



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

February 10, 2016 / KHRG #14-101-D1

Thaton Short Update: Hpa-an Township, October 2014

This Short Update describes how the Tatmadaw Border Guard Force Battalion #1014 made use of forced labour to make repairs to their army camp in A--- village, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District, in October 2014. Thirty villagers from three villages were forced to work in the camp for one day each, without getting paid.

Short Update | Hpa-an Township, Thaton District (October 2014)

The following Short Update was received by KHRG in December 2014. It was written by a community member in Thaton District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This report was received along with other information from Thaton District, including one situation update.²

On October 10th 2014, a KHRG community member met with a B--- villager who was involved in army camp repairing. Villagers from three villages were forced to make repairs to the army camp of the Tatmadaw Border Guard Force Battalion³ (BGF) #1014,⁴ in A--- village. The incident took place in Meh K'Na Hkee village tract, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District.

The KHRG community member saw villagers travelling on their way to work and spoke to them. The villagers said that they were forced to work for BGF Battalion #1014. The person who

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeast Burma/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 writing situation updates, community members are encouraged to summarise recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area.

² In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in southeast Burma/Myanmar, 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 categorised by Type, Issue, Location and Year, please see the Related Readings component following each report on KHRG's website.

³ 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.

⁴ 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 "[Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014](#)," KHRG, July 2015.

provided the information to the KHRG community member is a B--- villager who went to work at the army camp himself. The people responsible in the township also sent this information to the Karen National Union (KNU) via radio.

The BGF Battalion #1014 Company Commander Saw Htee Kyoo, also known as Tin Win, went and asked to meet with village heads from B--- village, C--- village and A--- village in order to make repairs to the army camp in A--- village. The soldiers forced villagers to make improvements to the army camp and demanded that each village should send ten villagers to work as labourers each day. The construction was started on October 7th 2014, and continued at least through December 2014. The villagers did not get any payment for carrying out the construction work. Moreover, it took place during the paddy harvest season and therefore some of the villagers, who were busy with the harvest, had to hire people to replace them, if they could not go to work at the camp themselves.

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

- “Thaton Situation Update: Thaton Township, January to June 2015,” (January 2016)
- “Thaton Field Report: January to December 2014,” (November 2015)
- “Thaton Interview: Saw A---, October 2014,” (October 2015)
- “Thaton Situation Update: Thaton Township, January to February 2015,” (October 2015)
- “Forced relocation and destruction of villagers’ shelters by Burma/Myanmar government officials and police in Hpa-an Township, Thaton District, June 2015,” (August 2015)

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