



## Situation Update

February 2, 2015 / KHRG #14-94-S1

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## Dooplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik, Kyainseikgyi and Kyonedoe townships, May to October 2014

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*This Situation Update describes events occurring in Kawkareik, Kyainseikgyi, and Kyonedoe townships, Dooplaya District between May and October 2014, including cases of theft and looting, shooting and arbitrary arrest and detention.*

- *On May 7<sup>th</sup> 2014, Infantry Battalion (IB) #32 confiscated and looted villagers' property in Kawkareik Township. Although villagers reported it to the IB #32 battalion commander, no action was taken against the perpetrators.*
  - *On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2014, 25-year-old Saw D--- from A--- village was shot at by soldiers from Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #283 while returning by motorcycle to his village from Kyaikdon town. He was not injured during the incident.*
  - *On October 12<sup>th</sup> 2014, a Tatmadaw soldier arrested two Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) soldiers and one villager. The community does not know what has happened to the villager.*
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## Situation Update | Kawkareik, Kyainseikgyi and Kyonedoe townships, Dooplaya District (May to October 2014)

*The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in November 2014. It was written by a community member in Dooplaya 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 Dooplaya District, including 44 photographs.<sup>2</sup>*

### Introduction

The activities of the Burma military [Tatmadaw], Burma government, KHRG [Karen Human Rights Group], KNU [Karen National Union] and villagers in Kaw T'Ree [Kawkareik] Township, Kruh Tu [Kyonedoe] Township and Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township are described below.

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG trains community members in eastern 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 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.

On May 7<sup>th</sup> 2014, [Tatmadaw] Infantry Battalion [IB]<sup>3</sup> #32 destroyed and confiscated villagers' property in Kaw T'Ree [Kawkareik] Township. They: 1) pulled out young betel nut trees,<sup>4</sup> 2) stole and sold lemon fruit and 3) took villagers' durian fruit and sold it. As villagers saw this, they reported it to the village head and the village head went and reported it to the [IB #32] battalion commander. The [battalion] commander asked [if the village head could] recognize the soldiers and the village head replied [that he] could not recognize [the perpetrators] but that it was definitely [the commander's] soldiers. The commander replied that if you cannot recognize [them] you should not make accusations.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2014, Tatmadaw soldiers [from Light infantry Battalion (LIB)<sup>5</sup> #283] shot at 25-year-old Saw D--- who lives in A--- village, Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township. Saw D---, [a taxi driver], had driven customers to Kye Doh [Kyaikdon] town and was returning to his village. When he arrived in the middle of Pa Yan Taung road he was shot at by Tatmadaw soldiers three times but [they] missed. However, his motorbike was hit and damaged and he had to push his bike to a nearby village.

On October 10<sup>th</sup> 2014, fighting broke out between the DKBA [Democratic Karen Benevolent Army]<sup>6</sup> and the Tatmadaw in northern B--- village, Kruh Tu [Kyonedoe] Township because of tensions between the DKBA and Tatmadaw. The incident began in Kyaikmayaw, Mon State, then spread through Karen [Kayin] State. This forced villagers to flee from their village, but no individuals were injured or hurt.

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<sup>3</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.

<sup>4</sup> In Burmese, 'betel nut' and 'betel leaf' are referred to as *konywet* and *konthih*, as if they are from the same plant. The Burmese names are also commonly used by Karen language speakers. Betel nut is the seed from an area palm tree, areca catechu; "betel leaf" is the leaf of the piper betel vine, belonging to the Piperaceae family.

<sup>5</sup> Light Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprised of 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Primarily for offensive operations but sometimes used for garrison duties.

<sup>6</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/Myanmar 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/Myanmar 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.



This photo was taken on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2014, in Kyaikdon Town, Kyainseikgyi Township. Saw D--- was shot at by Tatmadaw LIB #283 three times when returning to his village from Kyaikdon Town. His front and back lights and his back wheel spoke were broken due to the gunfire. [Photo: KHRG]

On October 12<sup>th</sup> 2014, Tatmadaw soldiers captured two DKBA soldiers and one villager on Leh Wah Bridge in Kaw T'Ree Town, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District. The villager had been asked [forced] by the DKBA to guide them. When the Tatmadaw arrested [the] DKBA [soldiers] they also arrested the villager. Since then, we [the villagers] do not know whether the individual is alive or dead. He [has not] come back home yet. The Tatmadaw were the most active during the months of September and October [2014]. They patrol and travel at night but we [the villagers] do not know the reason why they are doing this. Villagers are always questioned when they travel. However, we do not know what [the Burma/Myanmar military's] purpose is.

#### **Burma government situation**

In both Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] and Kaw T'Ree [Kawkareik] townships the Burma government constructed a better road for villagers. Sixty-two buildings were constructed in Mae K'Tha village, Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township

by the Burma government. Some villagers who are very poor moved there already.

#### **KNU situation**

In our region the KNU tries hard to protect their people [villagers]. In the healthcare department, the KNU tries to provide medicine as much as they can even though their supplies are insufficient. KNU also tries to help and support education as much as they can.

#### **Conclusion**

Information related to the military, Burma government, KNU, KHRG, the healthcare situation, and the education situation in Kruh Tu [Kyonedoe] Township, Kaw T'Ree [Kawkareik] Township and Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township is presented above.

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

- "Dooplaya Field Report: January to December 2013," (December 2014)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik Township, September 2014," (November 2014)
- "Dooplaya Interview: Naw A---, July 2013," (October 2014)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyainseikgyi, Kawkareik and Win Yay Townships, December 2013 to February 2014," (September 2014)

- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyonedoe Township, September to December 2013,” (September 2014)

# Dooplaya District



## Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)