



Interview

October 17, 2017 / KHRG #17-67-A1-I1

Dooplaya Interview: Naw A---, May 2017

This interview with Naw A--- describes events that occurred in Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District, between 2016 and 2017, including development projects, health, education, taxation and military activities.

- *After the 2012 Preliminary Ceasefire was signed between the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Burma/Myanmar government, the ownership of a Tatmadaw camp in a reserved forest area near B--- village, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District, was transferred to the Border Guard Force (BGF), led by Bo T'Kee. The BGF soldiers have taxed villagers who carry logs on trucks meant for the construction of their houses at 5,000 kyat (US \$3.68) per truck.*
 - *The BGF soldiers logged trees and bamboo and cleared vegetation for their plantations inside the villagers reserved forest. They also fished in the river in which villagers had forbidden fishing. The soldiers damaged the forest; therefore villagers are concerned that this will cause water shortages in future. Villagers would like the forestry administration staff to replant trees for environmental protection.*
 - *The Burma/Myanmar government do not recognise the KNU education curriculum so students who finished standard eight from KNU schools in T'Ku Khee area, Kyainseikgyi Township in 2016 do not have access to equal job opportunities because their school certificates are not formally recognised.*
 - *An unknown Community Based Organisation (CBO) provided some finances for the villagers to work on a water supply project and construct one village hall building. Villagers had to contribute 1/3 of the required budget for the project.*
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Interview | Naw A--- (female), B--- village, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (May 2017)

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 May 10, 2017 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 one situation update.²

Ethnicity: Karen

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeastern 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 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.

Religion: Christian
Marital Status: Married
Occupation: Farmer
Position: Village Head

What is your name?

People call me Naw A---.

How old are you?

I am [censored for security]

What is your village name?

My village name is B---.

As you are a village leader, could you please tell me what problems have your villagers been facing?

The temperature nowadays is getting hotter and hotter. We [villagers] have established one reserved forest. We [villager leaders] have prohibited logging and the cutting of bamboo in the reserved forest for more than 30 years. This does not mean that we did it [banned logging] for our personal benefit, but it is for [the benefit of] all the villagers. The Tatmadaw came to our village and set up their army camp in our reserved forest, on the hill near our village river source, but we did not feel safe to tell them [not to have their base there]. I do not remember the date or year when they came. Early on when they were based in our reserved forest, there were no problems for villagers, except that villagers had to clear vegetation in their army camp for them [as forced labour]. After the 2012 Preliminary Ceasefire³ was signed, transportation was improving, which meant the Tatmadaw could transport [logs, bamboo and military supplies] more easily. At that time, we were not aware that they would cut down bamboo and trees for their army camp building. Later on, villagers reported that *“We did not get permission [from the village leaders] to cut trees or bamboo from there [reserved forest], but the Tatmadaw did it. So will you [village leaders] forbid logging and the cutting of bamboo for the Tatmadaw?”* And then, we knew what the Tatmadaw were doing to our reserved forest and it was not appropriate, so we [village leaders] reported this case [to the local authorities], but the army camp continued to be based in our reserved forest.

Whose [armed group] camp is it?

In the past, it was the Tatmadaw camp. After we frequently reported and complained [about their logging and their cutting down of bamboo], they then replaced the Tatmadaw with the Border Guide Force [BGF]⁴ in the camp. Unfortunately, the BGF are worse than the Tatmadaw.

³ 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.

⁴ 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 Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the

How are they worse than the Tatmadaw?

They [BGF] fished in the river, the river where we forbade fishing. Villagers have said the BGF set up fishing nets in the rainy season. They cleared the area near their camp of trees and vegetation, the area which supports the plantation of one big tin [12.5kgs] of paddy seed [a local form of land measurement]. If they [BGF] continue to base themselves in our reserved forest and continue these actions, we are concerned that we will not have water in the future. We forbade logging in the reserved area in order to save water [as trees retain groundwater and for environmental protection]. Actually in terms of environmental protection, they [Burma/Myanmar government] have rules [in order to protect the environment], but as the BGF is a part of the Tatmadaw [they do not feel the need to follow the rules]. They [BGF] also tax the villagers who travel on the road [near their army camp]. Therefore, most of the villagers complain about this case.

What do they [BGF] tax? Do they tax villagers who travel by car or truck?

They tax the villagers who carry [by truck or tractor] logs which are used for the construction of their house, but the KNU does not do it [charge villagers taxation].

How much taxation do they charge?

I don't exactly know the amount of the taxation that they ask for [per truck or tractor], but I know that they tax our villagers at least 5,000 kyat [US \$3.68]⁵ [per truck or tractor].

What is the number of that BGF [Battalion]?

I don't know their [Battalion] number.

Who is their leader [of this BGF Battalion]?

The leader is Bo⁶ T'Kee, but they are led by the Tatmadaw because the Tatmadaw ordered them to be situated in this area and they receive their salary from the Tatmadaw. Therefore, if the Tatmadaw tells them to withdraw [their camp] from this area then they will follow their orders. This is what I think. We don't want them [the BGF to be based in our area] and the civilians do not want it either.

Do you think they [BGF] can do anything without the permission of the Tatmadaw?

No, they cannot. Actually the reserved forest should be full of trees and then they should replant more trees for us.

Regarding the BGF army camp which is based in the villagers reserved forest, do the villagers think that they [BGF] are beneficial for the villagers or not?

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.

⁵ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the ___(date)___ official market rate of ___ kyat to US \$1.

⁶ *Bo* is a Burmese title meaning 'officer.'

It [the BGF camp] disturbs villagers instead of being helpful. If you don't believe me, you can go to the C-- village head and ask him/her about this case tomorrow because they told me that *"They [BGF] are based in my area and are very annoying to C--- villagers, what do they have to be based here for?"* In the past, they [C--- villagers] reported that the BGF based in this area disturbed their travels to the KNU area. The [Dooplaya] KNU District Vice Secretary asked me *"Why didn't you report this case to the Burma/Myanmar government headquarter commander when he came here?"* I had not reported it to him because I did not have full information [about the case] at that time. But what I would like to report now is that I wish the BGF would not be based in my area because A--- and D--- villagers are living in harmony and there is no conflict between us so the BGF does not have to guard the border of our villages. D---, E--- and B--- villages all want the BGF to withdraw their army camp from our area.

Do the BGF provide any help to the civilians? For example, [do they provide] security or any other help?

No, I haven't heard that they help villagers, instead they cause problems for them. If you don't believe me, you can also go and ask the C--- village head, D--- village head and the E--- village head. They know it [have the same feeling] but they do not feel safe enough to report this case [to any authorities], but they reported it to me so I am honestly reporting it to you as they told me.

As you previously mentioned, the BGF are harassing villagers when they travel and [they logged and cut bamboo inside the villager's reserved forest which] will cause water shortages for the villagers. Are there any other problems created by the BGF?

No, but what I want to add is that if we can't stop them from clearing the forest, then our children in the next generation will face water shortages. We forbade villagers from making their plantation wider [encroaching into the reserved forest].

What is the difference in the situation between the BGF and the Tatmadaw being situated in your area?

They are the same. We don't want either of them to be based in our area.

For example, if [we compare there being] no armed group based in your reserved forest, like as was in the past, and having the Tatmadaw or BGF based in your reserved forest, which situation do you think is better?

If there was no armed group based in my area it would be better because we [villagers] are not in the jungle. We protect the forest as a reserved forest which is just for trees and water conservation for our children who are the next generation. We will be happy if there is a forestry administration who can protect the forest and replant trees for us. This armed group [BGF] is not the forestry administration and they cut down the trees and bamboo so one day this will cause problems for the villagers.

So you mean there should only be the forestry and river administration based in your area, correct?

Yes, it is correct. We will allow them to be based in our area.

The information [and desire for a forestry and river administration] that you reported to me, is one that villagers from many villagers support. If the leaders [authority] who are responsible for the forestry department get this information, they will be able to consider [doing something] regarding this issue. I would like to ask you about young people in your area. Do young men in your area use drugs?

There are some people who use drugs in my area, but not my villagers.

What kind of drug do you mean? Is it alcohol?

No, it is not alcohol. I mean a drug that people call yaba⁷. Even though the KNU forbade [the sale or use of] yaba, there are still some people using it, but my villagers do not do it.

Do you see yaba causing problems and damaging the lives of young people in the local area?

Yes, I do. Therefore, I worry that the yaba will arrive in my village, so I have to give awareness [about yaba and its side effects] to my villagers.

So there are some [people who are using or selling] yaba in the area close to your village, correct?

Yes

How about healthcare in your area? Is it getting better?

It is getting better.

How is it getting better? For example, are there health workers [from either the Burma/Myanmar government or Karen Department of Health and Welfare] or a healthcare clinic in the village?

There are no health workers or clinics, but there are people from the International Red Cross working with the Burma/Myanmar government who will help villagers if they have to go to hospital in the case of emergency.

How about dependent elderly and disabled villagers in your village? Are there any organisations or governments who provide support for those people?

No, there are no organisations. They [Burma/Myanmar government] twice gave money to elderly people who are 80 years old, but it is not really a proper form of support [because it is not regular].

Which organisation was it and what did they provide?

It was provided by the Burma/Myanmar government. They provided only 15,000 kyat [US \$11.07] or 20,000 kyat [US \$14.76] kyat per elderly person, I don't remember it well. [Villager #2 interjects, "*I think it was 15,000 kyat [US \$11.07].*"] I thought they would provide it monthly, but they only provided it twice.

How is the educational situation in your area following the ceasefire? Is it getting better? Has it improved?

⁷ *Yaba*, which means 'crazy medicine' in Thai, is a tablet form of methamphetamine. First developed in East Asia during the Second World War to enhance soldiers' performance, methamphetamine has become increasingly popular in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Burma/Myanmar where it is typically manufactured. See, [Yaba, the 'crazy medicine' of East Asia](#), UNODC, May 2008; "[Woman raped and killed in Pa'an District, October 2012](#)," KHRG, December 2012; and Chapter IV in [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, June 2014.

The education in my area has improved because the school in my village is now up to Standard⁸ eight so the numbers of students who finished the eighth Standard has increased. When I was a child, the school was only able to offer Standard four, so most people only finished Standard four. During the time when my parents were children, there was no school in the area so they were unable to go [to school].

What were the problems [that meant] they had to cease their studies?

They could not afford to study in other areas or villages [where they could study past grade four] because the school expenses were higher, meaning their parents couldn't provide financial support for them.

So you mean the students were eager to study, but they had to stop their studies because there was no [educational] support for them, correct?

Yes, that is correct.

For example, if any organisations who conduct research about education could provide support for the further education of the top students and those who are willing to study, do you think this kind of organisational cooperation in your area would be good or not?

Yes, it is good. The Christian church members [in the village] try to help some students, but the support is insufficient so it will be very good if any organisations do it [provide support for the students].

If the Karen students in your area access higher levels of education like people in the city, do you think they will access equal rights?

I think they would have equal rights like them [people in the city].

Do the people in rural areas have access to equal rights [and access] to transportation or job opportunities like people in the town do?

No, they do not have access to equal rights; students who graduated from the rural areas [from KNU schools] cannot apply for jobs like the students who graduated from the Burma/Myanmar government school.

Why do they not have equal rights [access]? Is it because the Burma/Myanmar government doesn't give permission?

I think, they [Burma/Myanmar government] want the Karen people to be under their control and to graduate from their schools only, [therefore they make it] so the people who graduated from Kaw Thoo Lei⁹ [KNU] schools are not able to access equal rights [or have equal access to the job market]. I mean they do not want the Karen people to have equal rights.

As you mentioned, the Burma/Myanmar government want the people to graduate from their schools only, so if the people who graduated from schools on the [Myanmar-

⁸ 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 Standard 6 to Standard 9, and upper secondary school is Standard 10 to Standard 11.

⁹ 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.

Thailand] border return to their area [in Burma/Myanmar] and if they apply for the Burma/Myanmar government certificates, do you think they will be able to get the certificates? Do you know any people who have tried to do this?

They [Burma/Myanmar] government said they will give permission, but I haven't seen anyone apply for it yet.

I understand about the situation of education in your area. Therefore, I would like to ask you about development projects in your area. Do any organisations come to your village for village development? For example, for providing water, supplying electricity or any other development projects?

Yes.

What kind of development project?

Last year, villagers faced a water shortage so they [a CBO] supported a water supply project for villagers, but the budget [for the water supply project] was not enough. They also supported the construction of one [village] hall building this year.

Who supported the water supply project? And then who paid the other expenses?

They are a CBO. They supported us in this way; the distance from the water source to the village is 3 miles, they provided the expenses for 2 miles [of construction] and then the villagers had to pay for the expense of the final mile. I asked for donations for the cost of the final mile of the water pipe from B--- villagers who had resettled to another country¹⁰. We could also set up a small dam [to support our water supply]. I would like to thank the B--- villagers who resettled in other countries very much [for their financial donations].

So you were finding the financial support, which you needed to finish the water supply project, by yourself, correct?

Yes.

Did the CBO inform you that they will support only part of this project before they started the project?

Yes, they did. They said they would provide financial support for two thirds of the project, and then the civilians had to fund the rest themselves. They wanted to say that if they completely helped civilians on the projects [and provided all of the funding required], the civilians will not appreciate it [the building or any projects]. Local civilians will appreciate it if they do it using their own capacity. This is what they said when we sat for a meeting. They have the same method [for projects] in other villages as well.

Where did you sit for the meeting?

[The meeting was held in] Kyainseikgyi.

So what is the name of this CBO?

I don't remember because it has been long time, but the people who supported K'Neh Khaw Poe Hkee, Noh Taw Pla and Noh Pla villages for their water supply project last year were from

¹⁰ Since 1990, it is estimated that over 100,000 Karen have been resettled from refugee camps to third countries, especially USA, Canada and Australia

an [unknown name] Community Based Organisation [CBO], and those villages that I mentioned were not able to access a water supply [at that time]. Then this year the [unknown] CBO also supported the construction of a village school hall which will cost more than 8,000,000 kyat [US \$5,915]. Anyway, we will try our best to finish this building with that amount.

Did the CBO provide enough budget for the water supply project in K’Neh Khaw Klow area [K’Neh Khaw Poe Hkee, Noh Taw Pla and Noh Pla villages]?

They have a project plan timeline, [specifying] the amount that they will fund each year. [The project timeline for the water supply] project in my village is four years. During the first year [of the project], they [CBO] gave me [the village] money, 4,200,000 kyat [US \$3,095.07]. The amount of money wasn’t enough for the whole water supply project, including the payment of workers’ wages. We [villagers] planned to finish it using that amount of money [by constructing it ourselves] because if we could finish it within that amount of money, we would get another thing [development project]. Actually, the CBO wanted us to finish just half of the water supply project within that budget. We [the villagers] wanted to finish the water supply so we finished it within the total budget [and additional funds from villagers resettled in third countries] by constructing it [mostly] ourselves and using our own capacity.

So as you [villagers] worked on this project without paying for workers, you used all of that money for buying other [construction] materials, correct?

Yes, we bought water pipes that cost 3,900,000 kyat [US \$2,857.832] so that money was almost gone and then villagers paid some other costs, like paying the workers around 1,000,000 kyat [US \$732.70]. We were wondering where we would get that amount of money, but we understand that that amount of the money came from villagers’ strength [cooperation].

It is good that you [villagers] could solve the problem that you had to face. You mentioned about the development project for the school [hall in your village], who supported this project?

It was also [the unknown] CBO, but they don’t support the [running of the] school because they only support developments projects in the village.

So what did they ask the villagers to do?

The villagers proposed this [hall construction] project to them because we have only a single village [administration] building, without any hall for holding meetings or ceremonies. Whenever we held meetings or ceremonies, we always had to ask permission from two nearby churches to use their buildings, so we need a village hall. We do not receive a lot of money [from CBOs] each year [for the village hall project]. Some villagers [from other villages] wanted a large amount of money [from the CBO], up to 10,000,000 kyat [US \$7,327.04], at the same time as [they received money for the construction] of the conducting the water supply project, but we [my villagers] completed our project with the 4,000,000 kyat [US \$2,930.94], that we received [from the CBO]. We want them [CBOs] to give us money on an annual basis. This year they provided only 5,000,000 kyat [US \$3,663.68] per village [for village development]. This year we need money in advance [to construct the new building in time for it to be used by students] because the students have to go to school at night to do their homework and prepare for their exams [and have nowhere else to study]. This hall will be useful for both the school and the village so we proposed this project to them [CBO]. The other [neighbouring] villages agree with us too.

How much money did you get?

In total, we will get 8,000,000 kyat [US \$5,861.89] but we got 5,000,000 kyat [US \$3,663.68] this year and then we will get another 3,000,000 kyat [US \$2,198.21] next year. We started this project even though knew that the amount of that money would not be enough, therefore we will try our best to finish it [hall building] with the budget we have.

As you mentioned about your village development projects, I noticed that your villagers have a water supply and [there is funding for] building the hall so your village is engaged in development projects. What were the development projects before and after the [2015] ceasefire agreement?¹¹

Developments in transportation infrastructure have occurred since the ceasefire. We can now travel easily without any concerns for our security, both at night time and day time. In the past, if we knew that if Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU] were arriving and the Tatmadaw also were arriving, then we would not let our children go to school [due to security concerns] because we were concerned that fighting would happen. We have no concerns about this issue anymore and our children can go to school and do their homework both in the day time and at night time. People can travel to Kyainseikgyi [Town at night due to the improved security situation].

Do you think this peaceful situation [after the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] is permanent or just temporary? For example, will this current good situation get better and better or it is just for a few years?

I am not sure [if the situation will remain peaceful forever], but it also depends on our people. If we live in harmony then the peaceful [situation] will be with us forever. I don't believe that the peaceful situation like now will exist forever.

Do you mean only Karen people? How about the other ethnic groups?

I mean all ethnics minorities have to live in unity. Firstly, Karen people should start it [living in unity] and secondly, the other ethnic minorities should be in unity.

If all minority ethnic groups are living in unity, do you think the Burma/Myanmar government will build peace with them, or how else do you think they will react to the minority ethnic groups?

I think they will be looking for possible ways [to act negatively towards the ethnic minorities]. I know this because I have known their [Burma/Myanmar government] situation for more than 60 years. Since our great-grandparents were alive, the situation that we have experienced under the Burma/Myanmar government [management] has not provided justice for us. If we [Karen people] were always unified they would not be able to do anything to us.

¹¹ 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.

After the ceasefire, did the Tatmadaw commit any human rights abuses against villagers? For example, forced labour, illegal taxation or explicit threats?

There are none of these things happening in my village and I don't even see any Tatmadaw in my area now. If we want to see them, we have to go to Kyainseikgyi [Town].

So my last question for you is, do you think the Tatmadaw should withdraw from Dooplaya District or increase the size of their army camps?

In my opinion, they should withdraw their army camps and they should not be based [in our area] anymore because you [Burma/Myanmar government] should govern your own state and I [we, Karen] should govern my [our] own state. This area is Karen State. Even people in [Kyainseikgyi] Town including Ter Ler¹² or Bamar¹³ don't want to be under their [Tatmadaw] control because if any cases happen with them, they report them to the KNU. I don't understand [why]. Therefore, we don't want the Tatmadaw to set up more army camps and we want them to withdraw their camps from our areas.

Do you mean the KNU government court system is better than the Burma/Myanmar government court system?

I think the people who live in the Town will understand and feel this way because they are in the Town, but they reported cases to KNU which is based outside of the Town.

Do you think the KNU government court makes them [villagers] satisfied?

Yes, I think so. The other thing is they don't have to spend a lot of money [like they do at the Burma/Myanmar government court].

So it would cost more if they went to the Burma/Myanmar government court, correct?

Yes. They [Burma/Myanmar government lawyers] hold many appointments and take a lot of time during the court process and our travel costs are already high. Sometimes they [Burma/Myanmar government lawyers] were busy and then they rejected the appointment, so one case took two months to be heard. Therefore, there were many costs [travelling fees and others]. I told them, *"The KNU can solve two cases during five minutes, if you don't know how to solve this case then handover it to the KNU"*. Then they finished this case.

As you mentioned, the situation is getting better regarding the Burma/Myanmar government's current management after the ceasefire, do you think the refugees from [Myanmar-Thailand] border refugee camps should return or not? Do you think it is too early for them to come back now or should they wait and see the situation [in Burma/Myanmar]?

I have no idea.

It is ok if you don't know. I just want to know your opinion regarding the refugee return process.

I think, it depends on their [refugees] ambition [to return]. We have been patiently living here [inhabitants were displaced and settled here] from 2002 until now. For us the current situation is better than it was in the past, for example in 2002 or 1997, so I think they [refugees] should be

¹² Ter Ler is a Karen phrase that refers to the Mon, a minority ethnic group in Myanmar

¹³ The majority ethnic group in Myanmar, also known as ethnic Burmese or Burman.

able to return. The KNU also has its own rule of law so I don't think anything bad will happen to them.

I am very happy and would like to thank you for providing information for us [KHRG], as you are a village leader who has experience in cooperating with other organizations. I will stop my interview here. Do you have any questions?

I would like to ask you, what is your opinion [regarding returning process]?

If you ask me other questions that's fine, because I have no idea about it [refugee return] too. Thank you so much. Good evening.

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: Kyainseikgyi Township, February to May 2017" (September 2017)

Dooplaya District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)