



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Photo Set

June 24, 2014 / KHRG #14-3-PS1

Hpapun Photo Set: BGF Battalion #1013 land confiscation for army base in Dwe Lo Township, June 2012 to November 2013

This Photo Set shows the Tatmadaw-Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1013 army camp, which has been under construction in Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District since June 2012, as well as photographs of villagers' lands which were confiscated for its construction. This Photo Set also explains that, although villagers received compensation from the BGF for the land, they now regret their earlier decision to sign the land over to the BGF and accept the compensation.¹

Photo Set | Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (June 2012 to November 2013)

The following photos were taken by two villagers in Hpapun District and submitted to a KHRG community member who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. They are presented below, censored where necessary for security purposes.² The 12 photos below were received along with other information from Hpapun District, including 115 other photos.³

1. Villagers' lands and plantation where the Tatmadaw-Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1013 army camp will be constructed

¹ As will be explained in a forthcoming KHRG News Bulletin, a KNU/KNLA-Peace Council member with links to the BGF impersonated a KNU headquarters member in order to convince the local community to sell their land.

² KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma 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, villagers 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.

³ This Photo Set was compiled by KHRG office staff and is based on information from a community member from Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. 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.



These photos were taken by an A--- villager on June 6th and 7th 2012 in between K'Ter Tee and Baw Kyoh Leh villages, which are in K'Ter Tee and Noh Hpaw Htee village tracts. According to the villager, BGF Battalion #1013 will build their shelter and work place in this area, and it will damage villagers' rubber plantations, cashew plantations and farms. As can be seen in the bottom right photo, a plastic rope was hung in the villagers' plantation to designate the land for the military compound, reportedly placed there by a BGF soldier. On June 8th 2012, the BGF #1013 battalion commander ordered an A--- villager to meet with the battalion regarding the plantations and farms that were to be confiscated for the military base. According to the KHRG community member, the two BGF commanders in charge of this project are

Major Hla Kyaing and Major Htu Lu (from Baw Kyoh Leh army base).⁴ The individual in charge of organising the construction is U Ha Than. In response, the KNU prohibited the BGF from building the army base. According to the community member, the risk of ongoing construction is that the KNLA might engage in an armed attack if this project is not terminated. The local community is deeply concerned about such armed conflict, as they believe that the BGF will continue to build its army base until it has been successfully completed. [Photos: KHRG]

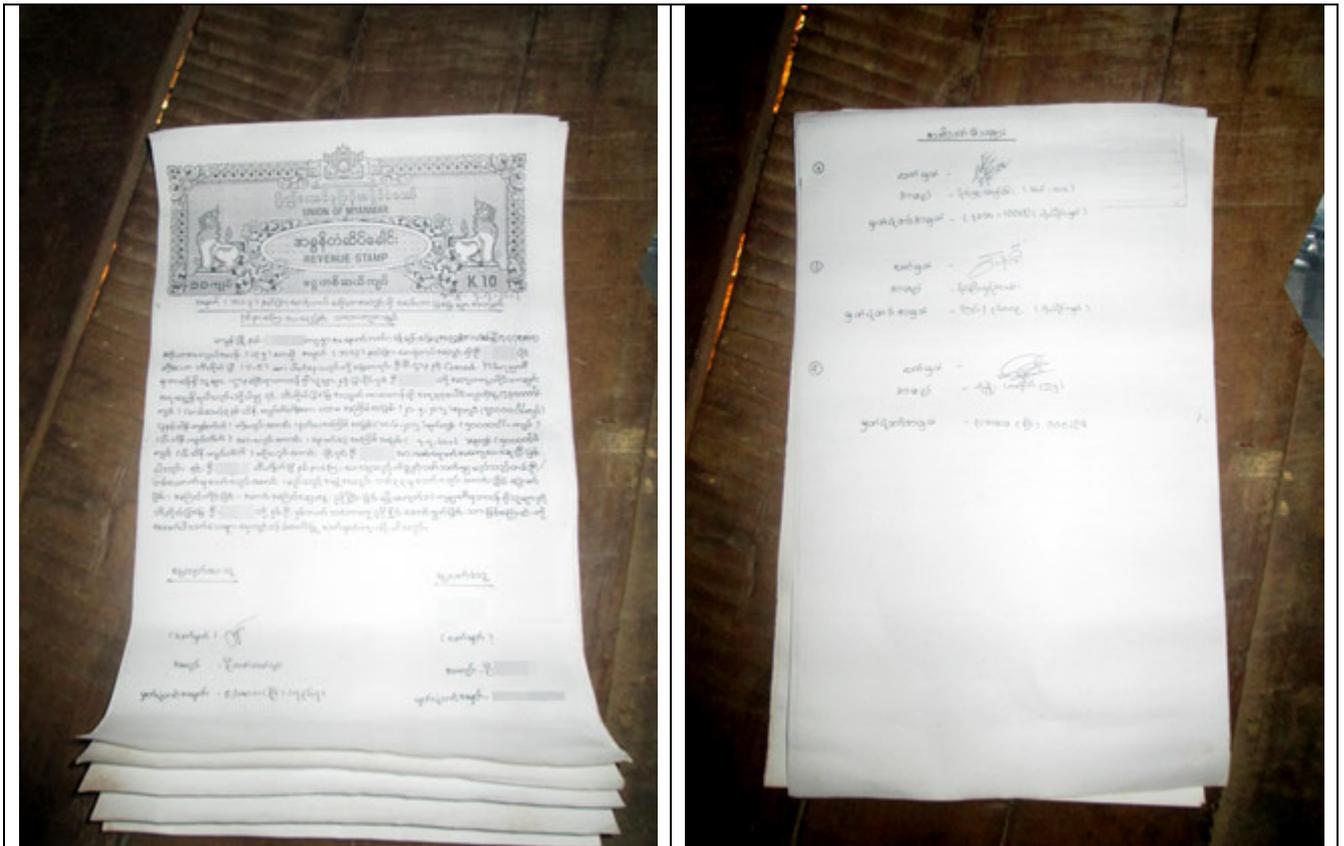
2. Ongoing construction of the BGF Battalion #1013 army camp



These photos were taken by an A--- villager on November 20th 2013 in B--- village, K'Ter Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The first photo shows the entrance gate of BGF Battalion #1013's army camp with its military symbol. The signboard reads, "No #1013 Border Guard Force, Ka Taing Ti". According to the KHRG community member who met with the A--- villager, the BGF confiscated 135 acres of villagers' land, including villagers' rubber plantations, cashew plantations and farms. There are 75 buildings in the BGF Battalion #1013's army camp and the workers have almost finished constructing the buildings on that land. The landowners could not do anything to protect their land from being confiscated for the camp, as they already mistakenly signed documents and accepted compensation from the BGF and company for their land. [Photos: KHRG]

3. Compensation to the villagers

⁴ Major Htu Lu was previously the commander of the DKBA battalion referred to as white elephant or *k'chaw wah* in the Karen language.



These photos were taken by an A--- villager on November 20th 2013 in B--- village, K'Ter Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The first photo shows a contract titled: “*The agreement of the compensation for the farms, plantations and lands in BGF #1013’s area.*” In the body text, it explains; “*In Hpapun District, in the back side of Ka Taing Ti [also called K'Ter Tee in Karen] village, in LV (Land Value) #444487, which contains 135 acres of land in BGF 1013’s compound. It includes 7.5 acres of cashew plantation land, which is owned by Saw C---. This was determined based on the measurement by those in charge of the Myanmar Government Land Department and the Green Hill Company; the people in charge of relevant [other government] departments; and the plantation owner, Saw C---, was also included. For the cost of the cashew plantation, which is currently valued at 1,700,000 kyat (US \$1,761.66),⁵ the company already came and compensated the owner, Saw C---, with a first payment of 700,000 kyat (US \$725.39) on May 20th 2012; a second payment of 500,000 kyat (US \$507.61) was made on June 10th 2012; and a final payment was made on July 4th 2012 for 500,000 kyat. Regarding the compensation for Saw C---’s cashew plantation, there is no person or organisation who has coerced this decision in any way, nor has there been any forced discussion, but the people in charge of the company and the cashew plantation owner, Saw C---, agreed and wrote their signature in front of the below witnesses.*”

Paid by

(Signature): Sd.

Name: U Zaw Zaw Lwin

ID No: 9/Ma Hta Hla (Naing) 173671

Received by

Sd.

(Signature)

Name: Saw C---

ID No: [censored for security]

⁵ As of May 21st 2014, all conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 965 kyat to the US \$1.

According to the community member, the compensation was given to the five villagers whose lands were confiscated by BGF Battalion #1013 for the military camp. The second photo shows the document containing the name and signature of the witnesses who were involved in the compensation process. [Photos: KHRG]

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

- *Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire*, (May 2014)
- “Ongoing forced recruitment into the people’s militia in Kyeikto Township, Thaton District,” (January 2014)
- “Thaton Situation Update: Hpa-an, Thaton and Bilin townships, January to July 2013,” (December 2013)
- *Civilian and Military Order Documents: November 2009 to July 2013*, (October 2013)
- “Thaton Situation Update: Kyeh Htoh and Bilin townships, November to December 2012,” (October 2013)

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



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