



## Situation Update

November 15, 2017 / KHRG #17-56-S1

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## Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi Township, November 2016 to March 2017

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*This Situation Update describes events occurring in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District during the period between November 2016 to March 2017, including Tatmadaw activity, education, healthcare and livelihoods.*

- *Villagers were concerned for their security when Bu Yin Naung military section conducted the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Company Commander training between November 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 on confiscated land in Kyon Kone, Nan Thar Kone and Ywar Thit villages.*
  - *From November 8<sup>th</sup> 2016 to March 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, the Tatmadaw actively conducted numerous military activities, including military training, troop rotations, sending rations and ammunition, upgrading military camps, and patrolling around frontline areas in Thandaunggyi Township.*
  - *The educational situation in Thandaunggyi Township, and particularly in the western part of Day Lo area and the P'Leh Hoo Geh area, remains poor as many are unable to access education and the overall quality of education is poor.*
  - *The health situation in Thandaunggyi Township, and particularly in Ta Poo area and in the western part of Klay Wa area remains poor as local villagers have difficulty accessing healthcare due to insufficient medicine supplies and health workers.*
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## Situation Update | Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (November 2016 to March 2017)

*The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in June 2017. It was written by a community member in Toungoo 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.<sup>1</sup> This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including four interviews, 14 photographs and 1 video clip.<sup>2</sup>*

### Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in southeastern 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.

This situation update describes events occurring in Daw Hpa Hkoh [Thandaunggyi] Township, Taw Oo [Toungoo] District, between November 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 and March 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, including Tatmadaw activity, education, healthcare, and livelihoods.

### **Tatmadaw Situation and Activity**

Bu Yin Naung military section has confiscated villagers' land in Kyon Kone, Nan Thar Kone, and Ywar Thit villages in order to retain the land as military training areas; this land was used to conduct the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Company Commander Training. From November 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, they [Bu Yin Naung military section] came to the training area and conducted their training. Part of the training included shooting heavy weapons and small guns so the nearby villagers were afraid and did not feel safe going outside for work.

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, Military Operation Command (MOC)<sup>3</sup> went to Ko Day and Th'Aye Hta villages and came back to Kler Lar village with eight soldiers and one commander. On the same day, the Southern Command Headquarters commander came up to Kaw Thay Der with five military trucks which were full of soldiers.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Tatmadaw troops transported rations to Kler Lar [village/area] with 15 military trucks. On the same day, MOC (Military Operations Command) #20 commander Aung Myo Than came back to Taw Oo Town.

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, Tatmadaw troops patrolled (for security reasons) the road from P'Leh Wa [area] to Klay So Hkee [area]. They also sent out rations with 19 military trucks to the military camps close by in the Kler Lar, Kaw Thay Der, Th'Aye Hta, and Bu Hsa Hkee areas. At the same time, they continued construction on the road in Th'Aye Hta area and extended their camps' areas.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, over 90 Tatmadaw armed soldiers came to Hplay Hsa Loh and carried with them artilleries/heavy weapons such as 60mm and RPG7 shells.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, Tatmadaw troops transported rations to Hkeh Weh military camp along with 80 horses. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, Tatmadaw troops sent horses to Kleh Lar to carry rations. There were 23 military trucks carrying 113 horses to Kleh Lar [area] which arrived by 5:00 PM. The P'Leh Wa military camp sent rations through the water route with a motor boat which was full of rice to Yaw Lo (Kyoe T' Ta) area. On December 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion (IB)<sup>4</sup> #594 sent rations from P'Leh Wa to Klaw Mee Der military camp with 120 horses.

On January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017, Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)<sup>5</sup> #581, under MOC #20, rotated its troops with LIB #581 in Hkeh Der, K'Thaw Pwe, Hkeh Weh military camp. The name of the Commander of LIB #581 is Aung Htet and the name of the Deputy Commander is Hein Zaw. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, IB #26 came to rotate its troops with LIB #307 in Hsha Say Boh military camp; the name of the IB #26 commander is Nyi Nyi Maung.

On February 14<sup>th</sup>, LIB #19, under MOC #6, came to rotate its troops with LIB #603 in Shwe Nyaung Pin [area], Sethong Maing [13 Mile] and Setchauk Maing [16 Mile] military camps. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, Tatmadaw troops transported rations to Hplay Hsa Loh military camp [with

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<sup>3</sup> Military Operations Command (MOC) is comprised of ten battalions for offensive operations. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs) made up of three battalions each.

<sup>4</sup> An Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

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

horses] and then sent the horses back to town [Thandaunggyi Township] with 8 military trucks. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Tatmadaw sent rations to Thandaung Bu Yin Naung military camp with 12 military trucks.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 12 LIB #26 soldiers, led by Commander Nyi Nyi Maung, who were based in K'Hser Doh military camp returned to Hsha Say Boh military camp but along the way they crossed into a delimited area.<sup>6</sup>

### **Education**

The education system in Taw Oo District is still weak because the quality of the education provided is poor and many do not have access to education. Government schools in this area do not receive enough school equipment or teachers. Moreover, the teachers do not care about the students' education and are not fulfilling their duty to prioritise their students' academic needs. These educational problems are particularly prevalent in the western part of Day Lo area and in the P'Leh Hoo Geh area in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township.

Similarly, local people in Ta Poo area, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, have not had a chance to attend school because the government has not provided any schools for them. However, they have built schools for themselves to be able to attend school; students, parents, village heads and religious leaders have cooperated to establish these schools.

### **Healthcare**

Regarding the health situation in Taw Oo District, the diseases/illnesses that were most prevalent during this reporting period were malaria, diarrhoea, and abdominal pains. Even in some Myanmar government controlled areas, they [the villagers] were unable to access any health services from Myanmar government, especially villages located in the Ta Poo area and the western part of Klay Wa area. Some villages [in Toungoo District] did not have health workers and some did [have health workers] but did not have enough medical supplies. Thus, it was difficult to offer treatment to sick patients. However, some local villagers were [trained] health workers; they bought and restocked the medicines and took as much care of the patients as they could. In cases in which they were unable to give treatment they sent the patients to nearby hospitals.

### **Livelihoods**

Local people in Taw Oo District mostly make their living as farmers. Local people in remote areas usually work on plantations (such as cardamom, betel nut, coffee, rubber, and durian plantations). By working on these plantations for their livelihood, some people were able to provide for themselves but some were not able to. Those who were unable to cover their daily food needs had to either do daily work on other peoples' land or had to go out and work in other places such as the Moe Hkee area.

The local people that live in the plain areas mostly make their living by farming. Those who did not have any farmland had to work for those who owned the farmlands. As farming work is only available during the rainy season, the hired workers received only 50 baskets of rice for four months of work. Some people also worked as traders and retail sellers.

### **Researcher's Opinion**

In my opinion, in the coming year, local villagers in Taw Oo District do not want to have any [Tatmadaw] military camps based in their villages. Villagers will feel secure if they [the Tatmadaw] withdraw their troops, remove their camps, and go back to their own places.

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<sup>6</sup> As per the 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and the Burma/Myanmar government, the Tatmadaw are only allowed to operate and travel up to 50 yards from either side of roads that connect their army camps through KNLA territory, and only within a 150 yard radius around their own army camp.

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

- “Toungoo Incident Report: Killing Case in Thandaunggyi Township, January 2017” (October 2017)
- “Toungoo Interview: Naw Ka---, October 2016,” (June 2017)
- “Toungoo Interview: Saw A---, January 2016,” (February 2017)
- “Toungoo Interview: Naw A---, November 2015,” (February 2017)
- “Toungoo Field Report: Slow transitions towards real change, January to December 2015” (January 2017)

### Taw Oo (Toungoo) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)