



Incident report

April 19, 2019 / KHRG #18-110-11

Thaton District: Land Confiscation by the Super World Company in Bilin Township, October 2018

Nine villagers from Bilin Township started facing livelihood difficulties when the Super World Company confiscated 64 acres of their farmlands in 2015. The victims received no compensation and have yet to recover their lands.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Land Confiscation
Date of Incident(s)	Summer 2015
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	D--- village, Chaw Pya village tract, Kyaikto Township, Doo Tha Htoo [Thaton] District

Victim Information	
Name	Saw T---
Age	38
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Married
Occupation	Plantation
Religion	Buddhist
Position	-
Village	D--- Village

Perpetrator Information			
Name(s)	Position	Company	Based in
U Hla Maung	Owner	Super World Company	Naung Yo village

¹ The present document is based on information received in November 6, 2018. It was provided by a community member in Thaton District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions on the ground. The names of the victims and the exact locations are censored for security reasons.

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

I got the information about this land confiscation case from a KNU Bilin Township police officer. Then, I went to speak with the D--- village head, the Chaw Pya village tract administrator and one of the victims, Saw T---.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The information was provided by one of the victims and by the D--- village head, who has been involved in reporting the case. The village tract administrator, Saw U---, was not able to provide detailed information as he had recently been appointed.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

In 2015, the Super World Company (SWC) led by U Hla Maung confiscated 64 acres of land in D--- village, which is located in a mixed-control village tract administered by both the KNU and the Myanmar government. The nine victims received no compensation and are currently facing livelihood challenges. Saw T---, who lost 13 acres of land, reported to KHRG: *“They confiscated my land and used four acres to plant sugarcane. Other parts are inundated so they haven’t started planting there yet, but they will if the water recedes.”* The company planted more sugarcane in 2019, leaving him with only two acres of farmland left.

Saw T---’s lands have been successively confiscated by three companies since 2012: Shwe Thar Lwin Company from 2012 to 2014, AIG from 2014 to 2015 and SWC since 2015. He used to produce between 200 and 300 baskets of rice per year, which was enough to support his family. He was allowed to cultivate his fields in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In 2018, he spent 200,000 kyat (US \$132) to rent a plough, but an SWC worker ordered him to stop farming his lands. As a result, he could not produce enough food for his household and faced economic difficulties.

To provide for his family, Saw T--- took care of buffaloes as a casual labourer from August to September 2018. However, he had to stop because the SWC did not allow him to graze the buffaloes on the confiscated lands. Saw T--- told KHRG that he would try to work on what is left of his lands in 2019 despite being barred from doing so by the company. He also shared his concerns regarding his future: *“We have our family, our children. If we don’t have a job, it will be a big problem for us.”* His wife now also has to work on other people’s rubber plantations and gardens to earn additional income.

Saw T--- referred his case to the local leaders. On December 26th, 2017, the D--- village head and the village tract administrator sent a complaint letter to the president U Htin Kyaw and reported the nine cases to the Thaton District KNU leaders and the local Myanmar government authorities. As of November 2018, the complaint letter remained unanswered and the SWC was still using the confiscated lands.

Saw T--- spent almost 500,000 kyat (US \$330) in total to try and get his lands back since they were confiscated in 2015. This was mostly to cover the travel and accommodation costs of local KNU and Myanmar government officials who helped him processing his case. The fact that victims of land confiscation must pay for these expenses raises serious concerns, as most of them cannot afford it. Therefore, some have no choice but to give up hope of reclaiming their land, as Saw T--- did in October 2018. In 2019, the new village tract administrator said that the KNU would try to give

new lands in a different area to the victims.

Land confiscation remains a problem in Southeast Myanmar, affecting owners of both customary and officially registered lands. Indeed, all nine victims have KNU land titles. These are not recognised by the government, and thus provide little protection against land confiscation, especially in mixed-control areas. Moreover, The KNU seems unable to enforce its own system, as it plans to give new lands to the victims instead of securing the restitution of the confiscated lands. It is also particularly worrying that Saw T--- lost his land despite holding a Myanmar government title, the only legally recognised protection against land confiscation in Myanmar.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.

The victim gave KHRG permission to use this information.



These photos were taken on October 31, 2018. They show some of the lands that have been confiscated by the Super World Company. Its workers have already planted sugarcanes on some parcels, and they will most likely plant more once the water recedes from the others. *[Photos: KHRG]*

Further background reading on land confiscation in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Do Not Trespass: Land Confiscations by Armed Actors in Southeast Myanmar"](#) (March 2019)
- ["Toungoo Interview: Repeated instances of land confiscations harm the livelihoods of local community members"](#) (November 2018)
- ["Development without us: Village Agency and Land Confiscations in Southeast Myanmar"](#) (August 2018)
- ["Hpapun Incident Report: Arbitrary Land Confiscation in Dwe Lo Township"](#) (May 2017)

About KHRG

Founded in 1992, the Karen Human Rights Group is an independent local organisation committed to improving the human rights situation in Southeast Myanmar. KHRG trains local people to document and gather evidence of human rights abuses, and publishes this information to project the voices, experiences and perspectives of local communities. More examples of our work can be seen online at www.khrg.org.