



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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**Tatmadaw soldiers pilfer villagers' livestock in Dooplaya District, May to August 2013**

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*This News Bulletin describes the stealing and killing of villagers' livestock between May and August 2013 by Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division (LID) #231 soldiers. LID #231 is based in K--- army camp and led by Zaw Min, the Division Commander in Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. The three K--- villagers who had their livestock stolen spoke to a KHRG community member to report the abuse. Saw P--- explained that LID #231 soldiers shot one of his buffalos on May 10th, while Saw H--- described how soldiers stole and ate two of his buffalos on July 20th. Saw H--- mentioned that there have also been many unreported cases where livestock was killed and eaten. The third villager, Saw T---, explained how his friends witnessed LID #231 soldiers kill and eat one of his buffalos. Saw T--- reported the incident to his village head in order to receive some compensation. The K--- village head discussed the incident with Commander Zaw Min, who denied that his soldiers were responsible for the incident but requested that Saw T--- point out the offending soldier, however, Saw T--- was unable to identify the soldier. K--- villagers also raised concerns about landmines restricting their ability to travel freely and graze their buffalo.<sup>1</sup>*

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In the beginning of 2013, the Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division (LID) #231 moved its army camp to a location on K--- Mountain, west of Meh K'Lah Kloh. Some soldiers in the battalion rotate every three months and some rotate every six months. They rotate to several different army camps such as K--- army camp, Maw Tu army camp, Oo Kree Hta army camp and many others.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> 2013, LID #231 soldiers, based in K--- army camp, shot a buffalo owned by a 27 year-old, K--- villager named Saw P---. Saw P--- grazed his buffalo in the forest of western K--- village. On May 10<sup>th</sup> 2013, Saw P--- could not find his buffalo and went to look for it. He found the Tatmadaw soldiers' footsteps leading to the place where they killed and ate his buffalo. He also saw the remains of soldiers' clothes and footprints of their boots on the ground. He did not see the Tatmadaw soldiers in person.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2013, the same Tatmadaw battalion killed and ate two buffalos belonging to Saw H---, a 44 year-old K--- villager. He also only saw the place where the Tatmadaw killed and ate his buffalo. Saw H--- said, "*When I went there, I saw that my buffalos were already*

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<sup>1</sup> This News Bulletin was written by KHRG office staff and is based on information from a community member from Dooplaya District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It summarizes information from three interviews received by KHRG in September 2013. In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in eastern Burma, KHRG aims to make all field information received available on the KHRG website once it has been processed and translated, subject only to security considerations. For additional reports categorized by Type, Issue, Location and Year, please see the Related Readings component following each report on KHRG's redesigned Website.

<sup>2</sup> This information was included in an interview received by KHRG in September 2013 from a KHRG community member from Dooplaya District.

killed. One of my buffalos was torn into two parts while the other was already completely eaten and only the intestines and bones were left.” Saw H--- grazed his buffalo at the intersection of the entrance of K--- village and the old road to L--- village. He has been grazing his buffalo there for many years, but never had problems with anyone stealing his buffalo before this incident. Only when the Tatmadaw started to operate in the area, have many villagers lost and had their livestock eaten. His buffalo was killed between K--- village and L--- Mountain.<sup>3</sup>

Again on August 5<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Tatmadaw killed and ate a buffalo belonging to a 40 year-old K--- villager called Saw T---. When he was looking for his buffalo, he found out that LID #231 soldiers already killed and ate his buffalo. Saw T--- said, *“I didn’t see with my own eyes but my friends witnessed it. They saw seven soldiers with their gun kill my buffalo and grill its meat. If they asked me about it, I would have considered giving it to them but now they just stole it. I do not need to get back the full compensation, but at least I want them to compensate me half of the cost.”* Saw T--- told the village head about it and the village head went to tell the division commander, Zaw Min. The commander denied that it was his soldiers who stole and ate the villager’s buffalo. He also told Saw T--- to show him which one of his soldiers did it. Saw T--- was unable to identify the offending soldier.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the K--- villagers graze their buffalo at the western edge of the village because there are landmines contaminating land in the eastern part. Additionally, it is presently the time for villagers to plant paddy, so they worry that the buffalo will eat their paddy. The soldiers killed and ate the villagers’ livestock, not because they thought the buffalo were wild but because they knew that they belonged to the villagers. Very rarely do the soldiers buy meat with their own money, which means that most of them steal the villagers’ livestock.

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

- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyone Doh Township, July to November 2012,” (June 2013)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kya In Seik Kyi Township, September 2012,” (June 2013)
- “Shooting in Dooplaya District,” (November 2012)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update Kawkareik Township and Kya In Township, April to June 2012,” (September 2012)
- “Dooplaya Interview: Saw L---, June 2011,” (May 2012)
- “Incident Report: Arrest and torture in Dooplaya District, December 2011,” (March 2012)

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<sup>3</sup> This information was included in an interview received by KHRG in September 2013 from a KHRG community member from Dooplaya District.

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