



Incident Report

May 31, 2019 / KHRG #18-126-11

Mergui-Tavoy District: Land Confiscation by the A Lin Yaung Company in Ler Muh Lah Township, December 2018

In 2004, the population of Y--- village was expelled from their village after all 450 acres of their lands were confiscated by the Tanintharyi A Lin Yaung Company, which is owned by the husband of local MP Daw Yee Yee Cho (NLD). They were allowed to return in 2017, but were only given 150 acres of lands to resettle. They now face significant economic difficulties and poor living conditions.

Part 1 – Incident Details

Table with 2 columns: Incident details (Type of Incident, Date of Incident, Incident Location) and descriptions.

Table with 2 columns: Victim Information (Name, Age, Sex, Ethnicity, Family, Occupation, Religion, Village) and descriptions.

Table with 4 columns: Perpetrator Information (Name(s), Position, Company, Residence) and descriptions.

1 Tanintharyi Light Industries Company Limited (), Registration Number: 119259819 – See more information about this company here.

2 The present document is based on information received in December 2018. It was provided by a community member in Mergui-Tavoy District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions on the ground. The names of the victims, their photos and the exact locations are censored for security reasons.

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

I got this information from a local villager in O--- Area. After that, I met with six of the land confiscation victims in Y--- village.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The sources experienced the land confiscation first-hand.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the incident(s) in complete detail.

Back in 1995, the population of Y--- village was forced to relocate to O--- village because of the conflict. That year, more than ten community members were killed while serving as forced porters for the Tatmadaw, prompting the locals to flee the village. They displaced again to H--- village from 1996 to 2001, before going back to Y--- village in 2002.

In 2004, the Tanintharyi A Lin Yaung Company, a rubber company, confiscated all the customary lands in Y--- village to plant rubber trees. They confiscated over 450 acres, two-thirds of which was covered in cash or subsistence crops and trees, and expelled the returnees from the village. No compensation was provided to the victims, none of which had an official land title. The local population did not want to leave, but they had to after the company threatened to call upon the Tatmadaw to oust them. The Tanintharyi A Lin Yaung Company is owned by U Aung Lin. He is the husband of Daw Yee Yee Cho, who is currently serving as a member of the Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw (Parliament) for the National League for Democracy. Both of them live in Tavoy (Dawei).

The local population had to stay in the nearby L--- village from 2004 to 2010. In 2010, they relocated to A--- village and stayed there until 2017. In A--- village, they received humanitarian assistance from the Karen National Union (KNU) in the form of rice, yellow beans, oil and small solar panels. However, it was not enough to cover their daily needs so some of them had to work as day labourers. In 2014, they reported their case to the Karen Affairs Minister of Tanintharyi Region. At the end of 2017, the local Myanmar authorities returned 150 acres of land to the local people community to live on, mostly land on which rubber trees had been planted before.

As a result, in 2017 and 2018, some families were able to return to Y--- village, while others moved to other places. About 36 households are now living in Y--- village, 187 people in total. Each household was given two acres of lands. They had to cut down the rubber trees and clear the land to build their houses. However, returnees do not have enough land to farm on to secure their livelihoods. Most of them cut bamboos to make mats, which they sell in order to buy rice. Some are engaged in intermittent, informal work for up to MMK 5,000 (US \$3.29) a day.

Because of a lack of farmlands, the living conditions of the local population are very poor. People in Y--- village face food shortages and do not have safe shelters. They do not have access to proper toilets and cannot afford to buy mosquito nets to protect themselves from diseases such as dengue or malaria. In addition, they do not have

access to healthcare services. Access to water is also a problem because of the lack of wells. Locals mostly get water from the river, but its salt levels are sometimes too high for domestic use. Because there is no school, children cannot access education in the village, and have to travel long distances to study in neighbouring villages.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The victims gave us permission to use this information.

Further background reading on the issue of land confiscation by private companies can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Development without us’: Village Agency and Land Confiscations in Southeast Myanmar”](#), (August 2018)
- [“Thaton District: Land Confiscation by the Super World Company in Bilin Township, October 2018”](#), (May 2019)
- [“Mergui-Tavoy Field Report: Growing concerns about land confiscations and development-related abuses, January 2016 to December 2017”](#), (July 2018)

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.khrq.org.