



News Bulletin

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BGF #1014 Warrant Officer injures villagers and steals property in Hpapun District, January and May 2013

This news bulletin is based on information submitted by a community member in May 2013 describing events occurring in Hpapun District between January and May 2013. The community member reported that, in January, Tatmadaw Border Guard Force (BGF) #1014 Warrant Officer Saw Day Day injured a woman and her son when he struck them with a grenade, which did not detonate, fired from his grenade launcher after demands to be given gasoline were not met. The community member also reported that in May 2013, the same warrant officer stole villagers' dog fruit for sale elsewhere. According to the community member, villagers are too afraid of the Tatmadaw and BGF to complain to area BGF authorities, despite what they have endured.¹ This news bulletin also updates information found in an earlier KHRG report, "Incident Report: BGF and KNLA grenades injure villagers and their children in Papun District," July 2013.



The above photos were taken on May 2013 in P--- village, Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The first photo shows scars on P--- villager Naw Eh---, who was struck on her calf by an inoperable grenade, and the second photo shows scars on her son Ht---, who was also injured when the failed grenade grazed his back on January 15th 2013. According to the community member, BGF #1014 Warrant Officer Saw Day Day came to P--- village while drunk and demanded gasoline from Naw Eh--- that she didn't have, at which point he attempted to shoot her with his grenade launcher. [Photos: KHRG]

Between January and May 2013, Border Guard Force (BGF)² #1014 Warrant Officer Saw Day Day was blamed for two notable incidents in P--- village, Htee Th'Daw Tha

¹ This news bulletin was written by KHRG based on information from a community member from Papun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions, including 12 interviews, 38 photographs and one situation update received by KHRG in July 2013.

² 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 formalized ceasefire agreements with the Burmese government and agreed to transform into battalions

village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. According to the community member, Saw Day Day, who is led by Company Commander *Bo³ Ye'* Thway under the command of Battalion Commander Bo Maung Chit, injured a villager and her son while drunk and was involved a few months later in the widespread theft and re-selling of villager produce.

Saw Day Day entered P--- village while he was inebriated on the afternoon of January 15th 2013 as 23-year-old Naw Eh--- was breast-feeding her son at the rear of their house. Naw Eh--- said, *"When he saw me sitting with my son, he asked me if I had gasoline or not. I answered him honestly that I didn't have gasoline, as I really didn't have it, but my answer angered Saw Day Day, so he started preparing to shoot me with his 40 mm mortar.⁴ A few seconds after his preparations, the sound of the mortar went off and I knew that it was not an accident, but that he intentionally shot me."* Naw Eh--- was struck on her calf by the grenade, which failed to explode.⁵ Her son was also injured when the grenade grazed his back.

As a result, Naw Eh--- received six stitches on her calf and her son got three stitches. They went to Myaing Gyi Ngu National Hospital, known as Hkaw Taw Hpoh Hospital in Karen, where treatment cost 250,000 kyat (US \$258),⁶ of which Ye' Thway paid 100,000 kyat (US \$103.20). Naw Eh--- also told the community member that villagers in the area faced many other unspecified abuses around this time, but have kept quiet due to a lack of media presence in their area.

The community member also implicated Saw Day Day in another incident occurring in the same village. On May 23th 2013 Saw Day Day and other BGF soldiers stole dog fruit⁷ belonging to villagers and re-sold them in another town. Victim Saw Hs--- reported that, *"The BGF soldiers came into our village and took our dog fruit with them. They went to K'Ma Maung town to sell them. Sometimes they even went around in the village and sold them house to house."* Villagers fled to Myaing Gyi Ngu, fearing forced labour might accompany the theft. Some villagers also left for Mae La Oon refugee camp in northern Thailand out of concerns that the Hatgyi Dam might flood the area in the rainy season. Only five households remain in P--- village. According to the community member, the few villagers who continue to stay are too afraid to complain to BGF authorities about perceived abuses despite the difficulties they have faced.

Further background reading on the situation in Hpapun District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- "Forced labour and indiscriminate firing in Papun District, June and July 2012," (September 2013)

within the Tatmadaw. BGF battalions are assigned four digit battalion numbers, whereas regular Tatmadaw infantry or 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.

³ *Bo* is a common prefix used to refer to a military officer without necessarily signifying his rank.

⁴ Although the eyewitness uses the term 'mortar,' it is apparent from the community member's research that she is colloquially describing the M79 shoulder-fired grenade launcher frequently carried by armed groups in Karen State.

⁵ Most M79-launched grenades need to travel at least 14 meters before they are primed to explode, meaning the grenade was unlikely to detonate in such a close-range attack.

⁶ As of September 4th 2013, all conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 969 kyat to the US \$1.

⁷ Dog fruit, also known as jengkol, is a bean containing sulphur and a mildly toxic amino acid. It is native to Southeast Asia and is commonly eaten with rice and fish paste.

- “Incident Report: Monk orders forced labour for bridge construction, Papun District,” (September 2013)
- “Papun Interview: Saw A---, March 2013,” (August 2013)
- “Mining development damages farms and irrigation infrastructure in Papun District,” (August 2013)
“Incident Report: BGF #1014 Corporal Maw Nay Say violent abuse and extortion of villager in Papun District, November 2012,” (July 2013)

