



## Situation Update

July 21, 2015 / KHRG #14-28-S5

---

## Hpa-an Situation Update: Paingkyon Township, March 2014

---

*This Situation Update describes ongoing land confiscation occurring in Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District during March 2014. Villagers in A--- village, Kah Teh Koh village tract, Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District report that in 2013 Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC) soldiers confiscated land from 25 villagers. Villagers were still reluctant to speak openly about the issue, reporting that they were threatened and feared reprisals if they spoke about the incident.*

---

### Situation Update | Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District, (March 2014)

*The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in April 2014. It was written by a community member in Hpa-an District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.<sup>1</sup> This report was received along with other information from Hpa-an District, including six other situation updates, 1,080 photographs and two video clips.<sup>2</sup>*

I would like to report about B--- village, Kah Teh Koh village tract, Ta Kreh [Paingkyon] Township, Hpa-an District.<sup>3</sup> Tatmadaw Infantry Battalion (IB)<sup>4</sup> #28 used to have a base in B--- village in the past. General Saw Bo Mya of the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] used to have a base there before Tatmadaw IB #28 [established] a base there. Then General Saw Bo Mya left the place after battles [with the Tatmadaw]. After, Tatmadaw IB #28 came in [to B--- village tract] and then the Democratic Karen Buddhist

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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>3</sup> The following narrative presents a historical background to conflict in the area, describing a series of events that occurred over a period of approximately 20 years.

<sup>4</sup> Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprised of 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Primarily for garrison duty but sometimes used in offensive operations.

Army [DKBA]<sup>5</sup> emerged [in 1994]. [Later] General Htay Maung, [leader of the KNU/KNLA Peace Council]<sup>6</sup> moved to the area] and took control of C--- camp in B--- village. The commander who lives in that camp [now] is named [KNU/KNLA-PC Commander] Saw Kyaw Oo and he is the camp commander. The highest-ranking officer of the camp is [Operation Commander] Saw Htaw Lay, the adjutant. The soldiers of the Peace Council [KNU/KNLA-PC] also [among other armed groups] confiscated the land of villagers [in 2013]. The villagers whose lands were confiscated are:

1. C---
2. W---
3. U D---
4. U E---
5. F---
6. U G---
7. U H---
8. U I---
9. U J---
10. U K---
11. U L---
12. U M---
13. U Ee---
14. U N---
15. U O---
16. U P---
17. Daw Q---
18. U R---
19. Mg S---
20. Daw T---
21. Daw U---
22. U V---
23. U Dd---
24. U X---
25. Daw Y---

---

<sup>5</sup> The Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), formerly the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, was formed in December 1994 and was originally a breakaway group from the KNU/KNLA that signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burma government and directly cooperated at times with Tatmadaw forces. The formation of the DKBA was led by monk U Thuzana with the help and support of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the name of the military government in Burma at that time. For more information on the formation of the DKBA, see "[Inside the DKBA](#)," KHRG, 1996. The DKBA now refers to a splinter group from those DKBA forces reformed as Tatmadaw Border Guard Forces, also remaining independent of the KNLA. As of April 2012, the DKBA changed its name from "Buddhist" to "Benevolent" to reflect its secularity.

<sup>6</sup> The KNU/KNLA Peace Council (also called the Karen Peace Council or KPC), is an armed group based in Htoh Gkaw Ko, Hpa-an District, which split from the Karen National Union (KNU) in 2007 and subsequently refused to comply with orders from the then-SPDC government to transform its forces into the Tatmadaw Border Guard. See: "[KPC to be outlawed if it rejects BGF](#)," *Burma News International*, August 30<sup>th</sup> 2010.

They [KNU/KNLA-PC] confiscated the yards of the villagers. The villagers were not willing to talk because they were threatened. Some of them were not willing to follow me when I went to take photos. I have seen that the villagers are [still] very frightened.

Further background reading on the situation in Hpa-an District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- *'With only our voices what can we do?': Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar*, (June 2015)
- *PRESS RELEASE: 'With only our voices what can we do?': Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar*, (June 2015)
- "Hpa-an Interview: Saw A---, May 2014," (May 2015)
- Hpa-an Interview: U A---, November 2014," (May 2015)
- "The Asia Highway: Planned Eindu to Kawkareik Town road construction threatens villagers' livelihoods," (March 2015)

# Hpa-an District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)