



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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**Recent fighting between Tatmadaw and DKBA soldiers leads to killing and displacement of villagers in Hpa-an District, July 2015**

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*This News Bulletin describes recent fighting between Tatmadaw and Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) soldiers, which has led to killings and displacement of villagers in Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District, in July 2015. On July 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, Tatmadaw soldiers attacked a DKBA camp near Waw Poo Bridge in Meh Th'Waw village, Hlaingbwe Township. On that day, two villagers were shot and killed by Tatmadaw soldiers whilst travelling on the road where the Tatmadaw soldiers had taken up position for fighting. The relatives of the two villagers tried to retrieve the bodies, but the Tatmadaw soldiers did not allow them to do so at the time. The relatives were permitted to retrieve the bodies several days later.<sup>1</sup>*

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On July 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, a female villager named Naw D---, from G--- village, reported to KHRG that on the evening of July 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, Tatmadaw soldiers began firing small machine guns and grenade launchers at the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) camp in Waw Poo Bridge area, Meh Th'Waw village. Villagers who live in the villages near the location where the fighting took place have fled from their villages for their own safety.

Another female villager named Naw E--- reported to KHRG that two villagers were shot and killed between Bway Moh Hklay and Beh Htee Hta villages by Tatmadaw soldiers at around 7:00 pm on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, whilst they were on their way back to Beh Htee Hta village. According to Naw E---, neither of the villagers knew that Tatmadaw soldiers had taken up position for battle on the day that they travelled. Therefore, they were walking on a path where the Tatmadaw soldiers were positioned and they were shot dead. One of the victims was a 17-year-old boy and the other was 21 years old. The 21-year-old villager left behind a wife and a child. Relatives of the two dead villagers tried to retrieve the dead bodies, but the Tatmadaw soldiers did not allow them to. Naw E--- also added that on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2015, five Tatmadaw military trucks came to Meh Th'Waw village area and their helicopter was flying over the area. The clashes started again around 5:30 pm on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 and continued until 8pm.

On July 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, Naw E--- reported to KHRG that the relatives of the two dead villagers were later permitted to retrieve their bodies several days after the incident took place.

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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 website.

Further background reading on the situation in Hpa-an District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- *'With only our voices what can we do?': Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar*, (June 2015)
- Press Release: *'With only our voices what can we do?': Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar*, (June 2015)
- "Hpa-an interview: Saw A---, May 2014," (May 2015)
- "Hpa-an interview: U A---, November 2014," (May 2015)
- "The Asia Highway: planned Eindu to Kawkareik Town road construction threatens villagers' livelihoods," (March 2015)

# Hpa-an District



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