



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

November 20, 2014 / KHRG #14-50-I1

Hpapun Incident Report: Violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, April 2014

This Incident Report describes events in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District in April 2014, including violent abuse and injury due to shooting. On April 2nd 2014, Border Guard Force (BGF) Officer Tha Beh summoned the village head of A--- village to meet him after the village head had organized the delivery of a letter on behalf of a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) officer to the officer's former private, who is now a BGF private, under Officer Tha Beh's command. Upon their meeting, Officer Tha Beh punched and hit the village head of A---, as well as the messenger who sent the letter. When the village head of P---, who had also been summoned by Officer Tha Beh, arrived, he was punched and hit as well. The village head of P---brandished a machete, after which one of Officer Tha Beh's privates, who had accompanied him, shot the village head of P---, hitting him in the hand and accidentally shooting Officer Tha Beh in the leg.

Incident Report | Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (April 2014)

The following Incident Report was written by a community member who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions in Bu Tho Township. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This report was received in July 2014 along with other information from Hpapun District, including, one incident report, 13 interviews, 146 photographs.²

Part 1 – Incident Details

¹ KHRG trains community members in eastern Burma to document individual incidents of abuse 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 incident reports, community members are encouraged to document incidents of abuse that they consider to be important, by verifying information from multiple sources, assessing for potential biases and comparing to local trends.

² 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 Website.

Type of Incident	Violent abuse
Date of Incident(s)	March 2 nd 2014
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A--- village, Htee Ta Daw Htah village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

Victim Information				
Name	Saw E---			
Age	58			
Sex	Male			
Nationality	Karen			
Family	Married			
Occupation	Farming			
Religion	Buddhist			
Position	Village head			
Village	A---			

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
[Officer] Tha Beh ³	2 nd Lieutenant	Border Guard Force (BGF) ⁴ Battalion #1014	Ta Law Thaw	Maung Chit ⁵ [Commander of Battalion #1014]

Part 2 - Information Quality

³ KHRG has received numerous reports involving human rights abuses committed by BGF Officer Tha Beh, including violent abuse, forced labour, explicit threats and arbitrary arrest and detention. See "[Violent abuse and forced labour in Hpapun District, November 2013 – January 2014](#)," KHRG, September 2014; "[Hpapun Incident Report: Forced labour and violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, January 2014](#)," KHRG, August 2014; "[Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, November 2013 to February 2014](#)," KHRG, August 2014; and "[Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August to November 2013](#)," KHRG, December 2013.

⁴ 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 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.

⁵ 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 battalions #1017, #1018, #1019 and #1020 in Ko Ko, Hpa-an District.

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

I went and met with the victim and interviewed him about the incident. He said that “On April 1st 2014, Officer Hpah Mwee of the KNU [Karen National Union]⁶ told me to send a letter to his [former] private who [had defected to the BGF] and is in P--- village. So I asked a sentry [messenger] to send it to him. BGF Officer Tha Beh knew about it [sending the letter] and ordered me to go and meet with him, then he met me on the way and then he punched me.”

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The person who gave me this information suffered the abuse and told me about it.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please use the space prepared below, and create an attachment if needed.

On April 1st 2014, Officer Hpah Mwee of the KNU asked the village head of A--- village, Htee Ta Daw Htah village tract, Bu Tho Township, to send a letter to his [former] private, who is in P--- village. The [A---] village head asked a sentry to send the letter. The [former] private of Officer Hpah Mwee came back [to him] as soon as he read the letter that the sentry gave him because his [former superior] officer [Hpah Mwee] told him in the letter to come back. Hpuh Ta Thoo, also called Tha Beh, is a BGF officer. He knew about it [delivery of the letter on behalf of a KNU officer] and ordered the village head [of A--- village] and the sentry to come to him [at his current location]. [Impatient,] he [Officer Tha Beh] met the village head and the sentry [on their way to see him]. He did not say anything [when they met along the road, but] punched the sentry and then punched the village head of A--- village. Then the village head of P--- arrived [also summoned to see Officer Tha Beh]. [Officer Tha Beh] asked them why they [KNU Officer Hpah Mwee] came and took back the [former KNU] private, because he [Officer Tha Beh] was already taking care of him [as a BGF soldier]. When he [Officer Tha Beh] was punching the village head of P---, he [P--- village head] could not bear it [the abuse] anymore and took a machete out to cut Hpuh Ta Thoo [Officer Tha Beh]. At that time, another private of Hpuh Ta Thu [Officer Tha Beh] shot the village head of P--- and it [the bullet] hit his hand and then hit his [superior] officer’s [Tha Beh’s] leg. The village head and villagers could live peacefully after this incident. The villagers had to be afraid of Hpuh Ta Thoo [Officer Tha Beh] before he got the injury. After the incident, he was assigned to operate in another area in Brigade #1 [Thaton District]. Now he is staying with Officer Tin Win, the subordinate of BGF Battalion #1014’s Battalion Commander Maung Chit, at Meh Kyi Htah.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

⁶ The researcher refers to the Karen National Union (KNU) here; Officer Hpah Mwee is in fact a member of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the armed wing of the KNU.

Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.

The victim allowed us to use this information in order to eliminate violent abuse.

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

- “Hpapun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, February and March 2014,” (November 2014)
- “Hpapun Incident Report: Forced Labour in Bu Tho Township, November 2013,” (October 2014)
- “Hpapun Interview: Ma A---, October 2013,” (October 2014)
- “Hpapun Incident Report: Forced Labour in Bu Tho Township, October 2013,” (October 2014)
- “Hpapun Interview: U A---, January 2014,” (October 2014)

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



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