



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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**Explicit threats and the indiscriminate firing of mortars and small arms by BGF soldiers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, June 2015**

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*This News Bulletin describes events occurring in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District in June 2015, including explicit threats and the indiscriminate firing of small arms and mortars by Border Guard Force (BGF) soldiers. The first incident took place on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, when the soldiers of Htoo Lwe Baw Company from BGF Battalion #1015 shelled mortars and fired small arms into P--- place, in G--- village, injuring villagers' livestock and damaging their rubber plantations. The second incident was perpetrated by Second Lieutenant Tha Beh from BGF Battalion #1014, who on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2015 threatened to kill one or two villagers for allegedly supporting the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The villagers fear the BGF soldiers because they have previously committed numerous abuses toward the villagers in the area and continue to threaten their lives and livelihoods both physically and verbally.<sup>1</sup>*

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On June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, at 8:30 pm, a Border Guard Force (BGF)<sup>2</sup> company<sup>3</sup> led by Company Commander Hpuh Lwe Baw, under BGF Battalion #1015, headed by Commander Hpah Nwee, launched mortars and fired small guns into P--- place, in G--- village, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District. The shells hit the villagers' buffalos and damaged their rubber plantations. One of the buffalos lost its tail after being hit by shrapnel and has since stopped eating, likely due to the pain from its injury. The villagers were frightened by the shelling and temporarily ran away from the village. The BGF soldiers later told villagers that they fired their weapons because they were being haunted by a ghost.

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<sup>1</sup> This News Bulletin was written by KHRG office staff and is based on information from a community member from Hpa-an District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. 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 redesigned website.

<sup>2</sup> 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/Myanmar 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.

<sup>3</sup> Military unit of approximately 100 soldiers.

In addition, on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2015, Second Lieutenant Tha Beh,<sup>4</sup> a BGF platoon commander from BGF Battalion #1014,<sup>5</sup> went to A--- village, Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, and threatened to kill one or two villagers. His reason for the threat was the alleged exclusive support of Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) soldiers and lack of support for BGF soldiers by some of the villagers. As a result, the villagers are afraid of him. Second Lieutenant Tha Beh is notorious in the area, as he has previously violently abused villagers<sup>6</sup> and ordered villagers to do forced labour.<sup>7</sup>

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

- “Human rights violations by Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014,” (July 2015)
- “Violent abuse and killing committed by BGF soldiers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, March to May 2015,” (July 2015)
- *‘With only our voices, what can we do?’: Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar*, (June 2015)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, June to November 2014,” (June 2015)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, November 2013 to January 2014,” (June 2015)

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<sup>4</sup> Saw Tha Beh is a Second Lieutenant in Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014 in Hpapun District. KHRG has received multiple reports of Saw Tha Beh committing human rights abuses in Hpapun District, including forced labour, arbitrary taxation and violent abuse. For more information see: [“Hpapun Incident Report: Violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, April 2014,”](#) KHRG, November 2014; [“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; and [“Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, November 2013 to February 2014,”](#) KHRG, August 2014.

<sup>5</sup> KHRG has received numerous reports of human rights violations committed by soldiers from Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, including killing, torture, violent abuse, explicit threats, arbitrary taxation and demands and land confiscation. For more information see, [“Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014,”](#) KHRG, July 2015.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, [“Violent abuse and killing committed by BGF soldiers in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, March to May 2015,”](#) KHRG, July 2015.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance, [“Hpapun Incident Report: Forced labour and violent abuse in Bu Tho Township, January 2014,”](#) KHRG, August 2014.

# Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



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