed and by who?

Mostly the abuses were committed by Tatmadaw troops, especially whenever fighting took place.

In what way did they abuse the villagers?

They recognised us, as we supported the side of our Karen people [KNLA] whenever there was conflict. After the fighting they usually blamed the villagers and found the villagers' at fault. They shot and ate our livestock whenever they wanted, without paying attention to the villagers.

So, do you mean that they did whatever they wanted; no one came and told them anything?

Yes, they did whatever they wanted. No one dared to tell them.

Were they Tatmadaw troops who committed the abuses against villagers?

Yes.

What do you think should be done against the people who committed human rights abuses during the conflict/fighting?

I think they should be dealt with through the law and justice [system], by taking effective action.

Ok, well. I mean, for example, should they be imprisoned or any other punishment?

It depends on the weight of the abuse; they should [be punished] in accordance with the law and justice [system], as there are different levels of crimes committed.

Do you think the people who once abused you are still alive, or have they died already?

I think some of them might have passed away and some are still alive.

You said that how the human rights abusers should be punished depends on the [crime they] committed, as it should be in compliance with the law and justice [system]. What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

I think the support is in the supporter's hands.

For example, the supporter wants to go and help them but they may not have any clue as to how to help. Perhaps, they may want to know the needs that they villagers' have.

I do not know what everyone wants. The supporter should ask the villagers by themselves.

So, the supporter should come to you.

We want support, such as accommodation, education and healthcare.

Well, according to your opinion, the affected victims should be supported in terms of accommodation, education and healthcare because they have experienced oppression. What is the root cause of human rights abuse?

War/conflict brings the most human right abuse, in my opinion.

Who are fighting in the war/conflict?

KNLA and Tatmadaw soldiers are fighting, especially over the control of land.

What future do you want?

Considering our children, there are things that we need for them. But for us, we do not have that much potential, as we are not able to do much work. Our children need access to education, healthcare and jobs. We want to see our children having adequate opportunity to access these.

Ok, I understand from you that the children need schools and enough teachers for their education, as well as hospitals for their health. What about economic opportunity?

It is about having the opportunity to have a proper job, and earning money for a livelihood. For example, we will not earn money unless we have a proper workplace.

You talk about job opportunities and workplace; there are many different types of workplaces. Which one do you mean?

I mean that poor villagers struggle more in their lives; they usually leave the country and work abroad. According to the situation, the government cannot offer [job opportunities] as expected, but we expect this will exist in the future. The needs are for a workplace such as a food/snack factory, garment factory and a company that can give a job to the people.

What are the biggest challenges facing your community's future?

The biggest challenge for now and the future is peace. We still do not have real peace yet, so the biggest challenge is peace.

The biggest challenge for you is that there is no peace yet. This means that you have a concern and are worried about war/conflict. Does it sound like that?

Yes, like that.

What about any other challenges that could be faced [in the future]?

I think no.

What should the government (KNU or Burma/Myanmar) do to improve the lives of people of your age?

It depends on them. If they want to help us they can help us [anytime].

For example, they really want to help you. What support do you need?

I want them to help me with healthcare and other things. I do not know what to say.

So, people at your age will be able to work if they are healthy. Is that right?

Yes, it is.

What do you need if you are able to work?

I am not clear with this question. Of course, we need many different things but are they able [to afford] to give it to us?

I mean we just claim what we need, but whether they give it to us or not is their part. Again, what do people of your age need?

I don't know.

For example, the people of your age might need opportunities such as having a place to make a living.

Will they give us what we need? For example, we need a good house, maybe a car, etc. It depends on them whether they will help us with that.

[As I have already told you,] we just want to present what we need [which doesn't mean that they will help us].

We need many things that we cannot count.

Are young people interested in leadership roles?

Yes, but only a few of them.

Can you give an example of how many of them are interested in [leadership roles] out of 100 people?

There will be 30 out 100 people of them who are interested in taking on leadership roles.

Only 30 young people out of 100 are interested in leadership roles. So, what do you think the rest of the other young people wish to become?

If we consider the current situation, 70% of young people are seeking a happy life, and some are addicted to drugs so they do not seem to have any special dreams.

What do you think about migration to other countries or cities to find a job? Can you give an example of the country [where people go to]?

Most of the people who seek work abroad go to Thailand, because of the livelihood problems that they and their family face.

So, it means that there are no job opportunities to earn a living in your community/area?

They are a few but they don't fully cover their needs. Therefore, they have to go to other places/countries to earn enough money.

You said that there are a few jobs that existed in your area, but do not fully cover the costs of living. Can you tell me what kind of jobs these are?

We normally do farming, betel nut plantation, and rubber plantation. Some people will own a piece of a rubber or betel nut plantation land, so we cannot compare the economy of our country to other countries. People who are working abroad cannot stay in the village, like other people do, but the only way to earn enough money is to work abroad. For example, one young person who is working in a rubber plantation every year cannot buy the motorbike that they want, as the price of rubber is unstable. However, it turns out that they can easily buy a motorbike after one year of working abroad. Many of them foresee this opportunity so they go to work in another country.

Do you want any job opportunities that you can earn money from made available to you?

This question is overlapped with what I have said before. If [we have] the opportunities like having a company workplace [factory] in our area, we can earn money by working there. We would be paid like other companies in other countries pay [their employees]. Thanks to that we would not have to go to work in other countries; we can work in our own country.

What do you hope to be doing in five years' time?

I hope to be working according to my skills and what I can do, because there are many things to do.

What are your skills?

I can do retail selling and sewing, so I will do that as they are the skills that I have.

What do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)? How is the NCA relevant to you?

I don't think that the NCA is durable.

So, what do you think about it?

Despite the NCA, I think we still do not have safety and security. Though they have claimed [signed] the NCA, they [Tatmadaw] have not removed their soldiers or camps. In fact, they enhance and strengthen them. Thus, as for me, I do not think this is a sustainable ceasefire.

Can you guess approximately in which area they [the Tatmadaw] have improved their

military services? For example, have they brought troops into new areas where they did not base their camps or troops before the ceasefire?

I cannot guess about new military extensions, but I've heard and know that they are enhancing and strengthening the ability of their camps and soldiers in their current camps in Dooplaya District.

Do you think the NCA is temporary or permanent?

As for me, I see it as a temporary [ceasefire] because there are still some minor wars happening. Though these are happening in other places, they also take place in Brigade Six [Dooplaya District] and other Brigades. So that I think this is temporary ceasefire.

Have any clashes taken place after the ceasefire was signed?

Yes, there has been some fighting, especially in Brigade One [Thaton District] and Seven [Hpa-an District]

When did this happen in Brigade One and Seven?

I can't remember the time.

Between which armed groups did it happen?

It happened between KNLA/PC soldiers and Tatmadaw soldiers, or DKBA (Benevolent) and KNLA/PC; I can't remember well.

Anyway, you are sure that there is still fighting in [Karen State]?

Yes.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of communication and transportation?

Compared to the past four years, the communication has improved. As well, transportation has improved because of the better roads and easier travelling.

You said the roads have gotten better. Who do you think is making the roads better?

It is conducted by a company but I think it comes through the Burma/Myanmar government.

Which company do you think [is involved]?

I don't know. I can't recognise it.

What about communication? Who do you think is making it better and what kind of communication is it?

The communication is talking on a phone. Now, there is a planted telecommunication tower in Pah Pra village. It has been planted for four months, but it has distributed the network for one month. This was planted by the Burma/Myanmar government.

In what years do you think there were the most human rights abuses, between 1992 to now?

In 1997 there were the most human rights abuses.

Who were the abusers?

They were the Tatmadaw soldiers.

How did the Tatmadaw soldiers violate your rights?

They violated everyone in the village whenever there was fighting. When MOC #44 entered the village every villager was brutalised. They brought a villager's wife to Pah Pra village and the Officer committed sexual abuse against her, which was unbearable.

Do you know who the Officer that committed the sexual abuse is?

I think his name is Bo Mae Lone.

What was the Burma/Myanmar military governments' name at that time? For example, there were SPDC and SLORC.

I didn't know anything about the military government at that time. So, I don't know whether it was SPDC or SLORC.

Do you want any development projects to happen in your village/community/areas?

Yes, we want development projects. However, there are different development projects, which involve construction, business, etc. Can you give me some tips so that I will be sure about what I say?

For example, your village's road has improved as you have mentioned, so do you want it to be more advanced, for example become a highway, or do you want a luxury house, or anything?

Of course, we want a smooth cement road in order to travel comfortably. We also want to see our houses built with blocks, like houses in the city.

Do you want to see any projects conducted in the future?

Yes, we do. For example, villages where projects are conducted must have access to sufficient electricity and water for the projects related to it.

Is that all? What else do you want?

There must also be projects related to health and education, as I have said before. Thus, we want every respective project to be conducted in accordance with their related fields. For example, if a village is developed into a town, it will need to have electricity, water, a hospital, and a school.

Thank you for answering all questions. It's your time to ask me question in case you are not clear about the questions that I asked. Are there any questions that you feel were unclear?

I think no.

The questions that you have answered are impressive. Therefore, we would like to ask permission from you use this information in our 2017 report. Do you agree with that?

Yes, I give you permission.

Thank you so much for giving us permission to use it.

Source #168

Log #	17-5-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

What is your name *Dtee* [Uncle]?

People call me Saw B---

How old are you?

I am 45 years old.

What is your occupation?

I do not have one [occupation].

Are you a farmer?

No, I am not because I am always sick. [His wife interjects and says,] *"He is always sick and he has had to stay in the hospital twice, so he cannot do anything [for work]"*.

Which village do you live in?

I live in A--- village.

[What] Village tract, Township and District?

Htee Th'Blu Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

What is your most important human right? For example health, education, freedom of movement, security, [or] land and livelihoods?

[My most important human right] is health. I have been sick for around three years, so I

cannot work on the farm. Therefore, I have to buy paddy for my family, but I do not have money and I do not know where to find money. I am unhealthy, so I cannot do any job. But at the same time, I cannot do anything without money.

What do you think about the rule of the law and the justice system in your local area?

I heard that people [authorities] told everyone to live according to the law, but once I saw drunk people come back [to the village] and make a lot of noise. Since I am unhealthy, I stayed alone and minded my own business and I did not do anything about it. If I was healthy, I would not allow them to do this [cause disturbances] and I would go and beat them.

Were there any human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

Yes, some drunk people went home and quarreled with their family. They live close to my family, so it also disturbed us. Some of them were drunk and fought each other. I do not drink alcohol, so I always move away from drunk people.

Did Karen National Union (KNU) or the Burma/Myanmar government commit any human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, could you tell me please?

Yes. It was when Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) was emerging. When?

It was around 1995.

Yes, maybe. At that time I always had to be a porter [for Tatmadaw]. Each time I arrived home [from portering], then I immediately had to go [be a porter] again, and again. Sometimes, just as we [villagers] arrived home, they [another Tatmadaw troop] would question us and hit us. I did not remember the name of that Tatmadaw troop.

Do you remember their general's name?

No, I do not remember it. At that time they hit Saw C---, Saw D--- and Saw E--- who lived in F--- village. At the time, I tried to think of why my head was not also hit by them. Another time, the Tatmadaw arrived to the office [in the village] just as I had arrived from portering. They ordered the villagers to go and see them, so I followed with the other villagers. On my way to them, I wanted to urinate, so I stop beside the road. For a while, I heard the sound of the Tatmadaw slapping the other villages faces, "*Hpah Hpah Hpah* [mimicking the sound of slapping]". They questioned the villagers, "*Do you know any situation update [about the KNLA]?*" A villager said, "*I do not know,*" so they slapped his face, "*Hta Hta*". He did the same thing like this many times and then stopped. Then he [ordered his solders] to tie me and other people. Then I thought to myself, "*If I have to suffer it [torture by Burmese solders] in this life, then I will accept it*".

Do you know the number of Tatmadaw army troops in Light Infantry Division (LID), their names, and their general's name?

No, I do not remember it.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village?

No, I did not.

Have you experienced conflict?

No.

Do you think there has been justice for human rights abuses that happened in the past?

I remember when all my children were three and four years old. I had to do difficult work on the farm to [provide] daily food for my family. It was during the conflict when Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) formed and the Burmese soldiers [were attacking us]. [The DKBA and Tatmadaw came into my village and rang the bamboo or wooden bell for the villagers to come to them. The married women with young babies could not go and the men could not go either because we had to work on the farms because we worried that rain would over-water our paddy. They said villagers did not listen and follow their rules, so they [armed groups] ordered each family to give them 3 pairs of batteries. At that time, all my children were too young and it was hard to work to earn a livelihood for my family. I was impatient and I wanted to retaliate and attack them.

The second time occurred when [the DKBA and Tatmadaw] ordered us to be their security guards. They arrested villagers and forced them to be security guards for them each day, but they only called me to Poh Kay area for two days. When they ordered villagers to give them batteries, I told them [DKBA], *"You are dogs who are barking at their owners back [meaning you are Karen people who betray Karen people]"*. They did not like that I said this to them, and it upset them, so they shot at the thatched singles of my roof with their guns and destroyed three pieces of thatched singles. I wanted to retaliate, but my older sister stopped me and she said it was not a good idea. I told them, *"I will only worship a pagoda, and I will not worship an ant hill [meaning I will respect good people and will not respect evil people or imposters]"*.

Did you see if any of the perpetrators were punished by people [the authorities]?

Yes, I saw Hpa Bleh [was punished].

What crime did he commit?

He was drunk and slept in a monastery.

What do you think should be done to people who committed human rights abuses during the conflict/fighting?

I do not know if they were punished or not. For the time they committed the abuses [armed groups torturing me], I would like them to be punished.

For example, did they go to prison or pay compensation?

Neither of these.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuse

during the conflict?

It would be good for people [authorities] to look after [provide services/safety for] us [victims].

What is the root cause of human rights abuse in your area?

It is Burmese [Tatmadaw], Ko Per Baw [DKBA] and Ko Per Thoo [KNLA]. We could not live under their protection. We had to feed the armed group [KNLA] rice. If we did not feed them, they did not have rice [food] to eat. Other armed groups ordered us not to feed them [KNLA] and we said yes to their orders, but we had to give rice to them [KNLA] when they asked us. We did not dare to refuse them rice because they have guns. We told the other armed groups [DKBA and Tatmadaw], *“If you do not want us to give rice to KNLA, then you better guard our villages”*. At that time, like the Burmese proverb says, *“When there is no cat then mice will come [meaning when there is no other armed group/protection, then the other armed groups will come]”*. The Burmese and the Karen are like chickens and pheasants [they are opposites]. The Ko Per Thoo [KNLA] are like pheasants. They sleep and eat wherever they need to go, but the Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] are like a herd of cows, which are looked after by their owners so they can sleep in good places. Therefore, they could not stop the KNLA to enter into the village.

Did armed groups call you or other villagers for porters and [did you] you have to work for them without any payment?

Oh oh it was a lot. I must carry [military materials or supply] for Burmese soldiers [Tatmadaw] till my back was injured but I could not have enough rice for my daily meal.

What light infantry division (LID) of this [Tatmadaw] armed group?

It was Regiment #211 Branch # 3 and their General's name was Zaw Zaw.

Did they ask you to look for a safe road for security for their travelling?

Yes, I must make a fire and be a security guard for them the whole day and night.

When was it?

It was during the DKBA emerging period [around 1995].

I would like to ask you about young people and the future for your community, so what future do you want? For example –improved education for children, improved employment options for me/my children, safer community e.g. no military, Karen society, access to land?

If the situation becomes good [peaceful and safe] in the future then I will not have to worry much. I want education to be in our community. I want our education to improve in the future, so I have been working at this school for many years. People who are leading the schools are not working honestly. They went to conduct logging for the school [construction improvements] 3 times already, but I have not seen any pieces of wood for the school yet. The first time, they cut down 7 very big Melanorrhoea logs beside Ma Aye Pa's garden. These 7 logs could produce more than 3 tons of wood. Then [unknown] people said, *“All of the pieces of wood are missing.”* Then I said, *“If they are gone then we cannot do anything.”*

It's not my problem and these pieces of wood are not mine either'. At the time we did not think carefully about this case [so people could have easily lied to us]. It is like Senior Monk Hpu Htaw Moo preached when he said "If you believe in something easily, then you will be the target of any evil". I think that if we have the opportunity then I would like for us to upgrade the school in my village to become a high school. People have given me advice and said that after my daughter finishes Standard Ten, I should let her teach at Sa Mya Thi Da monastery for one year and then she can be a teacher in my village. Then A--- villages can cooperate with the education program in Way T'Ku [Yangon]. Then students can sit tests in our village and they can get recommendation letters from our school [certificates].

What are the biggest challenges facing your community for the future?

Health and conflict between Tatmadaw and other ethnic armed groups. These two things are important.

What should the government [KNU or Burma/Myanmar] do to make the situation better for people your age?

This is confusing for me. They should give us opportunities and freedoms, so the children in our village can access education.

Are young people interested in leadership roles? Can you give an example?

Yes, there are some young people who are interested in leadership roles.

What do you hope to be doing in five years' time?

If I am healthy, I would like to work on a farm and tend to a betel nut plantation.

What do you want to say for the Karen youth to improve their community in the future?

I would like to encourage students' parents to support our children to go to school, so that our efforts are not in vain. We should send our children to go to school to get education about religion because politics is not important. The most important thing is religion. In the future, people will use only technical machines, so if we send our children, they will learn the names of these machines and other things. I asked people why is it that people in KNU cannot produce iron yet? It is because they do not have enough education yet. It is too late for me to receive an education, so I support the children to access education. When the Karen people can produce iron, guns and air planes then scientific warfare will happen. Then the married women will breastfeed their children while standing because the war will be very brutal, but it is not the time yet.

What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it?

The Burmese government [on the ceasefire] are like when people are playing a boxing match and they notice their longyi is untied then they say, "*Wait wait!! I will take a rest [to tie my longyi]*". They just want to take a rest for a while and will punch you after they tie their longyi [prepare themselves]. We [Karen people] cannot give up because we know they [Tatmadaw] will not give up either.

Regarding this ceasefire, I do not believe that the Burma/Myanmar government will work towards genuine peace yet.

What is your perspective and feelings on the peace process among the Myanmar government and ethnic armed organisations?

We have more freedom of movement now because we can travel during the day and night after the ceasefire.

What do you think about economic migration to other countries or cities to find jobs?

Yes, there are some young people [who have migrated to other counties to find a job] and send money [to their families]. Some young people have migrated to Bangkok, Malaysia and Singapore.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of health and education, communication, transportation, living standards, and administration? Please give examples, why?

No, I do not see any of these developments.

What years do you think there were the most human rights abuses regarding the following situations? (From 1992 to now). For example:

- i. Refugee situation?
- i. Access to education
- ii. Militarisation?
- iii. Government?
- iv. Land confiscation?
- v. Livelihood situations?
- vi. Drug situations?
- vii. Access to health care situations?
- viii. Landmine?

The most human rights abuses happened when Hkoh Hper Baw [DKBA] emerged.

Do you remember the year?

No, I do not remember.

Please explain what you know and remember.

It was a very long time ago because my oldest son is now an adult and he is over 20 years old already. At that time [when DKBA emerged], we [all the villagers] had to get permission letters [from DKBA] when we went to our farms for paddy harvesting and we could not sleep in our farms. We got permission from them in the morning and then we had to come back in the afternoon every day. There were a lot of villagers, but there was only one person who wrote permission letters, so we could only go to our farms [late] in the afternoon. Therefore, we could only work on our farms for a few hours and then we had to return. Our farms are very far from our village. At that time, villagers did not dare to take care of their animals, so our paddy was eaten by cows, buffalos and pigs. We could not blame the owners of the animals because we all faced the same problem, so we had to understand each other.

[Then the interviewee's wife interjected and said,] "*At that time, even pregnant women who were close to delivering their baby had to harvest paddy on the farm too*". There are a lot of people using drugs and there are a lot of drugs, but I did not go close to them.

Do you know any development projects that happened in your village/community/areas?

No, I do not know about any development projects.

What kind of development do you want to see in your community? How do you want it to be carried out?

I want the development of schools, hospitals and road construction. When I was sick, my neighbours had to carry me to the hospital on bad [unpaved] roads. Therefore, if people [authorities] construct a better road for us, then it will be a good thing. If we have a good road then we can go to the hospital by car and we can arrive to the hospital quickly. There is not a hospital in the eastern area [rural villages], so we have to go to the western area [town]. A person [unknown] went to the hospital, and then [the doctor] told him he had syphilis. Afterwards, there was no doctor there to treat him. Then he went to Ta Au Wah Plaw village and met with Thara [medic] Bee Aye. The Thara cured him and now he is okay, but he still has to go to the hospital for his tests and surgery.

What should the government [KNU or Myanmar, or the military] do for the security in your community for civilians' livelihood?

Civilians will be in trouble if the Karen military and Burma/Myanmar military do not find peace. It will be good if these two militaries will listen to each other and follow the agreements they made to each other. If they do not listen to each other, then we will be in trouble.

So what should [Burma/Myanmar] government military do for your community development?

They should build peace, [and prioritise] the development of education and hospitals [health].

What do you think organisations [CBOs and NGOs] should do, should know, and should follow?

They should provide information to the villagers before they start their project. Any projects from the Burmese [Burma/Myanmar government] will torment us because this is what I have experienced in my life. [Karen proverb says,] "*They [Burmese] curse us even when we step on their poo or they step on our poo [meaning "They make problems for us no matter what we do."* People from our area should work on development projects in our area. If other people come to our area and set up a project then it is like we put a sharp nail on our head [meaning we created problems for ourselves].

Do you have any other things to report to us? For example, your community situation?

I would like to share with you about [my experiences] after Hkoh Hper Baw [DKBA] emerged.

I slept in a grandpa's house and he told me, "Hpo Doh [nephew], G--- village and A--- village are the same [villages]. There are no bicycles and cars around our village, but one day cars and bicycles will be around our villages. Widows and orphans will have the same lamp. The roofs of people's houses will be white roofs [metal roofs]". I replied to him and said, "Hpu [grandpa], how will there be cars and bicycles in our villages? Look at our paths that are on the hill." He said "It can be." So now I can see bicycles, motorcycles and cars running in our village. We can use the same lamp and some villagers' roofs are metal roofs already.

Can we publish this information that you have provided for KHRG?

Sure, you can.

Thank you so much for providing this information.

Thank you.

Source #169

Log #	17-5-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

What is your name, uncle?

People call me Saw B---.

How old are you?

I am 51 years old.

What is your job?

I am a farmer.

Where do you live?

I live in A--- village.

Which village tract do you live in?

Htee Th'Bluh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

I would like to ask you questions regarding human rights. What is your most important human right? For example health, education, freedom of movement, security, land and livelihoods?

Health and livelihoods are important. My paddy was destroyed [by insects], so it impacts my livelihood.

What do you know or think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area?

There were some drunk people who argued with each other. When this happens village leaders give them a warning and talk to them.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

There were no human rights abuses in 2015 and 2016.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village? When and why did you return to your village?

Yes, my family did. We had to flee our village because an armed group [Tatmadaw] defeated us. A woman said, "*We had to run [flee] in tears and we were too tired*". When we were fleeing, my wife gave birth to my daughter. Are your questions about our experiences in the past?

Yes.

I had experienced plenty of difficulties and hardships in the past. I cannot even count them all.

Have you experienced war/conflict? What do you think about it?

Yes, I have. I experienced a brutal situation. While the fighting happened [between Karen Nation Liberation Army (KNLA) and Tatmadaw], if the Burmese soldiers got injured by KNLA, then we [porter villagers] had to carry the injured Burmese soldiers. My friend and I [two porters] had to carry an injured Burmese soldier from the battlefield to a vehicle road throughout the day and night. That was not the only time [I had to serve as a porter]. As soon as they [Tatmadaw] entered our area, we always had to be their porters and had to carry their military supplies during the night and day.

You said you had to be a porter and you had to carry [military supplies for Tatmadaw], and carry injured soldiers and these are all human rights abuses. So have any of these human rights abuse been solved or been forgiven?

We have not dared to solve it [try to get justice] and we cannot solve it, because they all [armed groups] have horns [guns], power, and authority.

Since you cannot resolve it, what do you think about it?

I cannot even dare to imagine these things because being a citizen is really hard. A woman said, "*I just think it depends on my luck [If I receive justice]*".

Do you have any examples of human rights abusers being punished? For example, if people came into your village and beat villagers, then will the perpetrator be punished?

No, there was no person to take action against the enemies [Tatmadaw]. When they [Tatmadaw] beat me and all the villagers, we just had to suffer because we did not dare to

respond or even to talk to them.

What do you think should be done to people who committed human rights abuse during the conflict? What do you think should be done to the people who committed the rights abuses against you that you previously mentioned?

People should punish them in some way. I do not dare to say how [they must be punished]. I want people [authorities] to take action against it [injustice] and give them punishment. If they do not take action against it, then it defeats [there is not justice for] the civilians.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause is Tatmadaw attacking us and the fighting between Tatmadaw and KNLA. The Karen people did not fight each other and we did not make conflict among us. We live a peaceful life.

I would like to interview you about young people and your community's future. So what do you want for the future? For example:

- ix. Improved education for children
- x. Improved employment options for me / my children
- xi. Safer community e.g. no military
- xii. Karen society
- xiii. Access to land

Please explain why.

I want to improve education. If we have education, then we can access jobs and we can work for our livelihoods more easily. I do not want our education to be left behind because if we and our children are educated then our country can become developed. Moreover, our children will have more political knowledge. If we only work on our farms without looking for education, then we cannot raise our standard of living. Therefore, education is the most important.

What are the biggest challenges for your community's future?

I am concerned that our enemies will come to us and fight us again. I cannot specify who the enemies are because any armed groups can attack us at any time.

What should the government [KNU or Burma/Myanmar] do to make the situation better for people who are at your age?

I need a better government administration and leaders who will lead us to set up laws, healthcare and other development improvements.

Are young people interested in leadership roles? Can you give an example?

Yes, there are many young people going to school. Some young people become teachers. For example, the female principal in my village is from my village.

What do you hope to be doing in five years' time?

I hope I can work for my family's livelihood and support my children to go to school as well as I can in 2017 and 2018. I will soon get older and weaker, so I will only be able to do these

things [for a short time].

Are you hopeful or worried for the future of your community and your people?

I am worried for my health. Health is important for me because if I am healthy then I will be able to look after my children. If I do not have good health, then I cannot look after young people.

What do you want to say to the Karen youth to improve their community in the future?

I want to encourage the Karen youth to look for education and try hard in their studies. The Karen youth should not lose education, but they should try to get more education.

I would like to know more generally about the situation in your community, so what do you know about the ceasefire [NCA] in 2015? What do you think about it?

I know my leaders met with [the Burma/Myanmar] government. As I am a citizen, I think the ceasefire will provide some benefit for us. I think if there are not benefits for us, then my leaders would not do it.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

It is not relevant to me because I am just a simple citizen, but it creates some benefits for me. I think the ceasefire will become more relevant for us [citizens] and we will also cooperate with it as much as we can.

What is your perspective and feelings about the peace process that the Myanmar government and ethnic armed organisations are involved with?

After the ceasefire, we [villagers] can sleep and we can live peacefully without worrying [of being attacked like the past]. We can work freely on our farms and plantations. Therefore, we have faith in the KNU and we can live under their protection.

What do you think about economic migration to other countries or cities for finding jobs?

There are not many young people who have migrated to other countries to find a job. I do not know how they live in other countries. I have met with them [the people who have migrated] sometimes when they have come back to the village.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of:

- i. Health and education
- ii. Communication
- iii. Transportation
- iv. Living standard

There have been a few developments, but it has not achieved what we had expected.

What years do you think there were the most human rights abuses regarding the following situations? (From 1991 to now) Please explain what you know and remember. For example: - Access to education, militarisation, government? For

example: Did you suffer the most human rights abuses when the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) emerged in 1995 or?

We [villagers] had suffered a lot of human rights abuses in many years during that period [DKBA emergence].

What kind of human rights abuses had you experienced? For example: militarisation, education...

It concerned militarisation.

So how did the militarisation [impact you]?

They [Tatmadaw] oppressed citizens.

How did they oppress you?

We could not bear to go [be porters] but they forced us. We could not bear to carry [their military supplies] but we had to carry them.

Did they burn your houses and village?

Yes, they burnt plenty of houses, our belongings, pots, plates and spoons in our village.

Do you know of any development projects happening in your village/community/ areas?

No, I do not know of any development projects in my village.

What kind of developments do you want to see in your community? How do you want it to be carried out?

I want development project focused on education, animal husbandry and other development project for improving our livelihoods.

How do you want them to be carried out? For example do you want government to support the schools?

It would be good if the government would support our school. Therefore, we want the government to support our school, but we want our government [the KNU government] to support us, not the Burma/Myanmar government. We really want to see education development projects [in my community].

What do you think the government [KNU or the Burma/Myanmar government] should do for security in your area and for civilians' livelihoods? For example, no Tatmadaw army camps in your area.

I do not want the Tatmadaw army camps to be based in our area. [A woman in the interview interjects], *"I don't even want to see them [Tatmadaw] and do not want their army camps to be in our area"*. Another man said, *"We want them to withdraw all of their army camps and go back to their place"*. [The woman in the interview said] *"Yes, we want that to happen"*.

What do you think the government [KNU or Burma/Myanmar] should do in terms of development for your community?

Education is important, so I want the government to work on education development projects in my area.

Which organisations [CBO and NGOs] do you prefer to do projects in your area? What should they do?

We are happy and will support any good organisations' projects that will work for our community's development and do a good thing for us. We are only concerned that bad projects will come to our village and will do evil things to us. We want construction projects to build hospitals.

Do you want to say anything else to us, KHRG?

I have concern for my fellow villagers. I am not a village head, but I stand as a parent of villagers. Therefore, I want all villagers to be in harmony whenever our government ask us to do something for them. Some villagers face the problem of food shortages. Sometimes the [unknown if KNU or Burma/Myanmar] government who controls us has meetings with villagers and forces villagers to give [pay taxes]. They [should] let old people, like me, to work freely on farms [without paying tax].

What do you feel about this interview?

I think it is a good for future development. I want you [KHRG] to keep doing this in the future.

Dtee [uncle] can we [KHRG] publish the information that you provided us?

Yes, you can use it.

Can we take your picture?

Yes.

Thank you so much for providing us [KHRG] with information.

Source #170

Log #	17-7-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Hpapun District
Full Text	
May I know your name?	
	My name is U Fm---

How old are you?

I am 53 years old.

What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Pa-o.

What do you do to support your livelihood [earn a living]?

I work on a [flat] farm and on hill farms.

What is your position in the village?

In the past, I was a chairperson in the village. Last year I was a village head, but this year I resigned from the village head position. I am now an elder who looks after the village.

Where do you live?

I live in Fn--- village.

Which Township?

K'Taing Tee village tract, Hpapun Township.

Is that a KNU [Karen National Union] controlled area? Which Township is Taung Thu village located in?

Fn--- village is located in K'Taing Tee village, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

Have you ever lived in other villages?

No, I have not lived in any other village. I have lived in Fn--- village [since I was young].

So how long has this village [Fn---] existed?

This village has existed since Japanese people came to colonise Burma [1942].

How many households are there in this village?

There are more than 40 households in the village.

How many people are there in the village? Can you estimate?

There are more than 300 people in the village.

What religion do most of the villagers believe?

Buddhism.

What work do most villagers do to earn a living?

Villagers mostly work on the farms and hill farms.

What is the situation of farmers and hill farmers regarding their livelihoods?

The paddy plants are not growing well because we have limited access to water.

So the paddy plants will grow well if you have enough water?

Yes.

OK. It will be better if you have enough water. So we have to consider how to improve your access to water. Alright, how will you solve the livelihood problems you are facing?

Some people just try to find work as daily labourers and others go to find jobs in faraway places.

What do you mean by a faraway place? How far do they go to find a job?

Mostly people go to Thailand to find jobs.

So they work in Thailand and they send money [to their families in the village]?

Yes.

The majority of the villagers are Buddhists. So are there any religious buildings in this village? For example, Buddhist temples?

Yes. We have Buddhist temples and ordination halls in the village.

What about pagodas?

Yes. We also have pagodas.

If villagers are sick, where do they go to get medical treatment? Are there any clinics in the village?

We do not have clinics in our village, but we have midwives and local health workers who know a bit about how to give treatment to sick people. We are only able to receive injections from them. If we have serious sicknesses or diseases, we have to go to [clinics] in K'Taing Tee village to receive medical treatment.

How far is it from Fn--- village to K'Taing Tee village?

Two miles.

What kind of road is constructed between Fn--- village and K'Taing Tee village?

A coal tar [tarmac] road.

When villagers are sick and they have to go to hospital, do you have some people in this village who are responsible for sending sick villagers to the hospital? For example, like a funeral service team?

We do not have a funeral service team in our village, but villagers help each other. If some people are sick, other people who own cars will help them and take them to the hospital.

Are there any schools for children to study in your village?

We have a school in our village, but it is small and narrow and there are a lot of students. So we will construct more small buildings [schools] for our children.

Do villagers construct these small buildings [small schools] by themselves?

Yes.

So is the school in your village a Myanmar government school or self-funded school?

In the past, our school in the village was a self-funded school. Later on, the Myanmar government supported this school and it became a Myanmar government school.

The Ministry of Education classifies this school as a Myanmar government school. So do villagers or students' parents have to support school teachers' [salary]?

In the past, we supported school teachers who were our guests in this village with foods, rice, and accommodation. Yet, now most of the teachers are local residents rather than guests [from other villages], so we do not need to support them anymore. They [teachers who are from faraway] support themselves with food, but we build houses for them to live in.

Are there any other business opportunities that villagers have in this village?

We do not have any special business opportunities in this village. We just cut trees and bamboo [to sell and make money] and we also collect firewood. However, now we can no longer cut trees because it is not allowed, so we just collect firewood [to sell].

Are there any armed groups nearby Taung Thu village?

There are Tatmadaw, BGF [Border Guard], KNU [Karen National Union] and police nearby Fn--- village.

How far is it from Taung Thu village to their [armed groups] army camps?

Two miles.

As there are many different armed groups nearby the village, do they come often to the village?

Mostly, Tatmadaw enters our village.

How and why do they [Tatmadaw] come to your village?

They mostly come to our village when their leaders make trips. So the soldiers provide security for their leaders when they travel around.

Do they bring a lot of weapons when they come?

Yes.

How many [Tatmadaw] soldiers are there each time they come?

15 or 20.

What about other armed groups? Do they come to the village?

I do not see other armed groups coming to our village with many soldiers. Sometimes KNU soldiers [KNLA] come to our village, but they do not wear soldiers' uniforms when they come. If they [the KNU] come, they only come with two or three soldiers.

What about BGF soldiers? Do they come to the village?

They also come and visit this village, but they do not wear soldiers' uniforms and they do not bring any weapon.

What about other armed groups? Do they come to village?

The police also come to our village.

What about KNLA-PC [Peace Council] and DKBA [Democratic Karen Benevolent/Buddhist Army]? Do they come?

No, they do not come.

There are many armed groups. Do they ever come to meet with each other in the village? For example, BGF, Tatmadaw and KNU.

In the past they came to meet with each other in the village and they had a meeting in my house. Tatmadaw, BGF and KNU were involved in the meeting.

When they met with each other, did any problems or conflicts happen?

No. They just tried to build a good understanding among each other when they met.

Prior to 2015, armed groups' activities were different than they are now? How is their activity different?

Now the situation is getting better and better and we can live without any trouble.

Do you know if there are still landmines around the village?

I think there are no more landmines around our village. In the past, landmines might have been planted around our village, but it has been a long time. Perhaps those landmines do not work anymore. Cows and buffalo are always walking around the village and they have not stepped on any landmines, so I think there are no more landmines around our village.

Now I know the situation of your village, but the main thing I want to ask you is regarding our upcoming thematic report. Please give me a little more time to ask you questions.

What is your most important human right? For example, health, education, freedom of movement, security, land and livelihoods, language and culture?

The most important human right is our right to healthcare. If I say honestly, there are many important things that we need, but the main thing is healthcare. If we are not healthy, we cannot do anything.

What about the right to education?

The right to education is needed [important], but, compared to the past; the education situation is now getting much better. It is easy to go to school in K'Taing Tee School. In the past, we had to cross through rough roads when we went to K'Taing Tee School. We could not use bicycles on the road because it was so bad. The jungle is very big. Now we can go [to the school] easily because the road is better. We can even use bicycles to go places.

What about security?

Regarding security, we sometimes worry about our children.

What do you worry about?

We worry that some young girls will get trouble [harassment] because in the past some young female students had to worry about that.

What about rights to land and livelihood? What do you need regarding this right?

Regarding land rights, we do not have land grants in our village. If we do not have land grants, it creates difficulties for us because we clean our lands to work, but if we do not have any land documents, it becomes a problem if our lands are confiscated.

Do you need Myanmar government land grants or KNU land grants?

It is better if we get both of them, because our village is in a mixed controlled area.

Oh, you do not have any land grants from the Myanmar government or the KNU?

Yes. We do not have any land grants, but we have KNU land receipts since we pay the land tax.

What do you want to say about freedom of speech?

We have freedom of speech here, but we do not dare to say whatever we want to say in our village.

So this means you do not have freedom of speech 100%?

Yes.

What is your most important human right? For example, health, education, freedom of movement, security, land and livelihoods, language and culture?

The most major thing is freedom of movement. We want to work freely. This is my view and this is what I need.

What do you think about the rule of law and justice system in your local area? Is it good or not? What do [people] need regarding the rule of law and justice system? Do you think it is perfect?

No. I do not think it is perfect. It is very bad in our area. When I was working as a village head, some elders told me about that [the situation regarding the rule of law and justice system]. I cannot do what elders ask me [regarding justice] because there are many different [armed] groups [in our area].

Do you mean you cannot have full access of rights, the rule of law, and the justice system in your area due to many different [armed] groups?

Yes. We cannot have all of our rights and we cannot access the rule of law and the justice system in our area.

What kind of human rights abuses happened in your area in the past?

To talk about it, there were a lot of human rights abuses in our area. Mainly, to my understanding, there were forced labour and killings.

These kinds of [human rights abuses] happened?

Yes.

When did it happen?

Killing cases happened five or six years ago.

What about forced labour? When did it happen?

It happened when I was young, but it [forced labour] decreased after the ceasefire in our area.

So it happened five or six years ago?

Yes.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village?

Yes. All the people in our village had to flee the village.

Why?

It occurred because of the impact of the fighting. At that time the DKBA [Buddhist] issue happened [split from KNU, 1994], so then we could not stay in our village.

Why did you return to your village?

We first came back to our village while most of the people [villagers] were away. When we stayed in other villages, it was not very easy for us to live. We could not work during that time. Our health was not good. We had no idea how to earn a living. Therefore, we took a risk and we came back to our village in order to work.

Why could you not live in that village?

We could not live because we did not have any work to support our livelihoods while living in other villages. We had to live by eating foods that other people gave us. If you eat other people's food, you have to listen to them [you lose your independence]. You cannot do anything you want because they scold you. For me, I could not live like that. I want to do my own work and I want to work and live freely and peacefully. If you live in other people's houses, you have to do what they ask you to do. I do not want to live under those kinds of restrictions. I just want to live freely and peacefully.

Have you experienced war / conflict?

I have experienced a lot of conflict [fighting].

What do you think about it? Do you think it is good, bad or fun?

How can we have fun if fighting happens? When the fighting happened we were forced to leave [relocate] and work as porters. We were afraid to die, so we had to protect ourselves out of fear during the fighting. It was not a good thing. If the fighting happens, you and I will suffer.

The image of war is not a good thing. Is that right?

Yes. It does not matter if the fighting happens among armed groups, because it does not happen like that [it does not only affect armed groups]. It also affects civilians.

Do you think there has been justice for human rights abuses that happened in the past?

No. There is no justice for human rights abuses [that happened in the past]. How can we have justice if human rights abuses happen? Actually, human rights abuses happen because there is no justice.

Have any human rights abuses been resolved fairly?

How can human rights abuses be resolved fairly? We cannot go to meet them [perpetrators].

Even if we can go to meet them, I do not think they [human rights abuses] will be resolved.

With whom would you like to meet?

I am referring to the Myanmar government's military [Tatmadaw] who committed human rights abuses. Although we have not gone to report these cases to them, they already know about it because Ko Myo was a village head at that time. They [the police] came to take pictures [after a killing case happened]. Higher leaders should look at [address] the situation. It is fine if they [leaders] do not know anything. However, now they know the situation, but they still do not do anything [to obtain justice].

Do you think there is a fair trial for people who were victims of human rights abuses in court?

No.

What do you think should be done for people who committed human rights abuses?

As far as I know, nothing is being done in this area. I have not heard anything about it. People who have committed human rights abuses just commit abuses and people who were and are victims of human rights abuses just suffer. Nothing happens.

For the people who committed human rights abuses, have they been punished? For example, have they gone to prison, paid compensation, or lost power?

We have not heard anything about that.

What do you think should be done for people who committed human rights abuses during the conflict?

For a person who has committed human rights abuses, he or she should get a punishment. For example, she or he should be put in jail.

Do you want them [people who committed abuses] to go to prison or pay compensation or lose their power?

If they have money, those people can pay compensation after they kill people and will still not be afraid and may kill other people again. Therefore, they should put them in prison in accordance with the law. If they are put in prison, it will stop more killing cases from happening. If they pay compensation, they will probably kill other people.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

People and their families who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict should get support in order to earn their living.

What is the root cause of human rights abuse in your area?

The root cause of human rights abuses is the impact of fighting.

You mean there was a lot of fighting in your area?

Yes. There was a lot of fighting and there were a lot of landmines at that time.

Why did it happen? Who fought?

The fighting happened between the KNU and the Myanmar government's military troops. How to say, it is the civil war. Due to that, villagers became the victims of human rights abuses.

What future do you want? For example, do you want to improve education for children or do you just want your family's lives to improve?

As we are living in the community, we want to improve the education for [our] children. This is for the future. If our children are able to read and write, they will be able to produce good ideas [about] how to improve their community. If they [children] are well-educated, they will be able to improve their lives and [their] communities. If they can improve their communities, they will become good and useful citizens. If we do not have knowledge or if we are not literate, we cannot go anywhere and we will be going around [and around] here [in] a circle [not making any progress]. Therefore, we will continuously be suffering from oppression.

In order to have a safer community, is it better to have army camps in your local area? Or how should it be?

If we look at the wishes of the majority, no one wants to have army camps near their villages. It is not easy to work and move if army camps are located near our village. For example, when armed groups base their camps near our village it is an obstacle for us when we travel. Therefore, I want army camps to move away from us.

What about Karen leaders in Karen State? Karen leaders should rule Karen State. What do you think of this?

We are happy if Karen leaders can rule Karen State. For example, if we live in our village and someone from K'Taing Tee village comes to rule our village. How can we be happy? Now I will tell you something about the government. We did not dare to meet and talk with U Zaw Min, Karen State Chief Minister because he just told us what was needed. That's it. However, when U Saw Win Htain became Karen State chief minister, he met with us and talked to us as a brother and friend. It was good.

What about now? When Nan Khin Htwe Myint became Karen State Chief Minister, how did the situation change?

When Nan Khin Htwe Myint became Karen State Chief Minister, I had already resigned [from the village head position]. So I do not know how it is.

What is the difference between U Zaw Min and Nan Khin Htwe Myint? Are they both similar?

I cannot say because I have not seen the new Karen State Chief Minister, so I do not know what she is doing. When I worked as a village head, U Zaw Min was Karen State Chief Minister. So I only know about what he did.

What about access to land? Do you want the Myanmar government to own lands or do you want local villagers to own their lands?

As we all know, local villagers have worked on their lands since they were young, how can local villagers work to support their livelihood if the Myanmar government own the land? The Myanmar government can do whatever they want to do if they own the lands. For us, we cannot do anything if we do not have our lands. I want local villagers to have access to land, so they can work on their lands freely.

What are the biggest challenges facing your community's future?

The biggest challenge facing our community's future is land.

Why?

We do not have land grants in our area. If the Myanmar government comes to construct their office and their buildings in our area, we worry that they will confiscate our lands because we heard that lands in the city have been confiscated since the people did not have land grants. Just look at K'Taing Tee village. Some of the land in K'Taing Tee village does not have land grants and also there are no cultivations and buildings on those lands, so the Myanmar government marked those lands as vacant lands. Then they confiscated those lands. Why did these lands become vacant lands? They became vacant land because there was a lot of fighting in the past and nobody used their lands at that time and it became wild land even though every year we pay land tax to the KNU. Therefore, if the Myanmar government and companies come to construct their buildings on our land, we worry that they will confiscate our land and mark our lands as vacant since we do not have land grants. So I think the biggest challenge for us is the issue of land.

What should the government (KNU or Burma/Myanmar) do to make the situation better for people at your age?

As I am getting old, I want to speak for people who are my age. They are old and they cannot do any more work to live, so they should be supported in order to earn a living.

Yes. This is what Myanmar government has to do for them. The Karen State departments or the central government should support elderly people. Is that right?

Yes.

Are young people in this area interested in leadership roles?

Yes. There are some young people who are interested in leadership roles. It was very bad in the past and most of the young people were not interested in leadership roles as they could not read and write. Now it is better. Most of the young people can read and write and they have a lot of knowledge and are open-minded. Yet, it is not easy for young people to get a job here. They [young people] hear about job vacancies and they apply, but they do not get a job. Then they find another job and they apply but they do not get it. They try to apply to get a job two and three times but they do not get it. Therefore, they get depressed and their motivation goes down. If there are plenty of jobs, I want young people to have jobs to do.

What do you hope to be doing in five years' time? What change do you hope for?

I hope a lot of things will change, so that the situation will be good for people, such as better transportation and better access to electricity.

For example, the road beside your village is now a stone road. Do you want this to change within five years?

I want the road to be constructed as a coal tar road. Not in five years. I want it now. Currently, we cannot ride a bicycle on that road. Last summer, we could ride a bicycle. This summer, we cannot ride a bicycle and we also have to push our bicycles in the rainy season.

What do you worry about most for your future?

I worry most that the fighting will happen in the future.

Do you think it is possible that fighting will happen?

I cannot say for certain. I am not sure.

Are you hopeful or worried about the future for your community and your people?

Most of the young people in Karen State do not understand about their culture and traditional clothes. Our culture will disappear in the future, so I think something should be done about it. Old people or leaders from the KNU have a responsibility to teach and lead young people to maintain our culture and traditional clothes. Now it is not like that.

What about young people's behaviors? What do you want to say about it?

There are a lot of things I want to say regarding young people's behaviors such as the way they live and the way they eat and drink. They are misbehaving. When I was young, there were only one or two old people who drank alcohol in our village. Now not only women, but also young girls drink alcohol and beer. I also want to talk about drugs. There are a lot of drugs. How much alcohol do you want? You can order it and have as much alcohol as you want. When I was young, only one or two men drank alcohol. Now it is not like that. More than half of the people, including girls and children, drink alcohol. Some children drink alcohol secretly when they study. I want our leaders to take action and reduce that kind of drinking and consumption [using drugs].

I have asked you a lot of questions that I wanted to know. Do you want to add more and say something that I have not asked you about? Do you have something that you want to say about any of my questions? Is there something that you have kept in your mind that you would like to say? You can say it now if you have something to add.

There are plenty of things to report or say, but I do not want to report all of them because I have too many things to say.

OK. That is fine. Prepare and tell me what you want to say if we see each other again. Now I would like to request your permission. I am now recording your voice. Will you allow us to use this information?

As I told you before, I worked as an elder [village leader] for a long time. As an elder, we have to speak truthfully. If we do not speak truthfully, we are not elders. I do not speak with anyone who does not speak truthfully. I just want it to be as I say. As I saw things in the past, I reported it. So I do not speak untrue things. Now I am telling you about what I know and see. If you would like to use my information, I allow you use it. It does not matter where you report it. I allow you to use it because I speak the truth. If it is not true, I will not dare to allow anyone to use what I report.

I have another request for you now that I have your permission to use your information. I also want to ask to use your picture. I would like to take three pictures of you. May I take these pictures and use them?

Yes, you can. They hear my voice. If they want to see my pictures, send them my pictures if they need to use them. My voice and pictures can be used and shared nationally and internationally because I speak the truth.

Thank you so much for sharing this information.

Yes. It is fine.

Source #171

Log #	17-9-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

What is your name?

Saw A---

How old are you?

I am 50 years old.

Where do you live?

I live in B---village, Ler Mu Baw area.

Which village tract?

Ler Mu Plaw village tract

What Township?

Lu Thaw Township

What District?

Hpapun District, Brigade #5

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religion?

My religion is Animism.

What is your occupation?

I work on a plain farm.

Do you have another occupation?

For my personal job I am a plain farmer, but I am also a village head.

Are you a Karen National Union (KNU) or a Burma/Myanmar government village head?

I am the B--- village head.

How many family members do you have?

I have eight children.

How old is your eldest child?

My eldest child is 26 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 13 years old.

How many households are in B--- village?

There are 16 households [in B--- village].

How many B--- villagers are there?

Of both male and female, there are 148 villagers in total in B--- village.

What is the main villagers' occupation?

Most villagers mainly work on plain farms and hill farms. Some of them are teachers.

Do all the 16 B---- households [villagers] get enough paddy?

This year some villagers got enough paddy, but some villagers did not get enough paddy.

How many households got enough paddy, out of the 16 households?

There were ten households that got enough paddy.

Why did the six other households' not get enough paddy?

They did not get enough paddy because they borrowed some paddy from their neighbors last year, and this year they had to give paddy back to their neighbors, so they did not get enough paddy.

Did insects, pigs or mice attack their paddy?

Yes, they did. There were plenty of mice and caterpillar attacks on the paddy that we could not stop, so some villagers did not get enough paddy [this year].

So six households did not get enough paddy this year, right?

Yes

Regarding this issue, what advice did you give your fellow villagers [who did not get enough paddy]?

Even if you do not get enough paddy [for this year] you do not have to be depressed, because we will look after each other [you] for our [your] future livelihood. We will try to help you with some [paddy], and then you will also help yourselves as well as you can. We will look after you when you are in a serious condition.

What are the most important human rights for you?

I think peace, freedom of movement, freedom to work, security and health are the most important human rights in our [my] lives.

So without peace, you cannot get these [freedom of movement, freedom to work, security, health] or your lands, right?

Yes, we desire to have our lands and our farms. I think that we can do it [get our land back] when we have peace [in our country].

What do you know/think about the rule of law and the justice system in your local area?

Law and justice [interviewee did not provide an answer].

For example, your villagers work on hill farms and you tell them to prepare the hill farm for planting paddy. Do you tell your villagers to burn [clean the hill farm] all the farms at the same time?

No, it is not like that. We all have to protect our hill farms and take care of the fire when we clean our hill farms, so that other people's hill farms will not be burnt.

So villagers should listen to the village head?

They listen [follow the rules of the village], but we [all villagers] have to help each other if someone misses them [makes a mistake]. We teach and explain [the rules to] them so that they will not make the mistake again. If they do make the mistake again it will cause trouble for everyone [for our livelihood].

Do you follow any of our Karen great-grandparents' traditional beliefs in the village?

Yes, we have traditional beliefs that our great-grandparents' practiced. I told them to follow the traditional beliefs systematically, because we are ethnic Karen. Do not disobey [our traditional beliefs].

Were there any human rights abuses in the past?

Yes, there were some human rights abuses [committed] by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), between 1997 and 1998. They came and attacked [our area] for the whole year, so we could not [work] on our farm [for our livelihood]. We started working on our farms on May 15th [1997], then we had to flee [for our life] to another area, so we had to leave our farms. Then we returned to working on our farms again in July but it was too late [for planting paddy]. Furthermore, we worked on our farm for a while then we had to flee again for around five years and we couldn't return to our village. The negative consequence of the SPDC attacks was food shortages. Therefore, the villagers have been facing food shortage year on year, until now.

Are there any Tatmadaw army camps that are based near B--- village?

The Tatmadaw army camps are based in D--- village and E--- village, which are only one hour distance [walking on foot] from F--- village. The Tatmadaw army camps are close to our village.

Do you know how many [Tatmadaw] soldiers there are, what they are planning, whether it will be a trick or will be bad, and what their objectives are?

I do not know their tricks. They are based more in our area and do research on the situation of the local people, but we definitely do not meet with them. Therefore, we do not go to them. They stick to their own business [without disturbing us] right now.

You [the villagers] do not go to see them and they also do not come [to see the villagers], correct?

They want to come to us but we prefer not to meet with them.

Do they try to organise and persuade the civilians to cooperate with them?

They always say it [that the civilians should cooperate with them] when they campaign [in our area], but our leaders [the KNU] do not allow us to cooperate with them. Furthermore, we do not want to participate with them so we are happier when our leaders [KNU] forbid it. We do not go near them and they stay with their own business.

Did the Tatmadaw army commit any human rights abuses in your area in the past? For example, did they kill villagers with guns [shoot on sight], eat villagers' chickens and pigs [theft and looting], burn out villagers' paddy and houses? Did any of these

abuses happen?

Yes, these [kind of abuses] happened a lot. They killed pigs, [attacked] houses and tents with guns, burnt houses and tents, burnt pigs and chicken coops, burnt our rice barns, shot buffalos, shot the owners [of those belongings] and the people who worked on farms.

Did the villagers have to go and get back their paddy [from the village in secret] at night?

Yes. In the past, we always had to [go back to our village] and carry our paddy in dangerous situations.

Did you go back [to your village] by yourself or go back with [the KNLA] or other villagers for security?

If the distance [from our hiding place to our village] is close, we [villagers] went back by ourselves and guarded ourselves. Mostly, [KNLA] soldiers who were the security guards, went with us. We had to follow them because we did not dare go back by ourselves.

Did you or your family ever have to flee your village in the past?

Yes.

You said that you [and other villagers] can return and live in your own village without any danger, correct?

Yes, the dangerous situation had passed.

Do you have any other concerns?

Yes, I do. I am concerned that the Tatmadaw army will come and [attack] us [villagers] again.

Why do you worry that they will come [to attack] you again?

For example, if we go close to them then they will look for us and question us. We [villagers] definitely do not want to see [meet] them.

Have you experienced war/conflict? How did you solve the conflict?

We experienced many conflicts, but we found the solution [decided] that we would just live like we used to live; we will follow the way of our leaders [KNU]. We will listen to them, we will help them, we will follow the example of our leaders and we will live like them.

So the KNU gave you advice about how to live, and you try to avoid meeting with the Tatmadaw because of their abuses?

We decided to solve this [painful experience] by avoiding meeting with them [Tatmadaw]. Therefore, we have to avoid them and we must not go to see them.

Did you build your temporary shelter in the jungle when you were fleeing?

Yes, I did.

How about the school?

We also built the temporary school in the jungle.

Did the teachers teach in the jungle?

Yes, they did.

How did the teachers teach the students in the jungle?

We built the school and the teachers taught the students, year by year like this. We now have our permanent school in our village.

Do you think there is justice for the human rights abuses that happened in the past?

I think the perpetrators [Tatmadaw] will get it [justice, but we will not have justice].

Do you think they are right, regarding what they have done?

No, it is wrong. They shot villagers on sight, ate the villagers' food and then killed the villagers. They destroyed the paddy, by pulling out and cutting down the paddy plants.

Has anyone [authority] resolved these human rights abuses?

Only our leaders [KNU] protected us from danger and were our security guard. They attacked them [Tatmadaw] back whenever they met.

For example, people said to stop the fighting. Has anyone done this?

There are some people who told [the Tatmadaw] to stop it [the fighting], but they did not obey or follow it.

Since the 2012 preliminary ceasefire, between the Burma/Myanmar government and KNU, what changes have happened [in your area]?

Since the 2012 preliminary ceasefire, as the situation is better I know that we can work [on our farm] for our livelihood. The other thing is that they [the Tatmadaw army] are in their place [army camp] and they do not come to [attack] us. Therefore, the situation is better and we can travel and work for our livelihood.

Have they [the Tatmadaw army] removed any army camps yet?

No, they have not. Moreover, they want to upgrade [the army camps].

What do you think the Tatmadaw army should do?

We want the Tatmadaw army to be removed [from Karen state] and go back to their area. After they do that, [I believe that] it will be better [safer] for us. If they are not removed [from

our area], we worry that [the fighting] will happen again, like we experienced in the past. This is our concern.

What has been the root cause of the human rights abuses in your area?

It has been the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Army [Tatmadaw].

For the young people and the future of your community, what do you want?

I want [community] development in the future, in order to get freedoms, our own country [state] and our own land permanently. [Which means young people must] develop their education and knowledge. We want security to be safe, we want our own leaders [to lead us] and we want to have our own state. We want to have our own farms, to work for our livelihood.

What are the biggest challenges facing your community's future?

There is no challenge among us [in our community].

How about food?

Yes, we need food, health and prosperity. We need prosperity for our young people, to be able to live and work in the future.

What should the government (KNU or Burma/Myanmar) do to make the best situation for people of your age?

They should make peace and freedom, so we will be able to live peacefully in our own lands.

Are the young people interested in leadership roles? Are they interested to work for their country and their nation?

Yes, the young people who want to work for their country and their nation have increased. They are interested in it [leadership roles].

What do you want to be doing in five years' time? [For example,] you could do development work or take on leadership roles to help improve [the country].

Starting from now, [looking] to the future, we [villagers] will protect the community reserved forests, rivers and our lands, and we will work to develop our communities as we are native [to this country].

What do you know about the October 2015 ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

The ceasefire is related to us because in the past we fled and became displaced persons, but we do not have to flee after the ceasefire. The SPDC [Tatmadaw] do not come and [attack] us, so we can travel and work for our livelihood as the situation is better. If we have the situation like we currently have now in the future, we will be able to work for the future [development].

What is your perspective and feeling on the peace process, of the Burma/Myanmar government and the ethnic armed organisations?

If the peace process is genuine then I can accept it. I am concerned that [the Burma/Myanmar government] will not be honest and that they have targeted this peace process to create negative consequences [for the ethnic armed groups]. We are [I am] doubtful [about this peace process].

Do you know any people in your area that have migrated to other countries or cities to find work? What do you think about this migration?

There are some people from my area who migrated to other countries to find work.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of:

- i. Health and education?
- ii. Communication?
- iii. Transportation?
- iv. Living standards?
- v. Administration?

These have not been developed in my community yet, but I hope these will be developed in the future. If we have peace then communication, health and education, transportation, administration and all of these things will be developed in our community.

In which year do you think there were the most human rights abuses regarding the following dates (from 1992 until the present day)?

The most human right abuses happened in 1998.

Which [armed] grouped committed those human right abuses?

SPDC

What impact [human rights abuses] did the SPDC commit?

They destroyed our businesses, our gold and money, our hill farms and plain farms; they heartlessly burnt down our paddy, and shot on sight our people and our villagers. Therefore we had to flee and could not work on our farms for our livelihood. Some villagers stepped on landmines, faced illnesses and faced food shortages. With the SPDC attacking us we had to survive in shelters in the wet season.

Was there any yaba [methamphetamine] [at that time]?

No, there was no yaba.

Do you know of any development projects that have happened in your village/community/areas?

Yes

What are they? Did they benefit the community?

Yes, they benefited the community because they have developed the land and plain farms, so they produce more food, like paddy, for the people in the community.

What development project do they do?

They do hill farming, plain farming and an agriculture project.

Do the villagers have to work or do they provide money?

They provide materials so we can work on the farms.

Who provides the farming materials?

They are our leaders [KNU].

Which administrators?

Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN).

What kind of material does [KESAN] provide?

They provide machetes, grape hoes, shovels, watering cans and all of the other materials that we use on the plain farm and hill farm.

Are the materials enough for the village [all the villagers]?

Yes

Do they provide farming materials for each villager, or do the villagers have to work together [on the farm]?

We have to work together on the farm. At harvesting time, we store the paddy that we harvest together [in the same rice barn], and then we get some for ourselves. If we do not have enough food [paddy], then we can go and get more from it.

Do the villagers get free paddy [from the village rice barn]?

The paddy [in the village rice barn] is ours, but if we take more paddy from it then we have to return that amount of in the future [in the next harvest time]. We do this so the villagers do not have to get paddy from far away.

It means we can get more paddy from the village rice barn [if we do not have enough paddy], and then we can work on our farm for a while [in the next season]. Then we have to give the paddy back [to the village rice barn] in the next harvest.

It is not that we have to give the paddy back; it is that we store our paddy at the rice barn.

Are all the villagers from your village/area happy with this development project?

Yes, all of them are happy with it.

Do you have another project that you want?

I want a project that can protect us and give us more knowledge of our work [on farm] for our livelihood. We want [our leaders] to look for more [development projects] for us.

What should the government (Burma/Myanmar and KNU) do for the development of the community?

They should develop the farms and the businesses.

Is there any transportation, business, or buying and selling project for the villagers' livelihood? For example, stone mining, gold mining or any other jobs.

They [KNU] have planned a project [gold mining etc.], which they will do it in the future. They look for a way [to solve the villagers' livelihood problems], so the villagers will not be in any trouble/difficulty.

Do you think these projects will benefit the villagers and civilians?

Yes, I do. If the projects succeed, as our leaders [KNU] have planned, then I think it will benefit the villagers and civilians.

Have the leaders or any companies planned any projects?

Regarding what they [KNU] said it is our leaders' project. The local people will do the projects carefully without destroying the environment, or the villagers' lands and water. It is local people and leaders [who will do the project], so we will do it as much as we can. [If any issues/problems happen] we can have a meeting and discuss [the project] together.

Have the Tatmadaw removed any army camps in your area (since the 2012 preliminary ceasefire)?

No. Since the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire, they have rebuilt their army camps instead of dismantling them.

What is the villagers' and civilians' perspective on the Tatmadaw camps [in your area]?

They said "*We don't understand why they [Myanmar government and KNU] signed the ceasefire but the Tatmadaw army does not go back to their area [remove from our area]*". Regarding the ceasefire agreement, they want the Tatmadaw to go back to their place so they [the local people] can work and travel safely. Then the local people would not have to worry about their security.

Do you want to report any other difficulties that you have faced?

We want peace, so that we can travel and work freely in the future. We want our leaders [KNU] and the Tatmadaw to be honest about any projects. Any plans of the Tatmadaw should not be tricks and the plans of the [Tatmadaw] should be honest to our leaders [KNU].

Do you have any other issues to report?

As I mentioned above, we want peace. We will be happy if the Tatmadaw is honest.

Thank you for providing information to us [KHRG].

Source #172

Log #	17-9-A4-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District

Full Text

Which area do you live in?

I live in D--- area village.

Which village are you from?

I am from C--- village [she lives in A--- village now.]

What is your name?

My name is Naw B---.

How old are you?

I am 45 years old.

Which village tract do you live?

Ler Muh Plaw village tract.

Township?

Lu Thaw

District?

Mu Traw [Hpapun]

Brigade?

Brigade #5

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religion?

Animist.

What is your job?

I am a farmer.

What responsibility do you take in your community?

I am a staff member of Lu Thaw Paw Day [Lu Thaw Township Humble Medical Group].

Do you have a family?

Yes

How many children do you have?

I have 2 children.

How old is your eldest child?

My eldest child is 12 years old.

How many households are there [in your village]?

There are 13 households.

How many people are in your village?

There are 120 villagers.

You're from C--- village, then why do you live in A--- village?

I am from Ghee Ghoh Loh Der village, but now I live in Doo Doh Loo village because we were defeated by the enemy [Tatmadaw] and they [Tatmadaw] are based in the centre of our village. Therefore, we were afraid to live in our village and had to flee our village to A---village, P'Nah Aay Per Hkoh area.

When did you flee your village?

We fled our village in 1997.

Since 1997 until now, you cannot return to your village, correct?

Yes, we have not been able to return to our village yet.

What is your most important human right?

My most important human right is [freedom], I want to live in freedom and [have] good opportunities.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, what happened?

Yes, there were human rights abuses in my village in the past. The Burma government military came into rural mountain villages and set up their army camps in my village. Then they defeated and tortured Karen people, and villagers.

What do you think about what you experienced during the conflict and how did you resolve that [human rights abuses]?

During the conflict period we ran for our lives to refugee camps, so the enemy [Tatmadaw] would not kill us and we would be safe.

Did you have to flee in the rain and heat in the jungle without enough food and clothes?

Yes, we did.

Did [pregnant] mothers have to deliver their babies under trees in the jungle?

Yes, they did.

Did they [mothers] receive any healthcare?

They did not have access to healthcare.

So there were only the villagers to take care of each other [using traditional medicine], right?

Yes.

Do you think there is justice for the human rights abuses that happened in the past?

Villagers came together in the village and they cooperated to solve their problems.

How did they solve these problems [abuses]?

They [village leaders] helped villagers not to face human rights abuses again.

So you mean they [leaders] solved human rights abuses that affected villagers by running away from them [Tatmadaw] and [helping villagers] set up temporary shelters in the jungle so they would not suffer [Tatmadaw] torturing and killing them again, correct?

Yes.

What do you think should be done to support the people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

You should help those people who were victims of human rights abuses by reporting the information [human rights abuses] to our upper leaders [to UN or other authorities]. Then they [UN or other authorities] will help us and then we can help other villagers.

What are the biggest challenges facing your community's future?

We do not dare to believe that the Tatmadaw will stop fighting and that we will have freedom because we do not know what Tatmadaw is capable of. Therefore, we are worried and concerned that we will not access freedom, and that the Tatmadaw will start fighting again.

What should the government [KNU and/or Burma/Myanmar] do to make the situation better in the future for the people your age?

KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government should improve [upgrade] their administrations, their management and their curriculum in good ways to improve situation for people my age in the future.

Are young people interested in leadership roles?

Yes.

Do you know of any development projects that are happening in your village/community/area?

Yes, there are some development projects that happen in my village. There are the prosperity projects [to increase villagers' income through agriculture], animal husbandry projects, and healthcare projects. Villagers and our leaders cooperate on these projects.

Which organisations plan these projects?

The prosperity project is organised by a Non-Government Organisation (NGO), Karen Environment and Social Action Network (KESAN), the healthcare project is organised by the Health Department [either Karen Department of Health and Welfare or Free Burma Ranger].

Do all of the community members have the ability to access healthcare yet?

Right now, we do not have our full freedom yet, so we can only access some healthcare. Therefore, we cannot receive the full range of healthcare services yet.

What development projects would you like to see in your community? How do you want them to be carried out?

The development projects that I want in my community regard opportunities [freedom, healthcare, employment, education etc.], healthcare projects, and opportunities to increase our income [employment and livelihood projects].

Do you have any other things to tell us [KHRG]?

Karen people have been defeated by [Tatmadaw] for ages and we do not have our freedom yet. We need freedom: [especially] freedom of movement, so we can work for our livelihoods freely and so our children can access education [and go to school].

Thank you so much for providing information for us [KHRG].

Source #173

Log #	17-9-A5-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	
<p>What is your name <i>Poe Doh</i> [nephew]?</p> <p>My name is Saw B---</p>	
<p>Which area do you live in now?</p> <p>I live in Doo Doh Hta area.</p>	
<p>Which village are you from?</p> <p>I am from C--- village.</p>	
<p>Which village tract do you live in?</p> <p>Hsaw Mu Plaw village tract.</p>	
<p>Township?</p> <p>Lu Thaw.</p>	
<p>District?</p> <p>Mu Traw [Hpapun].</p>	
<p>Brigade?</p> <p>Brigade #5.</p>	
<p>What is your ethnicity?</p> <p>I am S'Gaw Karen.</p>	
<p>What is your religion?</p> <p>I am a Christian.</p>	
<p>What is your job?</p> <p>I am a hill farmer.</p>	
<p>What is your other job?</p>	

I am a teacher and I am working to [solve] social issues at the village tract level.

Do you have a family?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have 3 children.

How old is your eldest child?

My eldest child is 7 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 3 years old.

How many villages are in Hsaw Mu Plaw village tract?

There are 12 villages in Hsaw Mu Plaw village tract.

How many households?

I am guessing there are more than 100 households.

So what about the number of people?

I think there are more than 1,000 villagers.

What job do villagers do in your village to work for their livelihoods?

They work on hill farms and plain farms for their livelihoods because there are no other jobs for us.

Do villagers have enough paddy [for the upcoming year]?

Villagers are IDPs and they cannot return to their villages yet. Therefore, villagers do not have enough paddy [for the upcoming year]. Some villagers throughout the year have to search to have enough food for their daily food.

When did the [people from Hsaw Mu Plaw] village tract flee from their villages?

They fled from their villages in 1997 and they still cannot return to their villages now.

Are there any Tatmadaw army camps in Hsaw Mu Plaw village tract?

There are 3 Tatmadaw army camps based in Hsaw Mu Plaw village tract.

Which areas are they based?

They are based in Der Kyoo area, Paw Khay Hkoh area and Wah Klay Toe area.

What is your most important human right?

My most important human rights are that each nation should have the right to self-determination, and people should be able to return to their own village/area. This is my opinion and my feelings regarding human rights.

Did human rights abuses happen in your area in the past?

Yes, there were too many kinds of human rights abuses that happened in my area in the past. I will tell you about those human rights abuses. The Burma/Myanmar government military attacked civilians so they [villagers] had to flee for their lives and they could not return to their own villages. This was one type of human rights abuse. The Tatmadaw attacked villagers and destroyed civilians' farms so they could not work for their livelihoods. This was another human rights abuse. They attacked [killed] civilians' animals that civilians relied on for their livelihoods [livestock raising and selling], so that was another human rights abuse. There are also a lot of other human rights abuses that I did not mention. This my opinion and my feelings regarding the human rights abuses from the past.

Have any of these human rights abuses been resolved within the justice system?

I do not know if any justice has been granted for the human rights abuses that happened in the past. I do not know if those human rights abuses that happened in the past will ever be resolved [appropriately addressed within the judicial system]. I have not seen any human rights abuses resolved.

Have you studied and discussed issues about human rights?

Yes, I have studied and discussed about human rights issues. Karen Human Rights Group [KHRG] also conducts workshops about human rights with the community, so I think KHRG will solve those human rights abuses. We [civilians] do not know how to solve [access justice for human rights abuses], so we understand that KHRG will resolve these [human rights abuses].

Do you think there is justice for the victims of human rights abuses that happened in the past, within the judicial system?

In my opinion, I think there is no justice for them [the victims of human rights abuses].

Why do you think there is no justice for the victims who experienced human rights abuses in the past?

Because the Burma/Myanmar government are hypocrites and they are dishonest. They are not honest with Karen people when the Burma/Myanmar government and the Karen people [leaders] have made agreements. When [Karen leaders] have reported any violations [of the agreements] to them [Burma/Myanmar government] they [the Burma/Myanmar government] did not take any action to [resolve] the human rights abuses in Karen State and they still commit human right abuses. For example in regards to the ceasefire, the Karen people follow the rules of the ceasefire, but the Tatmadaw broke the ceasefire agreement and their promise. The Karen people are honest with them [Burma/Myanmar government], but they do

not do the same.

Do you mean that the Tatmadaw shot innocent villagers on sight and they destroyed their paddy, lands, houses, plantations, gardens, and then they ate the animals and paddy [food] of the villagers who have not done anything wrong?

Yes, it is.

What do you think should be done to support people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

We should talk with them and encourage them. We should collect [food] together to help people facing food shortages. We should also collect their information [about the human rights abuses they experienced] and report it to Karen Nation Union (KNU) step by step. These are the ways we can solve them [human rights issues].

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

I think the root cause of human rights abuses is the Burma/Myanmar government military attacking civilians and oppressing them. This is the real cause of human rights abuses [in my community].

What future do you want for young people and your community?

I want young people to have the freedom to access education. I want them to be able to access more support [assistance with school fees and materials] for their education in the future. I want young people to have higher living standards and more knowledge. Therefore, people [from the education department and organisations] should come to my area and they should encourage, educate and organise the young people in my area.

Do you want a Karen society and for the Karen people to control Karen state?

For my community, I want all villagers who have been displaced to other areas [IDPs and refugees] to be able to return to their own villages. I want the Burma/Myanmar government military to withdraw their army camps from villages, village tracts and areas [in Karen state]. I hope they [Burma/Myanmar government] will give rights to Karen people. I hope the Karen people will have self-determination and will be able to access land to rebuild their country. I hope villagers get back their ancestral lands that date back to the generations of their forefathers. These are the things I want for young people and for my community in the future.

Why do you want these things?

We all understand that if we have rights then we can have self-determination and can rebuild our country. If our rights are in our hands then we can improve our education and we can work any job freely for our livelihoods. If we have rights to access our own lands, wherever we are, then we will be successful in any job for our livelihoods.

Are young people interested in leadership roles?

Young people in my area have suffered many things [human rights abuses by Tatmadaw] so

most of them are interested in leadership roles and they want to lead their Karen people. They know that if the Burma/Myanmar government leads them, they will have fewer rights and opportunities. Therefore, they are eager to have leadership roles because they have struggled in order to lead their own nation.

What are you most worried about for your own future?

I had experienced fighting [between Tatmadaw and armed groups] for ages and then it was the time of the ceasefire agreement, but the ceasefire agreement [between KNU and Burma/Myanmar government] does not satisfy us, and it is not reliable for the peace process. There are a lot of civilians in my area who cannot stay in [return to] their own villages and areas yet. My biggest concern is that fighting will break out again if the ceasefire agreement is not followed properly and if any disagreements occur between the two sides [KNU and Burma/Myanmar government]. Now we cannot stay in our own villages yet, and we will have to flee from our village again if the fighting happens again. Then we will be in a very dangerous [situation].

What do you want to say to the Karen youth for them to improve their community in the future?

I would like to say the Karen youth should look for more education, [learn more] languages and leadership knowledge, so they have more skills in many different areas to improve their community in the future. Then the Karen youth will have their rights and self-determination in their hands. The Karen youth will be future leaders for the next generation. This is my opinion and what I want to say to the Karen youth for the future.

What do you know about the ceasefire in September 2015? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

I understand that the September 2015 ceasefire agreement is just a pre-ceasefire and it is not a genuine ceasefire yet. I know that the Burma/Myanmar government military are sending more rations, more ammunitions [military supplies] and are upgrading their army camps. Therefore, the ceasefire agreement does not satisfy me and I do not trust that it will stop the fighting. I do not understand what the Burma/Myanmar government is planning during this ceasefire period. I think the Burma/Myanmar government should be honest with their agreements in the ceasefire and they should not upgrade their army camps and should not send more ammunitions. Therefore, I don't really understand [trust] this ceasefire period.

Source #174

Log #	17-11-A1-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Thara [teacher], I would like to ask you about the situation in your area. Could you tell me your name, please?</p> <p>People call me Saw B---</p>	

How old are you?

I am 27 years old.

Which village do you live in?

I live in A--- village.

Which village tract?

Noh Ber Baw village tract.

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many children do you have?

I have one child.

What is your job and responsibility?

I am a A-- village high school teacher.

I would like to ask you about human rights. What is your most important human right?

I think each human should have their rights.

Can you give me an example please?

I don't know how to give [an example].

What do you think about the rule of the law and justice system in your area?

I think the rule of law within [my] school is good, but there is no rule of the law or justice system in my village yet. For example, we have rules for owning cows and buffalo in my village. [Animal owners] have to look after their cows and buffalo [to ensure their animals will not eat other villagers' vegetables and paddy] but most of them [animal owners] cannot control their animals. Their cows and buffalo still roam the village [eating villagers' plants].

What do you think causes these issues?

I think the issues are caused from weaknesses of the village leaders and their administration. They set up rules [without taking any action when their rules are violated], so the villagers do not follow them.

I would like to ask you about what happened in the past [relating to human rights abuses]. Maybe you know about this and have experienced it [human rights abuses] in the past, or maybe people [who are older] have told you [about their experiences]. Did your village face human rights abuses in the past?

When I was a child, the Burmese army [Tatmadaw] entered into our area and arrested men

to become porters, so all of the men from my village had to flee [to other areas]. This is one of the human rights abuses villagers experienced.

Did you or your family ever suffer human rights abuses?

I had suffered when I was a child, so it upset me.

Did your uncles and aunts ever have to carry [military supplies/ammunitions for Tatmadaw]?

Yes.

Could you explain more about this to me, please?

Okay. My uncle, who is my mother's brother, was arrested by the Burmese army [Tatmadaw] to become a porter. When he carried [military supplies/ammunition] for Tatmadaw, people [armed groups] shot at the Burmese army, but the bullets hit and killed him instead. It is a miserable memory for us [his family].

Did villagers in your village ever have to flee their village?

No. Since I was born until now, I have never seen it [that villagers fled from their village].

Did villagers from other villages ever flee to your villages?

Yes.

Could you please describe to me what happened?

There were villagers from Kyuh Khee village, Ta Meh Khee village and Ta Kyoh Hkoh village who were forced to relocate to my village.

Who forced them to relocate to your village? Was it Tatmadaw?

At that time, Koh Per Baw ['yellow headscarves' referring to the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA)] cooperated with the Burmese [Tatmadaw] and forced them to relocate [to my village].

Do you remember the incident date?

I think it would have been around 1995, 1996, 1997 or 1998 because I was a child at the time.

Have you experienced war/conflict in your village?

I had experienced war when I was a child, but I was not around them [armed groups] during the war. When I heard guns firing I went into the well [to hide]. This was how we [villagers] protected ourselves during the fighting.

How did you feel when you had to run for your life during the fighting between Kaw Thoo Lei [Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)] and Tatmadaw?

I was in fear.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved and do you think there has been any justice for human rights abuses that happened in the past?

Mostly Burmese village heads solved the problems when it was the conflict period. If someone were arrested to be a porter by Burmese [Tatmadaw] then the Burmese village head used to solve this case. He/she talked to the Burmese [army] general for that person to be released [from Tatmadaw]. This used to happen in the past.

Do you think there has been justice for human rights abuses that occurred in the past?

Do you mean for rape cases?

It can be any human rights abuse. For example: a rape case happened in your area and the Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU] government solved the case [and gave punishment]. Therefore, do you think this is justice and how much justice have they [KNU] achieved?

In the past, when rape cases happened in the village, it was solved by village leaders. They decided that the man [perpetrator] had to pay compensation by giving a pair of oxen or a pair of buffalo to the victim. One rape case happened in my village and it was not very long ago. It happened when Dtee C--- was a village head. This rape case happened in Bangkok but they [perpetrator and victim] came back and solved this case in the village [with the village head]. After, I know that both sides [the perpetrator and the victim] agreed and were satisfied with the decision [punishment]. I think that it was successful and just. Another rape case was solved [by the village head] but they [victims and perpetrator] were not satisfied with the result. I do not know the details of this case because I only heard about it from other people.

What do you think should be done for [punishment] to the people who committed human rights abuse during the conflict?

Older people should give them warnings and teach them not to commit [human rights abuses] but if they do not follow it, then they [authorities] must punish them appropriately.

What do you think should be done [to support] people who were victims of human rights abuses?

One person cannot decide it [how to support the victims of human rights abuses] and it [their support] depends on what is agreed by many people. Thus, all villagers and village leaders have to decide [how to support victims and solve their problems], so the victim will be satisfied.

So you mean all [villagers and village leaders] should cooperate to solve problems [relating to human rights abuses]?

Yes.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

Please give an example.

For example, when people are drunk at night and fight with other people. As you mentioned, your village has rules that villagers must look after their cows and buffalo and have to drive their cars slowly, but the villagers do not follow the rules. These cases are kinds of human rights abuses. Every incident has a root cause, so what do you think it is [the root cause of human rights abuses in your area]?

I think it [the root cause] is that there is no the rule of law in my village.

So you mean there are rules, but [people] do not follow them, correct?

Yes. There is rule [of law in Burma/Myanmar] but people do not follow it, so there is no rule of the law.

I would like to ask about young people and about the future of your community. What future do you want to see in your community and for the next generation?

As I am a teacher, and since we [the older generation] are not well educated and could not [did not have the freedom to] go wherever we wanted, therefore, I want to see young people from this generation have the opportunities to go everywhere [be educated and have opportunities] as other people do. We should educate our children well, so they can choose [to do] good things for their future and they can live with better living standards.

Also, what [future] do you want [to see] for farmers in the next five years?

They have to work very hard for their livelihoods. Therefore, I want farmers to access marketing [opportunities] to sell their paddy, fruits and vegetables. Then the farmers will enjoy working on their farms more [due to their ability to earn a higher income].

What do you want [to see] for your nation in the future?

I have two objectives. I want to be a good leader like P'Doh and I am interested in business too. I want to be successful in business.

I would like to ask you about [your community's] security. The Burma/Myanmar government and KNU government signed a ceasefire agreement in October 2015. Therefore, what do you think these two armed groups [Tatmadaw and KNLA] should do from now on and in the future?

In my opinion, there should only be one armed group left in the future. There are many armed groups, but I am only mentioning KNLA and Tatmadaw. Our leaders [from the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government] have not made political negotiations yet [regarding the security issue]. But if it [security negotiations] are successful then these two armed groups will have to cooperate and there will only be one government army left. Two and three [armed] groups [in a country] is unnecessary, so there should only be one [armed] group [in the country].

Then they [the Burma/Myanmar Government military] will get more armed forces,

correct?

Yes.

What is the biggest challenge facing your community's future?

Our enemy [Burma/Myanmar government] entering into [attacking] our community is the biggest challenge facing my community. The Burmese do not attack us by [through] militarisation, but they attack us by [taking control over our local] education system. Therefore, it decreases our [Karen] school numbers and there are just a few Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU] Karen schools left in my area. I think all of the schools in my area were possibly replaced by Burma/Myanmar government schools. This is regarding [how the Burma/Myanmar government attacks] our education system. [They also attack our] economic system because now there are many NGOs that have entered into my area. They constructed schools, distributed solar panels, distributed rice and many other things [to villagers]. I do not know what they are planning and how they will influence us. I am just a young man, so I do not know how to find out. Therefore, these are the challenges for us and for my community.

What should the government [KNU and Burma/Myanmar] do to improve the situation for people your age?

The first thing that the governments [Burma/Myanmar and KNU] should do is to have genuine peace. When we have peace then we will have development, such as economic development and political development [in our community]. Then there will be improvements and hope for their [young people's] future.

You mean the governments [KNU/Burma] should build peace, correct?

Yes.

Are young people your age interested in leadership roles? Or are they not interested in them?

There are only a few young people in my community who are interested in leadership roles. Most of them [young people] in my community are interested in moving to other areas [to foreign countries] to find a job and earn an income. Most of the youth are focused on [increasing] their personal income, so there are only a few youths who are interested in leadership roles.

Why are only a small numbers of youth interested in leadership roles? What challenges do they face?

The challenge is that their families face food shortages. It means [they face], "Hardship in Kitchen [food shortage]".

Everyone has plans for their future, so what do you want to be doing in the next five years? What is your goal and objective for yourself, your family, and0 your people?

Regarding the education system, I want to be a science teacher within the next five years. This is my goal. If my plan does not happen, then I will do something with business, such as

buying and selling. If I have a car then I will be in better situation. I will do everything in my power to achieve this.

What are you most worried about for your own future?

My biggest concern is my health because I have plans to do many things, but if my health is not good then I will not be able to do anything. I am married, so another concern is that a husband and wife [my wife and I] are in agreement. We cannot do anything without the agreement between husband and wife [cooperating]. Therefore, if we will do something [and make decisions] we should agree.

What do you want to say to Karen youth [for them to improve] their community in the future?

Our great-grandparents paved the way for the Karen revolution for us and it is like they left us the house they built for us to inherit. This house [Karen revolution] is old and decaying. Therefore, I want the young people to build new house beams [to strengthen the house/revolution]. I want the young people to build a new house [support a new revolution] and I do not want them to use the old house. It's like [the phrase], "With a new person is a new heart [idea]; a new vision and new ideas." I want them to persevere, so they will be able to lead their nation and their country.

What do you know about the ceasefire agreement between Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU government [signed] in October 2015? Do you know it?

Do you mean [what do I know about the ceasefire] from the time they signed it until now?

Yes.

Yes, I know some things about how they signed the ceasefire agreement step by step. I also know that all ethnic armed organisations signed [attended] the Panglong agreement [conference].¹⁵⁸

How do you know about this?

I know this from watching the news on TV, listening to the radio, reading newspaper and from Democratic Voice of Burma [DVB].

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

We [villagers] are the children [members] of the KNU so when they signed the ceasefire it is also relevant to us because after its signing we were able to have freedom of movement. I hope that [the ceasefire] will improve the situation [in my community].

What is your perspective on and feelings about the peace process that the Burma/Myanmar government is engaged in?

¹⁵⁸ Although the interviewee states that all ethnic groups attended the 2016 Panglong conference, there was controversy over the inclusion/exclusion of some groups. See [ETHNIC NATIONALITIES AFFAIRS CENTER: BRIEFING NO. 21](#), Progressive Voice, 29 May 2017.

I feel it is good.

What do you think about [villagers] migrating to other countries or cities to find jobs?

In my opinion, I think it is good for them because there are no job vacancies in their communities and they are not able to earn an income. Therefore, I think economic migration [to other countries or cities] is good.

Are there any people from your village who have migrated to other cities or countries to find a job? Are they doing well with their jobs?

Most of them are doing well [have found decent incomes] with their jobs, but some of them are not.

Do you have any issues with healthcare in your village?

Malaria in my village has decreased. Previously, there were a lot of villagers who faced illnesses and experienced fevers, flu and dengue, but there are no serious diseases like HIV/ADS in my community.

Do you think your community is developed in terms of:

- ii. **Communication**
- iii. **Transportation**
- iv. **Administration**

I think the transportation in my village is not good because the road is bad and I cannot travel freely yet. The transportation in my village is not terrible, but I am still not satisfied with it yet. If we compare the communication [connectivity] in my village in the past and now, then we can see that the current communication has gotten a little better. There is [still] no phone tower in my village and there is no proper phone connection, but we can sometimes use it [phones] in some places. Therefore, we are still not satisfied with it [phone and communication connectivity].

What year do you think there were the most human rights abuses regarding the following situations? (from 1992 until now)

- ii. **Refugee situation?**
- xiv. **Access to education**
- xv. **Militarisation?**
- xvi. **Government?**
- xvii. **Land confiscation?**
- xviii. **Livelihood situations?**
- xix. **Drug situations?**
- xx. **Access to health care situations?**

I think the worst conflict happened when DKBA emerged. I was just a child at that time. I think if I had been an adult, I would have had to be a [DKBA or Tatmadaw] porter many times and I would have had to flee [from portering and abuse].

After the signing of the ceasefire agreement do you know of any development projects that have happened in your area/community/village?

There are two organisations doing [development] projects in my villages. They are the Nippon Foundation [Japanese NGO] and Basic Human Needs Association (BHN) [Japanese NGO]. The Nippon Foundation constructs schools and hospitals. The BHN distributed solar panels to provide electricity to villagers.

What kinds of development projects do you want for/to see in your community? How do you want it [the projects] to be carried out?

I think them [Nippon Foundation and BHN] constructing schools and clinics for villagers, and distributing solar panels to provide electricity for the villagers are all good projects. The Nippon Foundation also provides a clean water supply for villagers [in my village] so it is also a good project. We need many other things [services and development projects] in our lives.

Do you want more [development projects]? What development projects do you want?

We need [better] communication [connectivity]. We want a phone tower to be constructed in our village and [we want a] road construction project.

These development projects [that you have mentioned] are important to your community, correct?

Yes, these are all important [to my community].

You know about the Nippon Foundation and BHN's projects in your community. Therefore, what is your perspective/feelings about these projects? What suggestion do you want to give them [the Nippon Foundation and BHN]?

I can rely on most of their projects [to improve our situation], but one thing I am not satisfied with is the low quality of their schools' construction because they used low quality bricks. Therefore, we are concerned that their school buildings will deteriorate, which will injure the students in future generations. On the other hand, it is good that they constructed schools for us because we have been wanting them for a long time. Also, they [BHN] provided solar panels for us not too long ago, but the solar panels have already stopped working. We liked it [having electricity] but we cannot do anything [to fix the panels]. Therefore, it frustrates us. I am doubtful and think there might be a kind of trickery [cheating] on us.

You mean the development projects in your community are good, but the quality of the materials that they used and distributed are poor. Therefore, you are concerned that the projects will create dangers [to the students and villagers], correct?

Yes.

Do you have any suggestions to give the company [NGOs] for their project?

I want to tell them "Whatever projects you do or buildings you construct, do it the best you can and do it honestly".

What do you think these two armed group, KNLA/Tatmadaw, should do to support villagers' security and their livelihoods?

They should defend villagers, so the villagers can carry out their work freely [in peace].

These two armed groups have this responsibility [to defend villagers]. They should [also] provide farming technical training for us in order to help us yield more paddy and good vegetables.

Thank you for providing us [KHRG] with information and for answering us the best you can. Do you have any other information that you would like to report.

I do not have other information [to report], but I would like to say that I am very excited about this interview because this is my first experience with interviews of this kind. I have never answered these kinds of questions, so I could not answer these questions well.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.

Source #175

Log #	17-14-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>This photo was taken on January 18th 2017 in A--- village, Si Pyay village tract, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. This photo shows a local clinic in A--- village. According to the local villagers, there are not enough health workers at this clinic and the health workers do not always stay at the clinic so villagers continue to face troubles when they are sick.</p>	

Source #176

Log #	17-17-A2-I1
Title / type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Interview Date: November 15th 2016</p> <p>What is your name?</p> <p>Saw A---</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>33 years old</p> <p>Where do you live?</p> <p>B--- village.</p>	

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religion?

I am Christian.

What is your position/occupation in the village?

I am a village head and I do hill farming.

In my first question, can you tell me about the challenges/problems you encounter as a village head?

I do not currently see any problems. But in the past, regarding our livelihood, we had to flee from our village because of the Burma/Myanmar military's [Tatmadaw] obstacles, abuses, and mistreatment of the civilians, for about ten years. In 2014, no [around] 2007, 2010 [villager was unsure], we came back to our village and we have seen the situation has been improved by the administration [Burma/Myanmar government].

For their livelihood, villagers rely upon the land (especially agriculture and plantations). Kaung Myanmar Aung Company arbitrarily confiscated our lands, so the villagers find it difficult to make their livelihood.

One more thing that we have to look at is the standard of healthcare. Currently, we send patients from our village to [the hospital in the] town. We do not have any clinic in our village and this is one of our weaknesses.

Another thing is just among the village, as being a village head I sometimes face various problems when many contexts pop up within the affairs of our village. Some villagers are disobedient, and sometimes some villagers do obey.

As you have mentioned about Kaung Myanmar Aung Company, [could you tell] when did they enter this area?

2006.

Related to land confiscation, there is still another case [I have to mention]. The wealthy individual and private landowner named U Than Htay confiscated 200 acres of Htee Pa Loh village's lands, starting in 2006-2007. We cohesively gathered, went to our lands and continued our regular job [although they had confiscated our lands]. They notified us to stop but we continued and did our job. Actually, they should have brought the case to court but they didn't. We said we are just working on our lands so they stopped the process until now. However, we still see that the tax receipts are coming. But, they do not have any specific record/list to compensate for the lands.

So the 200 acres that had been confiscated was returned and the villagers could work on their lands. Yes?

Yes, they are now currently working on their own lands. There were two areas of land that were confiscated from two villages, which were C--- village and D---village.

How many acres of D--- villagers' lands were confiscated by Kaung Myanmar Aung Company?

If we look at only our villagers' lands, there was a high amount of territory, around 100 acres. But, the land that they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] used was about two to three acres. They needed to expand but they did not continue. They left the lands that they used. We know that Thara Doh Htoo helped us with that case, so that they [Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] did not continue to use and expand the land anymore.

Is the land that the Kuang Myanmar Aung Company has left [all] villagers' lands?

Yes.

Did they provide any compensation to the villagers whose lands were confiscated?

They didn't compensate at all. We have not met any action [of compensation].

Was only D--- village affected by the land confiscation of Kaung Myanmar Aung and U Than Htay? What about other villages?

No, it also included C----- village.

What about other villages?

No

Do the villagers of D---, especially those who own land, have to have land tax receipts or use the land application form system?

No, we don't have. We only have the "Land Use Permission" that has been practiced since a long time ago.

Regarding this, we would like to know whether the villagers try to get a land application form?

Yes, we tried. We proposed [the land application form] for two years already, but we did not receive any answer/information on that until now. The case has been reported since my uncle Saw John Kay was the village head.

[In your opinion] why do you think they did not give any response on this issue?

I think they did not want to give the opportunity to the villagers [to work on their lands] because the companies conduct business on those lands.

Concerning another topic, does the village have any clinic that has been provided/supported by the Burma/Myanmar government?

No, but we have monthly vaccinations. Currently one villager is attending midwife training. However, financial problems are one issue [to provide treatment in village].

What sort of diseases do people usually suffer from in this area?

Mostly they suffer from malaria.

We know that the village doesn't have clinics or health workers, so when the villagers are seriously sick how do the villagers arrange [treatment] and where do they send the patients?

We send [them] to Taw Oo [Toungoo] Civil Hospital.

Is there any discrimination [regarding treatment] because of a patient's financial background?

As I personally see it, there is no discrimination. However, it is hard to get treatment for serious diseases if people do not have enough money.

What about the education here? What is the maximum standard the school has?

We have five standards in this village.

Was the school established by the Burma/Myanmar government or by the villagers?

The school was initiated by the villagers in the beginning, but it was later transferred to the government's administration.

After the [Burma/Myanmar] government took on responsibility for the school, has the school been fully supported annually?

I don't know about the past but until now I haven't seen any teachers asking for money from villagers, regarding school materials, because we know that the Education Department Officer is supportive and everything is going well [with the education]. Moreover, the Burma/Myanmar government has established a school for us and we have also built one self-funded school by ourselves. Our self-funded school's purpose is to show the white colour.¹⁵⁹

Do the student's parents have the financial capability to send their children to school?

No.

How do they try to manage to send their children to school?

As local villagers depend on farming, the issues arise after their children have finished grade five in the village, because they have to continue their further study in the town where there are no relatives. As well, the parents find it difficult to send their children to a dormitory because of financial problems, which is another problem. Parents do try [to send their children to school] but they do not make much [money, because of their hardship], so

¹⁵⁹ This is a direct translation of what that interviewee said about the school, it is unclear as to what he means by this.

children are not able to go to school.

According to these circumstances, do you mean that only a minimum of children, who have finished grade five in village, can continue their study in the town?

Yes, just a few. If we look at people among our village, there is still no one who has finished grade ten (high school) because the school is far from their home village. Moreover, their parents cannot afford all the expenses since they have to send their children to the town, where prices are high.

What is the main job that the local people are doing for a living?

We mainly earn our livelihood by farming. And now, some people do rubber plantation. But, the main livelihood we have is farming.

Overall in the village, do all the villagers have enough food to eat annually?

No, they don't.

How do they manage to get enough food to eat annually?

The villagers usually go to work outside of the village, such riding elephant or elephant caretaking, logging, and finding cardamom, in order to get food to raise their children.

How much will they earn each day from cardamom work?

As I know from those who have gone and collected cardamom in the forest/jungle, they earn 4,000 kyat in a day and 5,000 kyat in Baw G' Lee village.

Are there any other uncommon issues that the villagers encounter?

I guess there are no uncommon problems here.

How many teachers do you have in the village school?

There are five [Burma/Myanmar] government female teachers and one male teacher, and two teachers have been hired by the [local] villagers.

How much do the [two] hired teachers earn for the whole year?

We offered 300,000 kyat [for the whole year of teaching].

Does the Burma/Myanmar government allow the school to teach Karen literacy?

Yes.

Is it taught within the schedule of the school timetable, or in extra time (outside of the official school time)?

It is allowed to be taught for one hour a day during school time.

Who are the teachers of Karen literacy?

They are the two teachers that were hired by the villagers.

We would like to know what you think is important for your human rights? What is the most important [part of] human rights?

The village must be peaceful; we should practice our livelihood freely without any barrier/restriction.

What do you think the influence of the rule of law is in this area? What about justice and the court system in the local village? For example, corruption.

I just heard about this [so it could be a rumour], we heard that the key actors are not disciplined [do not follow the rule of law], such as in the action of land confiscation and things like that.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

In the past, when clashes occurred [Tatmadaw] Battalion #39 entered the village and called the village head to gather the villagers. The military arrested the villagers and tortured/mistreated [the village head] and he has had to suffer from the side effects [of the torture] up until now.

Is he still alive?

Yes, he is. His eyes cannot see things well, as they are blurred as a consequence of the mistreatment.

When did it happen?

It happened when I was a child, maybe in 1993 or 1994. As soon as it happened the village was displaced.

After the village was displaced, where was it resettled?

In the beginning, it was resettled to Magyi Kone. We lived there for about one to two years and then returned to our village. Not long after returning they [Tatmadaw] came and fired on the village again, and then we moved back to Magyi Kone again. After Magyi Kone we moved to another place, which was Na Ga Mauk village and we were close to the cemetery. We returned to our village after living there (Na Ga Mauk village) for ten years.

When did you return to your village [for the last time]?

We came back and have lived here for ten years already, so I think we returned in 2004.

Have you experienced war / conflict? Anything about displacement?

I have not [recently] experienced displacement caused by war, but I experienced it during my childhood. And another thing is that I personally faced, as village leader, fighting at a dam site. The Burma/Myanmar government's military [Tatmadaw] investigated the case but they

didn't commit any physical abuse [on us].

How do you think we should handle the human rights abuses since the war/conflict period? For example, how should we take action against the perpetrator?

The case should be handled in compliance with laws and justice. I see that if the cases are handled in a lawful manner, then we, the civilians, will have well-being in our livelihood and prosperity.

What do you think the Burma/Myanmar government should do to make young people, who are aged 18 years or older, pursue higher education?

In my point of view, the government should open job opportunities to young people relevant to their level of education, whether they have finished grade eight or ten, etc., respectively. According to the current situation, only people can have a proper livelihood when they hold a degree or a high school certificate. They seem not to have a proper job without these.

Regarding security, is there any military [Tatmadaw] camps near here?

No, there are not.

How is the security situation? What about travelling and transportation, has there been any issue or prohibition?

Currently, no.

What about in the past? Was there any restriction on travelling?

If we look back at the past situation, the restrictions were not only in my village but in other villages as well. We could travel only when we had our ID with us, otherwise Burma/Myanmar military [Tatmadaw] soldiers or police did not recognise us as citizens. But, the situation is not like that at the moment.

What are the biggest problems/challenges facing your community's future?

The future challenge is military (both KNLA and Tatmadaw army). It will be best if the war does not break out between our Karen Army/KNLA and the Burma/Myanmar Army again. Whenever war happens the victims are local villagers, who have to flee [into the jungle] and lose their way.

What should the government (KNU or Burma/Myanmar) do to improve the situation of people at your age?

The government should acknowledge, empower, and conduct workshops for them like you [KHRG] are doing, so that they will gain more knowledge and see things clearer, and [then] I believe the situation will get much better. It can be either one of workshops or training.

Are young people interested in leadership roles?

Yes, we see that some of our young people are working with our leaders. They go wherever they are assigned. As a proverb says, "*Cultivated lands are much more than the workers*"

[there are plenty of jobs/tasks to do but only a few participants]. However, they go on [participating] under any circumstances. If we look at the side of our country's [Burma/Myanmar government] administration, [they] provide leadership to [fulfil] the basic needs in the village.

What kind of development projects would you prefer to be conducted in your village/community/area?

In this area the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC, formerly named the Burma Christian Council) came in and organised one particular group of villagers. [The group was founded] for agriculture, livestock and other small livelihood [issues]. They have been working here for seven years; they are saving back-up food for tomorrow and the next year. We see many benefits and advantages with their support. We, at first, did not see/know any of the organisations [like this] before, but later they came in.

What about other development systems, rather than this one? For example, any development project from an education or healthcare perspective?

In my opinion, if both sides of the government, whether KNU or Burma/Myanmar government, establish this [education & healthcare] for us it will be beneficial.

You said MCC, what does MCC stand for?

The main organisation is called Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT). Under LIFT, it has Thadar [youth] then to MCC. The MCC head also lives here in our village

You said the organisation [mainly] works on agriculture and livestock?

The [project] also includes casual work and paddy cultivation. So we see that everything is good and beneficial, such as having three pools [for fishing].

Do you know who leads and monitors this?

We have one, as I have mentioned before, who is currently working here. Or, do you mean the leader of the management or the leader only in the village?

The main organisation that supports [the MCC] is LIFT. There are nine countries who are donors [of LIFT], who help the poor people in Myanmar.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In the next five years, I see myself serving my village and villagers' livelihoods, and the Burma/Myanmar government will support me for five years to be a village head. This is where I see [myself].

What is your biggest concern for the future?

The future is unforeseen and unpredictable, so my personal concern might be about health.

Do you have anything to suggest to the young people in your community, in terms of development?

I would like to suggest that the young people in my village/community *“take your position at all levels, for the purpose of future improvement”*.

How do you view the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) that was signed between the KNU and Tatmadaw army? Have you seen any advantages?

After the NCA was signed, we saw a lot of improvements regarding livelihoods and travelling, when compared to the past. We do not see any arbitrary restrictions [like in the past].

What do you think of the current [NLD] government, which has responsibility for the nation?

We know that the current president [of Myanmar] is U Htin Kyaw, and State Counselor is Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who won the election. During the campaign, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi promised that she would help the civilians depending on their needs. However, we have not seen anything about that until now. We do not see any [changes being] implemented for electricity, road, etc. Likewise their administration doesn't seem much different to the past.

What about the KNU? What do you think about the KNU?

If we look at our people's side, the KNU, they are doing good things for our people. Our Karen people can survive through the KNU.

What year had the most human rights abuses, between 1992 and the present?

1995 to 1996.

Have you ever heard anything about drugs in this area? For example yaba, marijuana, etc.

I have not heard about them, nor [do we] have them in this area.

Do you want to tell us about any other information, which has been left out or missed?

I think no.

Related to the information from this interview, do you allow it to be used by KHRG?

Yes, you can.

Source #177

Log #	15-118-P1
Title / type of report	Photo Note
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Date Received: November 11th 2015

This photo was taken in Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District, and shows the T'la aw tree that was cut down by a member of the KNU, called Ba Oo, on the 16th October 2015. The villagers explained that they used the tree to collect leaves, and faced threats from Ba Oo when he cut down the tree. Ba Oo threatened the villagers by saying: "*Who dares to come? Whoever comes, I will kill them all.*" In response the villagers asked: "*Does this armed actor have a leader? He lives in the village but nobody dare to tell him to [stop].*"