



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

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**Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Ler Muh Lah Township,
November 2015 to January 2016**

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Ler Muh Lah Township, Mergui-Tavoy District between November 2015 and January 2016, including military activity, education and healthcare.

- *In Ler Muh Lah Township, the Tatmadaw held their military training in P'Soh Oo village and near P'Nweh Hpoh Kloh village, P'Law area village tract where they have their training buildings. On January 7th 2016, they transported rations by 20 military trucks to Naw Teh village army camp.*
 - *Both the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Burma/Myanmar government built clinics in the villages in Ler Muh Lah Township. However, while the KNU provide free medicine in their clinics, which benefits the villagers a lot, the villagers have to pay for medical treatment in the Burma/Myanmar government clinics.*
 - *Regarding education in Ler Muh Lah Township, both the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government built schools and vocational schools which benefit the villagers a lot.*
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**Situation Update | Ler Muh Lah Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
(November 2015 to January 2016)**

The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in March 2016. It was written by a community member in Mergui-Tavoy District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹

I would like to report on the situation in Ler Muh Lah Township. The subjects are the situation of Tatmadaw [activity], the civilian situation, healthcare and education.

Situation of the Tatmadaw

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeast 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.

After the [2012 preliminary] ceasefire,² there have been no problems in Ler Muh Lah Township. The Tatmadaw organised [military] training in the whole of Ta Naw Th'Ree Region. In Ler Muh Lah Township, they came to organise [military] training in P'Soh Oo village and near P'Nweh Hphoh Kloh village, P'Law area [village tract]. There are also training buildings [in these places]. Whenever they patrolled [as part of military operations], they patrolled in the [above] villages. The training lasted for three months from November [2015] to January 2016. On January 7th 2016, they [the Tatmadaw] transported their rations by 20 military trucks. They went through K'Hsaw Hphoh Yweh Ler Hpa Doh [village] road and Yeh Wah [village] mountain road to Naw Teh [village army camp].

Situation of civilians

In Ler Muh Lah Township, the main occupations of the villagers for their livelihoods are working on hill farming, plain farming, plantation farming, breeding animals and [other types of] agriculture. Since there was unusual rain [for the season] this year, the insects destroyed the paddy, which caused much difficulty for the civilians. Because of the flooding, the place [working land] for livelihoods had been destroyed. A Bamar village was burnt in Ler Muh Lah Township so they faced many things [problems]. The surrounding villagers provided them with support.

Situation of healthcare

In Ler Muh Lah Township, a clinic was built in Toh Teh Hta village, in the upper part of Htee Moh Pwa area [village tract] [by the KNU] in the KNU side [KNU-controlled area]. The surrounding villagers come to have medical check-ups at the clinic if they have any [health] problems. This benefits them so much. It benefits the IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] and the mountainous people so much. The [Burma/Myanmar] government also set up a number of clinics in Karen villages [in Ler Muh Lah Township]. It also brings benefit [to the villagers]. However, the problem is that the villagers do not have enough money to pay for the medicine. The KNU's clinic is free but the [Burma/Myanmar] government's clinic is not free. That is the difference.

Education

² On January 12th 2012, a preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. Negotiations for a longer-term peace plan are still under way. For updates on the peace process, see the [KNU Stakeholder webpage](#) on the Myanmar Peace Monitor website. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014. In March 2015, the seventh round of the negotiations for a national ceasefire between the Burma/Myanmar government and various ethnic armed actors began in Yangon, see ["Seventh Round of Nationwide Ceasefire Negotiations," Karen National Union Headquarters](#), March 18th 2015. Following the negotiations, the KNU held a central standing committee emergency, see ["KNU: Emergency Meeting Called To Discuss Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement And Ethnic Leaders' Summit," Karen News](#), April 22nd 2015.

Regarding education in Ler Muh Lah Township, the KNU built schools and the [Burma/Myanmar] government built vocational schools. The KNU has three schools which are Ta Muh Ta Hkuh school, Htaw Kweh Soh [village] school, and Toh Teh Hta [village] school. Ta Muh Ta Hkuh school and Haw Kweh Soh [village] school have four standards³ and Toh Teh Hta [village] school has ten standards. Since the schools have been built, they bring so much benefit to those who could not previously send their children to school and to the mountainous people. The KNU schools' teachers have to attend training for one month each year. In [Burma/Myanmar] government controlled-areas, there is a school in every Karen village. The [Burma/Myanmar] government also set up vocational schools in Karen villages. I see that Karen people are able to teach and learn the Karen language in [Burma/Myanmar] government schools and they are also able to learn how to weave Karen clothes. KNU teachers recorded the number of Karen schools and they provided books and school materials [to the KNU schools] but there are not enough [for all of the schools].

Conclusion

As mentioned above, I have reported about the situation of the Tatmadaw, the situation of the civilians, and healthcare and education in Ler Muh Lah Township.

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

- “Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Ler Doh Soh Township, June to November 2015,” (July 2016)
- “Mergui-Tavoy Short Update: K'Ser Doh Township, June 2015,” (July 2016)
- “Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: K'Ser Doh Township, August to October 2015,” (May 2016)
- “The 2015 Elections and Beyond: Perspectives from villagers in rural southeast Burma/Myanmar,” (February 2016)
- “Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: K'Ser Doh Township, January to March 2015,” (February 2016)

³ A standard refers to a school year in the education system of Burma/Myanmar. The basic education system has a 5-4-2 structure. Primary school runs from Standard 1 to Standard 5, lower secondary school is Standards 6-9, and upper secondary school is Standards 10-11.

