



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

August 20, 2014 / KHRG #14-56-17

Hpapun Incident Report: Forced labour and violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, January 2014

This Incident Report describes events occurring in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, including forced labour and violent abuse committed against villagers by Saw Tha Beh, 2nd Lieutenant of Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Maung Chit.

- *2nd Lieutenant Saw Tha Beh, of the BGF, set up military and logging camps around three villages, and forced villagers to transport wood using their ox-carts and cars without pay.*
- *Villagers who refused to participate were verbally abused and beaten; in response a number of them fled to other villages in the area.*

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

The following Incident Report was written by a community member in Bu Tho Township 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.¹ This report was received in January 2014 along with other information from Hpapun District, including seven other incident reports, 45 interviews, two situation updates and 711 photographs.²

¹ KHRG trains community members in eastern Burma/Myanmar 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/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.



This photo was taken on February 25th 2014 in A---village, C--- village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. This is a photo of Naw M---, taken during an interview, as she described abuses by BGF 2nd Lieutenant Saw Tha Beh. [Photo: KHRG]

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Forced labour and violent abuse
Date of Incident(s)	January 15 th 2014
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	B--- village, C--- village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Victim Information				
Name	M---			
Age	50			
Sex	Female			
Nationality	Karen			
Family	Married			
Occupation	KWO [Karen Women Organisation]			
Religion	Buddhist			
Position	KWO secretary			
Village	B--- village			

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Saw Tha Beh	2 nd Lieutenant	Border Guard Force Battalion #1014	Weh Gyi village	Lieutenant Colonel Maung Chit

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

I went to A--- village and interviewed Naw M--- about the abuses that were committed by officer Tha Beh. Naw M--- suffered the abuse that was committed by officer Tha Beh, and escaped [fled] to A--- village, where I met with her and interviewed her. What she says is the truth.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

We can say that this information is true based on what Naw B--- has said. She said, *“He [Saw 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.”*

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.

The human rights abuses that I am going to report happened in B--- village, C--- village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District on January 15th 2014. The abuses that happened were forced labour, bullying, beating [with cane sticks] and punching. The perpetrator was 2nd Lieutenant Saw Tha Beh, from BGF Battalion #1014.

The victim was Naw M---, who is 50 years old and from B--- village. The incident happened as follows: Officer Tha Beh from BGF Battalion #1014 was going around the jungle near B--- village, Z--- village and D--- village, setting up camps and logging. He asked the villagers [including Naw M---] from that area to transport his wood with their ox-carts and cars. He forced the villagers [to transport his wood] and did not pay them.

Without any reason, he swore, punched and beat [with cane sticks] the villagers who could not do it for him because they were not free [available to work]. Therefore many villagers were afraid and fled from their villages [including Naw M---]. They went to A--- village and other villages. Some of the villagers who fled from their village have

gone back, but some of them dare not go back yet, and are still hiding [living in the other villages].³ The village administrator has not done anything yet to solve the problem.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

I received permission from Naw M--- to use this information.

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

- “Hpapun Interview: U A---, July 2013,” (August 2014)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August to November 2013,” (August 2014)
- “Hpapun Interview: Naw S---, September 2013,” (August 2014)
- “Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, February 2013,” (July 2014)
- “Coercive land appropriation and KNLA landmine incident surrounds construction of a BGF army base in Hpapun District,” (July 2014)

³ Since receiving this report, we have obtained additional information from the researcher indicating that the villagers have been able to return to their homes.

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



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