



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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**Human rights violations by Border Guard Force (BGF)  
Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May  
2012 to March 2014**

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*This News Bulletin describes human rights abuses occurring in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District between May 2012 and March 2014, including killing, torture, violent abuse, forced labour, arbitrary taxation, explicit threats and land confiscation. These violations were committed by Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014 soldiers led by Battalion Commander Maung Chit. Despite having committed many human rights violations, the soldiers have not been held accountable for their actions and continue to operate with impunity.<sup>1</sup>*

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Between May 2012 and March 2014, KHRG received several reports concerning human rights violations committed by Battalion Commander Maung Chit<sup>2</sup> and his soldiers from Border Guard Force (BGF)<sup>3</sup> Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. According to the reports, BGF Battalion #1014 continues to operate with impunity.

**Battalion Commander Maung Chit**

Maung Chit is the Battalion Commander of BGF Battalion #1014. He and his battalion are currently based in Meh Say village, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. Since 2012, Battalion Commander Maung Chit either directly, or indirectly through soldiers under his command, committed numerous human rights violations, including forced labour, arbitrary taxation, arbitrary arrest and detention, as well as torture.

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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 Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. 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.

<sup>2</sup> Battalion Commander Maung Chit, also referred to as Maw Hsee, is the commander for Tatmadaw Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014 in Hpapun District. Maung Chit is not to be confused with Maung Chit Thu (typically referred to as Chit Thu), who is a senior level BGF commander overseeing BGF Battalions #1017, #1018, #1019 and #1020 in Ko Ko, Hpa-an District.

<sup>3</sup> 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 Burmese/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.

### Forced labour and arbitrary taxation

Between July and October 2012, BGF Battalion #1014's soldiers, led by Battalion Commander Maung Chit, came to stay in T--- village, Bu Tho Township. They lived in the villagers' houses and forced two villagers to stay with them and do labour relating to their camp set up and maintenance for them.<sup>4</sup> In another instance between August and September 2012, the battalion forced villagers from T--- village, Bu Thu Township to cut bamboo for them and paid 70 kyat (US \$0.06)<sup>5</sup> for each bamboo pole.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to forced labour, several villages in Bu Tho Township were also subjected to arbitrary taxation. On September 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, Maung Chit wrote a letter to five villages from Meh Pree and Htee Tha Daw Hta village tracts, demanding 33 million kyat (US \$29,663.37) to help him recruit and pay his soldiers. The battalion also operated in Day Wah, Kyaw Pah, and Htee Tha Daw Hta village tracts, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, where they set up their check points in order to collect taxes.

### Violent abuse of a villager

On August 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, fighting broke out between Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) troops and BGF Battalion #1014 troops in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township. An unknown number of BGF soldiers were injured and died during the attack. After the fighting, a group of BGF soldiers, led by Officer Saw Way Loo, tried to look for the KNLA soldiers for revenge, but they failed. When Officer Saw Way Loo arrived in S--- village, he arrested and tied up a villager, Saw H---, to a tree and then proceeded to punch and beat him, and led Saw H--- to the forest before talking to him. Officer Saw Way Loo released Saw H--- two days later and attempted to justify his actions by saying, "*Saw H--- is a KNLA spy, so we tortured him.*" This claim has been negated outright by other villagers' testimonies.<sup>7</sup>

### **Company Commander Nyut Thein**

In May 2012, Company<sup>8</sup> Commander Nyut Thein from BGF Battalion #1014 carried out forced labour and arbitrary demands toward the villagers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District.

Company Commander Nyut Thein ordered six villagers from three villages in Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, to go and do the BGF's camp maintenance, and forced them to porter the soldiers' materials while they travelled. These villagers have served them since May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012. In addition, on May 14<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>, Commander Nyut Thein demanded that villagers provide him with durians and chickens. Villagers were afraid of the consequences of non-compliance, so they delivered these items to Commander Nyut Thein's camp.<sup>9</sup>

### **Company Commander Saw Tin Win**

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<sup>4</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, July to October 2012](#)," KHRG, April 2013.

<sup>5</sup> All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the June 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 official market rate of 1,112.48 kyat to the US \$1.

<sup>6</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August to September 2012](#)," KHRG, April 2013.

<sup>7</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August to September 2012](#)," KHRG, April 2013.

<sup>8</sup> A Company is a military unit of approximately 100 soldiers.

<sup>9</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Border Guard #1014 demands for labour and goods in Papun District, May 2012](#)," KHRG, March 2013.

Company Commander Saw Tin Win from BGF Battalion #1014 committed land confiscation and forced labour, as well as torture and killing in Hpa-an Township, Thaton District between April and June 2012.

In April 2012, Company Commander Saw Tin Win confiscated 500 acres of land from V--- village, T--- village, and W--- village for two domestic companies named Shwe Than Lwin and Thein Lay Myaing.<sup>10</sup> After they confiscated the land, they ordered villagers to go and clear the bushes on the land and plant rubber and teak trees for the companies. They did not give any wages to the villagers and they had to bring their own food.<sup>11</sup>

On June 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, a villager named Saw R---, a 52-year-old resident of M--- village, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District, and his uncle Saw A---, a 67-year-old resident of H--- village, were arrested and tortured by Company Commander Saw Tin Win and his eight soldiers from BGF Battalion #1014, resulting in the death of Saw R---. Company Commander Saw Tin Win accused them of being Karen National Union (KNU) intelligence officers, after which they were stabbed and beaten with sticks and guns until they were unconscious. Saw R--- died, while Saw A--- was seriously injured. In addition, Company Commander Saw Tin Win also took 55,000 kyat (US \$49.44) from Saw R---.<sup>12</sup>

### **Company Sergeant Major Saw Day Day**

In January 2013, Company Sergeant Major<sup>13</sup> Saw Day Day from BGF Battalion #1014 committed violent abuse toward villagers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District.

On January 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, Company Sergeant Major Saw Day Day threatened to shoot a villager from P--- village, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township. However, he accidentally fired his grenade launcher at a 23-year-old woman, Naw E---, and her one-year-old son, with a 40 mm grenade in their home. The grenade failed to explode but hit the mother and son. Naw E--- sustained injuries to her knee and ankle, and her son was injured in his midsection. They sought treatment at Hkaw Taw Hpoh Hospital, where she received six stitches for her injuries, and her son three for his. Company Sergeant Major Saw Day Day agreed to pay 240,000 kyat (US \$215.74) for their medical fees, but they received only 100,000 kyat (US \$89.89). According to the villagers, Company Sergeant Major Saw Day Day was drunk when he committed the abuse toward the villager.<sup>14</sup>

In the same village, Saw Day Day and his soldiers also stole villagers' fruit. On May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013, Saw Day Day and other BGF soldiers stole dog fruit belonging to villagers and re-sold them in another town. Saw Hs---, a villager from P--- village, 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."*<sup>15</sup>

### **Second Lieutenant Tha Beh**

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<sup>10</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Incident Report: Land confiscation and forced labour in Thaton District, April 2012](#)," KHRG, May 2013.

<sup>11</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Thaton Situation Update: Hpa-an Township, January to June 2012](#)," KHRG, May 2013.

<sup>12</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Torture and killing in Thaton District](#)," KHRG, October 2012.

<sup>13</sup> A Company Sergeant Major in charge of the day-to-day administration of a company's equipment, rations, family affairs, etc.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on this incident, see "[BGF #1014 Warrant Officer injures villagers and steals property in Hpapun District, January and May 2013](#)," KHRG, October 2013.

<sup>15</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[BGF #1014 Warrant Officer injures villagers and steals property in Hpapun District, January and May 2013](#)," KHRG, October 2013.

Officer Tha Beh, also known as Ta Thoo, is the Second Lieutenant<sup>16</sup> of BGF Battalion #1014 and is based in Weh Gyi village, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. KHRG has documented numerous human rights violations committed by Second Lieutenant Tha Beh, including violent abuse of villagers, arbitrary taxation and demands, forced labour and explicit threats toward villagers in the period between August 2013 and March 2014.

On January 13<sup>th</sup> 2014, Second Lieutenant Tha Beh violently abused S--- villager, Saw P---, after accusing him of failing to pay taxes demanded by the BGF. The violent abuse culminated with Second Lieutenant Tha Beh breaking the villager's arm and demanding 300,000 kyat (US \$269.67) from him. Second Lieutenant Tha Beh said that Saw P--- had been logging and had not paid the appropriate tax for his activities. Second Lieutenant Tha Beh's commander failed to punish him for his actions.<sup>17</sup>

On January 15<sup>th</sup> 2014, Second Lieutenant Tha Beh set up military and logging camps around three villages in Pu Zun Myaung village tract, Bu Tho Township and forced villagers to transport wood using their ox-carts and cars, without pay. According to the community, villagers who refused to participate were verbally abused and beaten. In response, a number of them fled to other villages in the area. One of the villagers, Naw B---, said to a KHRG researcher, *"He [Second Lieutenant Tha Beh] always brings two or three cane sticks whenever he calls a meeting. He beats the villagers with the cane sticks even if the villagers make a small mistake."*<sup>18</sup>

During January 2014, a villager named U A---'s forest land was confiscated by Second Lieutenant Tha Beh. Then, Second Lieutenant Tha Beh threatened to cut off U A---'s head in front of his fellow villagers if he dared to log in the forest area that was confiscated. U A--- has fled his village out of fear. When a KHRG researcher interviewed U A---, he reported that, *"I want to talk about the part of the forest that I bought which is close [to other] people's farms. The village elder [that I bought the forest land from] talked [complained] to Second Lieutenant Tha Beh [about his abusive behaviour]. He [Second Lieutenant Tha Beh] then confiscated it [the forest area from me]. Second Lieutenant Tha Beh told me not to log trees from that forest [area] and that he would shoot me with gun if I log trees from that forest [area]. [If I did log trees], he would tell people to come after me and he said that he would cut off my head in front of the villagers and then take it [my head] around the village."*<sup>19</sup>

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014, Second Lieutenant Tha Beh summoned the village head of A--- village to meet him after the village head had organised the delivery of a letter on behalf of a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) officer under his area of control. When they arrived, Second Lieutenant Tha Beh punched and hit the village head, as well as the messenger who sent the letter. When the village head of P---, who had also been summoned by Second Lieutenant Tha Beh, arrived, he was punched and hit as well. The village head of P--- brandished a machete, after which one of Second Lieutenant Tha Beh's privates, who had accompanied him, shot the village head of P---, hitting him in the hand and stomach and accidentally shooting Second Lieutenant Tha Beh in the leg.<sup>20</sup>

In August 2013, fighting took place in D--- village, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, between KNLA soldiers and BGF soldiers led by Second Lieutenant Tha Beh. The

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<sup>16</sup> A Second Lieutenant is the platoon commander.

<sup>17</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, November 2013 to February 2014](#)," KHRG, September 2014.

<sup>18</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Hpapun Incident Report: Forced labour and violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, January 2014](#)," KHRG, August 2014.

<sup>19</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Hpapun Interview: U A---, January 2014](#)," KHRG, October 2014.

<sup>20</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Hpapun Incident Report: Violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, April 2014](#)," KHRG, November 2014.

BGF had to retreat and they were angry after the fight, so they frightened the villagers with verbal and physical threats to vent their frustration. They threatened the villagers to the point that the leader of E--- village in G--- region became so afraid of Second Lieutenant Tha Beh that he migrated to Thailand in order to avoid him. Lower F--- village leader, Saw C--- who was asked to accompany Second Lieutenant Tha Beh, remained in the area, but he still dares not meet with Second Lieutenant Tha Beh.<sup>21</sup>

Villagers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District reported that since the BGF soldiers began operating in Bu Tho Township, they have committed human rights violations against villagers with impunity and there is no accountability from their leaders. A local KHRG community member recommended that the BGF soldiers should receive additional training so that they learn to respect villagers' human rights.

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

- "Violent abuse and killing committed by BGF soldiers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, March to May 2015," (July 2015)
- "'With only our voices, what can we do?': Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar," (June 2015)
- "Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, June to November 2014," (June 2015)
- "Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, November 2013 to January 2014," (June 2015)
- "Hpapun Interview: Daw A---, July 2013," (May 2015)

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<sup>21</sup> For more information of this incident, see "[Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August to November 2013](#)," KHRG, August 2014.

# Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)