



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Interview

June 14, 2017 / KHRG #16-90-A2-I1

Dooplaya Interview: Saw A---, September 2016

This Interview with Saw A--- describes events occurring in Win Yay (Waw Raw) Township, Dooplaya District, including development projects, healthcare, education, community livelihood and armed group activities.

- *Saw A-- explained that the Three Pagodas Pass-Thanyuzayat car road would be widened and improved, but villagers were concerned that this would damage their land. Their concerns had arisen because of complaints that villagers had not been compensated for damage to their lands when the Three Pagodas Pass-Thanyuzayat car was originally constructed.*
 - *The Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU have built clinics in Win Yay (Waw Raw) Township but there are not enough medicines available to treat the villagers. When any children get sick, most of their parents cannot send them to a clinic or hospital for medical treatment, because the cost of medical treatment is too high.*
 - *Saw A--- reported that the Tatmadaw are still active in Win Yay (Waw Raw) Township, as they have been continuing to maintain their army camps.*
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Interview | Saw A---, (male, 42), B--- village, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District (September 2016)

The following Interview was conducted by a community member trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. It was conducted in Dooplaya District on September 4th 2016 and is presented below translated exactly as it was received, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This interview was received along with other information from Dooplaya District, including four other interviews, two situation updates and 164 photographs.²

Ethnicity: Karen

Religion: Buddhist

Marital Status: Married

Occupation: Rubber plantation worker

Position: Villager

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 conducting interviews, community members are trained to use loose question guidelines, but also to encourage interviewees to speak freely about recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important and share their opinions or perspectives on abuse and other local dynamics.

² 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.

Can you tell me your name, please?

My name is Saw A---

Can you tell me your age?

I am 42 years old.

Which village do you live in?

I used to live in C--- village but I now live in B--- village [Waw Raw Township]. I have moved from place to place so I cannot tell which village is my [original] village.

How many people are there in your family?

I have seven children.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is four years old.

What is your youngest child's name?

His name is D---

What is your religion?

My parents are Christians but my wife and parents-in-law are Buddhists.

So are you a Buddhist?

No. I am not a Buddhist.

What occupation do you do?

I work on a rubber plantation.

What position do you take in your village?

I am just a villager.

OK. Now you have something to tell me. So can you first tell me what information you want to tell me?

The road between E--- village and Three Pagodas Pass will be reconstructed better, in order to follow the international standard [for road construction].

When will the road be constructed?

We do not know when the road will be constructed. We just saw the sign [beside the road]. When local villagers saw the sign they worried about it [road construction].

Where did they post the sign? Can you tell me?

I just knew when the F-- villagers told me [about it]. They said the sign was posted in F--- village. I do not know the date [when the sign was posted]. I also do not know who gave the permission to post the sign.

There are local authorities and a Township leader in this area. Did they know about it [the road construction]?

Recently, the followers [employees] of the Township leader did not know about it, but local villagers gathered and had a meeting [about the road construction]. They reported it to the Township leader.

When will this road between E--- village and Three Pagodas Pass be constructed? Can you tell me please?

I do not know when it will be constructed. I could tell you if I knew it.

Who is in charge of this road construction? The Burma/Myanmar government or the Karen National Union (KNU) government? Can you tell me please if you know it?

The Minister of Construction in the Burma/Myanmar government will take responsibility for the construction of this road, but I do not know whether the KNU is involved or not.

What is the name of the Minister of Construction?

I do not know the name of the Minister of Construction.

Will they [road constructors] consult with local villagers about it before they construct the road?

They [road constructors] have never consulted with local villagers. They constructed [another] road in the past, but I have never seen them consult with the local villagers.

Can you tell me, what are your views and opinions on this road construction?

My views are the same as most of the other villagers. How do I say? Local Karen villagers who live beside the road, starting from G--- village to Three Pagodas Pass, have concerns that their lands, houses and plantations will be confiscated and damaged if the road is widened.

OK. Currently, how wide are they [road constructors] constructing the road? Can you tell me please?

How can I know? I have not measured the road during the [ongoing] construction, so I do not know exactly how wide it is.

When the road between E--- village and Three Pagodas Pass is constructed, will its harm [negative impact] increase or decrease? Can you tell me about it?

What kind of harm do you mean?

For example, their [villagers] lands will be damaged [if the road is completed]. Things like that.

If the road is constructed, the negative impact will increase. How can it [negative impact] decrease?

How many plantations or houses in the villages have been damaged during the road construction? Can you tell me about it please?

We do not know exactly and we also did not notice it in the past, but houses and plantations were damaged and destroyed in villages during the construction of the old road.

Did the villagers go to meet the local authorities and the Township leader, in order to discuss about the destruction [due to the construction of the old road]?

As far as I know, there is one old road in this area, which was constructed to make travelling easier. Therefore, the Township leader, [KNLA] Battalion [commander] and companies formed a committee to monitor the [old] road construction; in order to make sure local villagers got compensation if their lands, houses and plantations were destroyed [due to the construction of the old road]. However, local villagers did not get any compensation after the [old] road was constructed. Now the new road is being constructed, and local villagers worry that they will not get anything.

As you told me before, a committee said that local villagers would get compensation if their lands or houses were destroyed. Did they say whether local villagers would definitely get the compensation or not?

They [a committee] said that local villagers would surely get compensation. They told local villagers from almost every village [in this area]. You will know the information if you ask Si Thu Tun.

Who said that [the local villagers would surely get the compensation]?

Pa Doh³ Si Thu Tun.

What responsibility does Si Thu Tun have?

He [Si Thu Tun] is in charge of roads and communication in Waw Raw Township.

As he [Si Thu Tun] is in charge of roads and communication in Waw Raw Township, has he gone to meet local villagers regarding the destruction [due to the construction of the new road]?

Regarding the destruction, he [Si Thu Tun] just told local villagers to donate their lands and plantations [which were destroyed].

Regarding what he [Si Thu Tun] said, did the Township leader and the local authorities have anything to say?

I am not sure about that, but local villagers said that they would get compensation. In fact, they did not get any compensation. Villagers just said like that.

How much would the local villagers have received if they lost one tree in their plantation? Did anyone recognise that?

I do not know exactly, however, they [the committee] probably recognised that when they went to consult with the local villagers, but they said that the compensation would be given to local villagers who lost lands and plantations beside the road.

As this [new] road is in the KNU controlled-area, what responsibility has the KNU government and local KNU [KNLA] authorities taken regarding the road construction, before it was started?

KNU [KNLA] former Battalion Commander organised and formed a committee to monitor the road construction. Therefore, some KNLA commanders and the Township leader's people [employees] were involved in the committee. They [KNU and KNLA] formed this committee in order to solve any problems that the local villagers faced due to the road construction. I do not know why the companies will not give compensation to the local villagers. The case just disappeared after it occurred. I just understand and see like that.

So can you tell me what people call this road?

People call it the Three Pagodas Pass-Thanbyuzayat car road.

How was the name of this road in the past?

It was called 'the death road'. The Three Pagodas Pass-Thanbyuzayat death road.

So now do they [road constructors] construct a new road or [reconstruct] the old road?

They construct the new road, but they will also reconstruct [part of] the old road because it connects to the new road, but they will not reconstruct the old road until the end.

Can you tell me how local villagers feel about the road construction? What are your opinions on it?

When the [old] road was constructed wider and better in the past, the [KNU] organisation was involved in it. The [KNU] organisation understood local villagers and local villagers also understood the [KNU] organisation. Therefore, local villagers did not talk much about the road construction, even though their lands or plantation were impacted. This time the road between Three Pagodas Pass and Thanbyuzayat Town will be constructed [by road constructors], in order to follow international road [standards]. This road is 230 feet wide. However, local villagers are concerned about whether they will have to relocate or if they will have to run away. They also worry about whether they will get any compensation or not if the road is constructed on their lands and plantations. They [local villagers] want to have protection and guarantees for

³ Pa Doh is a Karen title meaning Minister/Governor.

that. Therefore, they hope and believe that the KNU will help them to solve any problems [regarding the road construction] because the KNU is the representative of all the Karen people.

For example, if the road is constructed, how will the local authorities and the Township leader protect it, or will they plan to do anything [for the villagers]? Can you tell me about it?

Local villagers have already heard that the road will be constructed. Thus, some [villagers] had a meeting to discuss it. Then, they reported it to Township leader. I heard that the Township leader, Naw Rah Tan, has already informed the District leader, however, local villagers have not gotten any reply yet. Again, villagers who live beside the road called a meeting with village tract leaders, and they invited the Township leader, local authorities, Township secretary, Battalion Commander Soe Nay Win from [KNLA] Battalion #16 and myself to attend a meeting to discuss the road construction. If the road is constructed and it impacts our lands and plantations, we will not be able to make any decision to get compensation. We cannot do anything for that. What can be done is that the KNU can give land documents and land grants to local villagers who live beside the road. I do not know when the Township leader will start to pay [give] it.



This photo was taken on September 4th 2016 in Three Pagoda Pass town, Win Yin (Waw Raw) Township, Dooplaya District. This photo shows the interviewee, who is explaining about road construction and holding a pamphlet distributed about the Asia Highway. [Photo: KHRG]

When the [old] road was first constructed on the local villagers' lands and plantations, did local villagers receive compensation or not?

Local villagers did not receive any compensation, although they tried to claim compensation. As I already told you before, Pa Doh Si Thu Tun told villagers to donate their lands [which were destroyed]. We do not know whether companies [road constructors] gave money [compensation] to our organisation [KNU] or not. We also do not know whether our organisation [KNU] tried to ask for compensation from companies for the villagers or not.

How many companies were there when they constructed the road?

There were many companies. Maybe eight different companies, but I am not sure. Oh I got it. There were seven companies.

What are the names of those companies?

I do not know the companies' names. We have not memorised their names. I just know it [how many companies] from when I went to a meeting on August 28th 2016.

Who is the most powerful person in charge of road construction among the seven companies? Can you tell me?

I do not know that kind of thing. We just heard about Mya Lin Aye Company, but we do not know exactly who is in control.

Who is a chairperson of Mya Lin Aye Company?

We just know Uncle Ta Pel, who is a chairperson of Mya Lin Aye Company.

Who was the manager in charge of the construction of the [old] road?

Do you mean the previous manager who was in charge of the first road construction?

Yes.

As far as I know, each company took responsibility to construct one section of the [old] road. I do not know how many miles were in one section of road because I did not find the information about that.

Did local authorities record [document] how many houses and plantations were destroyed due to the [old] road construction? And did they report it to the Burma/Myanmar government? Can you tell me about that?

I think local villagers might have reported it [to the Burma/Myanmar government] when the [old] road was first constructed on their lands, but I do not know whether the road [construction] committee documented [what was destroyed] and reported it step by step or not.

Can you tell me who participated in the road [construction] committee?

I do not know the people who were from the companies, but all I know is that the people who participated in the committee were Pa Doh Si Thu Tun, Mar Pun and [KNLA] Commander Naung Poe. I do not know how many other people participated in it [committee].

When the committee was formed, were local villagers also included?

I do not know whether local villagers were included or not.

Can you tell me the local villagers' livelihood and healthcare situation in your area?

Yes. I can tell you. Regarding the livelihood situation, our Karen people - local villagers - do not have a particular business to support their livelihood; they just earn their living by working on farms, hill farms and plantations. How can I say? Local villagers do not have a big business to make a lot of money, like a company.

What do local villagers think of the Asia Highway,⁴ which will be constructed for development? Can you tell me about that?

Local villagers see [think] like this. They hope that their villages will be developed, and our mother organisation [KNU] went to meet [with the Burma/Myanmar government] to talk about the political situation [regarding the development project]. Our Karen people - local villagers - do not understand the political situation. What local villagers want is for them [companies] to implement their development projects and guarantee something for the villagers beyond politics. Now nobody can provide guarantees for the villagers if something affects them because of a development project. If our mother organisation [KNU] talked [negotiated] with the Burma/Myanmar government to get a guarantee for the local villagers, then the villagers would not complain if they came to do a development project. As far as I know now, we are not sure

⁴ The Asian Highway Network is a United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific-supported project that aims to link 32 countries in Asia across 141,000 kilometres of roadway. In Burma/Myanmar the project has involved land confiscation and forced labour. For more information about the Asian Highway Network, see "[Beautiful Words, Ugly Actions: The Asian Highway in Karen State, Burma](#)", KHRG, August 2016; "[The Asia Highway: Planned Eindu to Kawkaik Town road construction threatens villagers' livelihoods](#)," KHRG, March 2015; "[With only our voices, what can we do?: Land confiscation and local response in southeast Myanmar](#)," KHRG, June 2015; "[Tollgates upon tollgates: En route with extortion along the Asian Highway](#)," KHRG, October 2009; and "[Development by Decree: The politics of poverty and control in Karen State](#)," KHRG, April 2007. In addition, fighting continues erupting between the Tatmadaw and the DKBA along the highway, with the latest clash erupting in early July 2015, resulting in the highway between Myawaddy and Kawkaik shutting down for several days, "[DKBA, Tatmadaw fight over illegal highway tolls](#)," *Myanmar Times*, July 3rd 2015.

whether the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]⁵ is stable or not. To guarantee our Karen people, they both [KNU and Burma/Myanmar government] are still in discussions. We do not know what level they have reached [in the discussions].

Currently, is it easy or hard for the local villagers to travel and communicate with each other, in order to support their livelihood?

If we look at the situation, it has become easier for villagers to travel because they have motorbikes and cars. For villagers who cannot buy a motorbike or a car it is not very easy for them to travel from place to place.

In Waw Raw Township, what do villagers mostly do for their livelihood?

Most local villagers work on farms and hill farms for their livelihood. Secondly, [other] local villagers work on rubber and betel nut plantations for their livelihood, but mostly they [the villagers] work on farms and hill farms.

During the past conflict [fighting], was there any armed group that forced villagers living beside the road to leave their place? Did anyone say to villagers: ‘do not stay beside the road’?

‘Do not stay beside the road.’ What do you mean?

Did any armed actor say to villagers: ‘do not stay, do not grow and do not work on the land’?

I do not know about that, all I know is that I saw the words [sign] and then [villagers] moved to stay beside the road. People said that most of the members of the organisation [KNU] came to stay beside the road. That’s all I know, but the Tatmadaw forced villagers on the mountains to move to stay beside the road. Villagers just stayed in their own villages but the Tatmadaw forced them to relocate to stay beside the road. For the KNU organisation, they just followed [the villagers] to stay in the place where most of the villagers resettled, in order to make a big village.

What about the words that I heard: ‘do not grow anything on the land beside the road’? Regarding this did the local KNU authorities tell the villagers [this] or not? Can you tell me about it?

There are two different steps [parts] for agriculture. Local villagers were asked to work on farms and hill farms, but villagers were not allowed to work in the restricted area. Like this road, the land from the mountain range to H--- village is recognised as KNU headquarters reserved forest. That is why local villagers are not allowed to work on that land.

Can you tell me the past and present healthcare situation in your area?

⁵ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see “[Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups](#),” Reuters, October 15th 2015. Despite the signing of the NCA prompting a positive response from the international community, see “[Myanmar: UN chief welcomes ‘milestone’ signing of ceasefire agreement](#),” *UN News Centre*, October 15th 2015, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe’s decision to sign has been met with strong opposition from other members of the Karen armed resistance and civil society groups alike, who believe the decision to be undemocratic and the NCA itself to be a superficial agreement that risks undermining a genuine peace process, see “[Without Real Political Roadmap, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Leads Nowhere...](#),” *Karen News*, September 1st 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. For KHRG’s analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the preliminary ceasefire, see [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014.

People said that the healthcare situation is getting worse and worse. Most of the children are sick because they eat sweet ice [saccharin]. Most of the children who are sick are not sent to a clinic or hospital to get medical treatment because the medicine is expensive for their parents.

Regarding the healthcare situation, are there health workers or medics from the KNU government or Burma/Myanmar government in your area?

Yes. There are health workers and medics in our area, but they just came to give medicines when the local villagers were sick. After that, they disappeared. We cannot find them anymore. We even have a local clinic in our area but there is not enough medicine in the clinic. There are more medicines at the local pharmacy than in the clinics that the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government run.

What are the most common sicknesses in your area? Can you tell me about them?

In the rainy season, local villagers mostly have coughs, colds, fevers and malaria. Most of the children have stomach-aches and diarrhoea.

So where do they [villagers] go to get medical treatment if they have a fever and diarrhoea?

They villagers just go to the local pharmacy to buy medicine.

How do they [villagers] find money [to buy medicine]? Especially the widows and orphans?

If their [the widow's] children are sick, they just go to call a local traditional doctor in the village or they just go to buy medicine at the local pharmacy. A few people go to the clinic if they get sick. [Some villagers] are trying to find money in their hard situation. If they do not have money or cannot find money, then they just borrow money.

Have the local authorities ever looked after widows and orphans in the village?

What do you mean?

Have they checked what challenges they [widows and orphans] face, documented it and reported it

Checked what?

I mean widows and orphans.

Who checks what?

I mean the local authorities.

What do you mean by local authorities? Do you mean the local authorities are an organisation?

I mean local KNU authorities. Do they [local KNU authorities] look after the widows and orphans facing livelihood problems? I mean like that.

I have travelled around this area but I have never seen or heard about that. Regarding the healthcare situation, I just heard about the Mother and Child Care and the Backpack Health Worker Team. They sometimes come to our area [to help villagers who are sick]. I have never heard that [any local authority or health workers] especially went to look after and support widows and orphans in this area, but I do not know about other areas.

What about the Burma/Myanmar government? Have they ever come to support [villagers] in the village?

I do not see that they [Burma/Myanmar government] particularly come to [give] support [to villagers] in this area. I do not know what they support.

Regarding education, what do you think of it? Can you tell me your views?

Education? What do you mean?

Has the education situation in your area improved or not since the NCA? Can you tell me about it?

Regarding the education situation, I see that many children are lazy at school because they have to read a lot. I have no idea what to say regarding the education situation because I never studied at school. I also cannot [afford to] send my children to school.

I mean, what do you hear [about the education situation] when you travel around?

There is the Karen Education Department [KED]⁶ in our area but there is no particular teacher from the KED at the local school. Only the local Burma/Myanmar government teachers are teaching at the school. KED supports the local school by providing school materials and books, and they also contribute salaries for the local teachers. However, we do not have the Kaw Thoo Lei⁷ [KED] curriculum at our local schools, and I have seen only one local school that has the Kaw Thoo Lei [KED] curriculum in Waw Raw Township. I have not seen any other school.

Do the children learn Karen literature in B--- village?

No. They do not learn Karen literature [at the school]. I, myself, never learnt it when I was young. In the summer children can go to learn Karen literature at the Buddhist temple in the village because the Karen Literature and Culture Committee teach a course on Karen literature.

Ok. Now do you want to say anything that I did not asked you?

What do you mean by that?

I mean, do you want to say anything outside of my questions?

I have no idea what you are talking about. However, regarding the education situation, there is no particular issue.

What about the road construction?

The road will be constructed from I--- village to Three Pagodas Pass. Local villagers in that area heard about the news [road construction] and they now worry a lot, because their houses will be demolished or destroyed if the road is widened. Therefore, they reported it to the Township leader who reported it to the District leader, but I do not know whether the District leader reported it to the KNU headquarters or not. However, local villagers hope and believe that the KNU will stand up for them, in order to solve their problems regarding the road construction.

Do you have other things to tell me?

I do not have any other particular things to tell you.

If so, I want to ask you more questions. Can you tell me about the situation with the Burma/Myanmar government's military troops [Tatmadaw]? I mean their activities in your area.

They just travel from place to place if they want to be active. I do not know where they go and what they do. I just heard about it from local [KNLA] soldiers.

⁶ The Karen National Union's Education Department. The main goals of the KED are to provide education, as well as to preserve Karen language and culture. During the civil war in Burma/Myanmar the KED became the main organisation providing educational services in the KNU controlled areas in southeast Burma/Myanmar. The KED also previously oversaw the educational system in the seven refugee camps along the Thai-Burma/Myanmar border, however in 2009 these activities were restructured under the Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity (KRCEE). See "[Conflict Erupts over Govt teachers deployed to KNU areas](#)," Karen News, August 20th 2013 and the KRCEE website: "[About](#)," accessed July 21st 2015.

⁷ The term Kaw Thoo Lei refers to Karen State as demarcated by the Karen National Union (KNU), but the exact meaning and etymology is disputed; see: Jonathan Falla. True Love and Bartholomew: Rebels on the Burmese Border, Cambridge University Press: 1991.

How do local villagers feel when they [Tatmadaw] are active in your area? Can you tell me if you have heard anything about it?

I just heard it from local [KNLA] soldiers. They said that it is not normal if they travel from place to place like that. Local villagers also asked the local [KNLA] soldiers, “*did they [KNLA] not know that the Tatmadaw travelled from place to place?*” How can I say? In this situation, they both [KNLA and Tatmadaw] do not trust each other at the current time.

Do they [Tatmadaw] force villagers to work? Have you ever seen that?

It [forced labour] is decreasing but I do not know if local villagers do not tell me that they are still doing forced labour.

What about the KNLA activities and the Burma/Myanmar government’s military [Tatmadaw] activities in your area? Can you tell me about that?

The Burma/Myanmar government’s military troops [Tatmadaw] are still active in our area. They have small and big army camps in our area. Their small and big army camps have not changed [been removed]. For Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] soldiers, they are also active in our area but not a lot. I do not know what they [KNLA soldiers] are doing.

Can you tell me how many army camps there are in Waw Raw Township?

What army camps?

I mean the Burma/Myanmar government’s military [Tatmadaw] army camps.

There are [Tatmadaw] army camps in Noh Khyo Nae area, Lay Naung area and Three Pagodas Pass, but I do not know how many [Tatmadaw] army camps are outside the mountainous area. There is one [Burma/Myanmar government] police station in Ta Kon Taing area, but I do not know how many police officers are stationed outside the mountainous area because I have never been there. Some [Tatmadaw] soldiers have been staying at a Buddhist temple for four or five months. It is not like their army camp.

When they [Tatmadaw] stay at the Buddhist temple, do you know what the local villagers think of that? What are the villagers’ attitudes? Do local villagers want them [Tatmadaw] to stay [at the temple] or not? What are their views? Can you tell me about it?

Local villagers hope [think] that it is good if they [Tatmadaw] do not stay at the temple, if possible. Local KNU authorities cannot tell them [Tatmadaw] to stay away. Therefore, how can we [villagers] tell them [Tatmadaw] to move away from the temple even if local KNU authorities cannot make them stay away? For example, some local [KNU] authorities reported it to [KNU] Brigade leaders but they did not receive any answer or reply. Thus, local authorities cannot do anything.

Do you have any other thing to tell me?

Regarding this road construction, local villagers worry that their lands, houses and plantations will be destroyed if the road is constructed. Therefore, they hope that the KNU will help them to solve their problems if the road is surely constructed.

Regarding land issues, there is the KNU land department. So does the KNU government make land titles or land grants for the local villagers?

I want to say a small thing regarding land titles and land grants. The KNU already made land laws but I cannot remember in which year. They [KNU] also made land titles and land grants. If there are ten villagers, I can say [estimate] that seven villagers do not have land grants. I do not know what is wrong with it. I do not know whether it [land grants] works or not. I am not sure whether they [KNU] have [people issuing the] land grants or not.

Regarding the [KNU] land grants, does the Burma/Myanmar government recognise them? What is their view on it? Can you tell me about that?

I do not know whether they [Burma/Myanmar government] recognise it [KNU land grants] or not. I do not understand that kind of thing. I heard that the Burma/Myanmar government recognises KNU land grants, but I am not sure whether it is true or not.

Are they official and legal land grants?

I do not know about it because I have never read a book [regarding the law]. I just heard about it from Pa Doh Selar who is in charge of the Agriculture Department [KNU], because I asked him and he told me.

Where does he [Pa Doh Selar] live?

He lives in Dooplaya District. He is in charge of the Agriculture Department in Dooplaya District. We never had land grants in our area because the [KNU] does not make land grants in our area. We do not know how to get land grants.

If local villagers report that they want land grants from both the Burma/Myanmar government and the KNU government, what can local authorities do for villagers?

Local villagers in our area only want KNU land grants, but we do not know whether the KNU authorities are busy or not. It has already been more than 60 years. The situation is continuing like that. Currently, because of the different forms of oppression, we [villagers] had a meeting about road construction and we reported it to the local authorities, Township leader and Township secretary. Most of the local villagers reported that they wanted the KNU to make land grants for our Karen people who live beside the road, but we do not know when the Township leader will make land grants for the villagers.

Some villagers want to get a Land Form #7⁸ from the Burma/Myanmar government. So if the Burma/Myanmar government came to measure the land [in your area], would the KNU agree [to it] or not? Can you tell me about it?

I do not understand about the Land Form #7.

Land Form #7 is a kind of land grant from the Burma/Myanmar government. The Burma/Myanmar government recognises that you can have compensation if you have a Land Form #7. Therefore, some villagers want to have it. So if local villagers show it to the KNU government, what is the KNU's view on it? Can you tell me about it?

Regarding the Land Form #7 that the Burma/Myanmar government recognises, I have no idea how to talk about it because I have never lived in a city.

If some villagers show it [Land Form #7] to the KNU government, how will the KNU respond? What does the KNU think of it?

I have never heard that local villagers want to have a Land Form #7, which the Burma/Myanmar government recognises. Thus, I do not know what to tell you, but I am not sure if villagers who live far away from the KNU controlled-area know about Land Form #7. I have grown up in this area but I have never heard that local villagers want to have a Land Form #7.

How much is the budget plan for road construction?

I have no idea regarding that. We just saw the signpost [about the road construction] and we worried about that, so we had a meeting. Then we reported it to the Township leader.

After local villagers reported it to the Township leader and the District leader, did they receive any reply?

Local villagers just reported it to the Township leader; they did not report it to the District leader. The Township leader informed villagers that he reported it to the District leader again. However, the District leader did not inform us whether he reported it to the KNU headquarters or not.

⁸ Land Form #7 is the Burma/Myanmar government land grant required to work on a particular area of land. In Burma/Myanmar, all land is ultimately owned by the government.

Did he [Township leader] inform you where he reported it?

No. We did not get any reply.

Did he [Township leader] inform you when he reported it?

He just told us that he reported it in July 2016.

What specific day did he report it on?

I cannot remember a specific day. If you go to Pa Naw Kler Khee village tract, Kwin K'Saw Kyin village tract and Lay Naing village tract, you will see a book there. You will know what specific date that he [Township leader] reported it if you read the book.

Do you have other things to tell me?

I have no other things to tell you.

If so, thank you very much.

Thank you too.

Can I take a picture of you?

Yes. You can take more than one.

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

- "Dooplaya Interview: Saw A---, September 2016," (May 2017)
 - "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik Township and Noh T'Kaw Township, April to May 2016," (March 2017)
 - "Dooplaya Situation Update: Win Yay Township, June to July 2015," (March 2017)
 - "Dooplaya Interview: Saw A---, August 2015," (February 2017)
 - "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyonedoe Township, April 2016 to July 2016," (February 2017)
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Dooplaya District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)