



Situation Update

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Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, September 2017 and February 2018

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District during the period between September 2017 and February 2018, including information about a sexual assault on a minor and forced labour.

- *On December 11th 2017, a middle school teacher, U Chit Oo Maung, sexually assaulted a Standard Ten student at Hpapun Basic Education High School. This incident happened at school, while Standard Ten students were staying over at the school because of evening study sessions organised in the lead-up to their examinations.*
 - *On October 15th 2017, Border Guard Force (BGF) battalion #1014 Commander Lieutenant Colonel Saw Maung Chit and Officer Bo Saw Tin Win forced villagers to be porters and carry weapons. The villagers were from Meh P'Li [Meh Pree] and Htee Tha Daw Hta village tracts in Bu Tho Township and Lay Poe Hta village tract in Dwe Lo Township to be porters and carry weapons.*
 - *On January 1st 2017, the Burma/Myanmar government education staff forced local community members of C--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, to work on school construction without any payment.*
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Situation Update | Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (September 2017 to February 2018)

The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in February 2018. It was written by a community member in Hpapun 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.¹ This report was received along with other information from Hpapun District, including three incident reports, six interviews and 20 photographs.²

This Situation Update describes events that occurred close to the main road that connects Ka Ma Maung Town to Hpapun Town located on the boundary between Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township in the period between September 2017 and February 2018. It includes information

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 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.

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.

regarding a case of sexual assault on a minor, and instances of forced portorage and forced labour.

Sexual assault and attempted underage rape

A case of sexual assault occurred in Hpapun Basic Education High School, which is located in D--- area, Hpapun Town, Meh K'law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mutraw (Hpapun) District. 50-year-old U Soe Myint is the school principal of Hpapun High School. The perpetrator who sexually assaulted [the student] was a 32-year-old middle school teacher named U Chit Oo Maung.

On December 11th 2017, a Standard Ten³ student, Ma E--- who is 17 years old and the daughter of 43-year-old U F--- from G--- village, attended an evening study session⁴ that was run by her high school teachers [in the lead up to examinations]. When the evening study session finished [on the night of December 11th], all of the students stayed overnight at the school. When the students were sleeping, the teacher, U Chit Oo Maung, entered the room where Ma E--- slept. He started touching her body and sexually assaulted her [attempted to rape her]. When Ma E--- was assaulted by U Chit Oo Maung, she started crying out so he ran away from her.

When a KHRG community member conducted an interview with her mother Daw H--- who is 43 years old, she said,

“The problem is like this! My daughter attended the evening study session that their teachers organised. When it was time to sleep, that teacher [U Chit Oo Maung] came to touch the body of my sleeping daughter. When she was touched, she started crying out loud so the teacher ran away. Even though other students who witnessed the event said that it was Sayar [teacher] U Chit Oo Maung [who sexually assaulted my daughter], he denied that it was him. That is the problem. My daughter is a Standard Ten student. Her name is Ma E---. She is 17 years old. The one who sexually assaulted my daughter was a 32-year-old teacher, U Chit Oo Maung.”

Around 80 students, [including] Ma E--- and her friends, demonstrated and wrote an objection letter that included their signatures to the Chief Minister of Karen State, Daw Nan Khin Htway Myint. Consequently, on February 5th 2017, U Chit Oo Maung was not allowed to teach at Hpapun Basic Education High School anymore. However, he was transferred to teach at another school, Ku Seik middle school, which is located in Ku Seik village, southern Hpapun, around nine miles from Hpapun Town.

Forced portorage

In addition to this case of sexual assault that occurred in the area around Hpapun Town, other human rights violations happened in the area near Ka Ma Maung Town. Instances of forced labour occurred in Meh P'Li [Meh Pree] and Htee Tha Daw Hta village tracts in Bu Tho Township and Lay Poe Hta village tract in Dwe Lo Township, as well as I--- village on October 15th 2017. The Border Guard Force (BGF) battalion #1014⁵ Commander, Lieutenant Colonel

³ 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.

⁴ To prepare for Standard 10 matriculation exams in Burma, students often participate in evening study sessions for up to two months leading up to their examinations. These evening study sessions are often conducted at a school or a teacher's house, and students typically stay overnight.

⁵ KHRG has received numerous reports of human rights violations committed by soldiers from Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, including killing, torture, violent abuse, explicit threats, arbitrary taxation and demands and land confiscation. For more information, see [“BGF Battalion #1014 demands forced labour, asserts heavily](#)

Saw Maung Chit, ordered BGF battalion #1014 Officer Bo Saw Tin Win to force villagers to be porters, and to fine any villager who refused to be a porter.

On August 15th 2017, there was fighting between the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) splinter group and the BGF in Meh Tha Waw area, Hpa-an District. Therefore, when the BGF battalion #1014, which was led by Commander Saw Maung Chit and officer Bo Tin Win, based in Lay Poe Hta village tract, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract and Meh P'Li village tract of Mu Traw (Hpapun) District, prepared for reinforcement, they forced villagers to work as porters and carry weapons for them. Villagers did not want to go so they paid a fine to the BGF.

Regarding the instance of forced portering perpetrated by the BGF, 46-year-old Saw J---, who is a villager of I---, stated that,

“They [BGF] asked for 10 villagers from each village tract [to carry weapons for them]. They fined 18,000 kyats [\$13.41 US]⁶ for I---, K--- and L--- villages. They demanded two villagers from M--- and N--- villages. As villagers from these two villages could not go, they were fined 18,000 kyats [\$13.41 US]. O--- village was fined for 200,000 kyats [\$149.01 US]. However, the BGF did not fine Kaw K'Yet village because a senior monk named U Tay Za Ni Yah lives in that village. P---, Q--- and R--- villages were fined for 100,000 kyats [\$74.49 US]. The BGF fined S---, T--- and U--- villages for 200,000 kyats [\$149.01 US]. There were around 1,000,000 kyats [\$744.90 US] for overall fines. Actually, if they fine money like this, they should fine all villages equally. But, they left and did not fine Ohne Daw and Kaw K'Yet villages. However, we did not see that they used the money to hire porters.”

Forced labour

Another instance of forced labour was committed by a school principal employed by the Burma/Myanmar government. He forced local community members in C--- village, Ma Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District to construct a school without payment.

On January 1st 2017, Sayar [teacher] U Kyaw Htay, who is 32 years old, oversaw the construction of a school. The area demarcated for school construction was 60 feet by 30 feet. In fact, the Education Department of Burma/Myanmar government funded a construction budget of 10 million [\$7,447.32 US] kyats and the area of the school was only intended to be 40 feet by 30 feet. As the school was built bigger than its intended size, U Kyaw Htay only hired masons [as contractors] but he also asked C--- villagers to help build the school as [unpaid] labour. C--- villagers carried the necessary materials to construct the school such as bricks, sand and stones, but they did not receive any payment from their work.

Whilst meeting with a C--- villager, a 45-year-old man Saw V--- told KHRG that,

“A school was built with a budget provided by the [Burma/Myanmar] Education Department. Sayar [teacher] U Kyaw Htay oversaw the school construction. He asked to construct a school that was 60 feet length by 30 feet width. However, in fact, the Education Department standardised the area of the school as 40 feet length by 30 feet width. He [U Kyaw Htay] said that the Education Department provided only 10 million kyats [\$7,447.32 US] which is not enough to construct the school building. He said that he had to use his own money as well. He also said that he bought materials and hired masons with his own money. For me, honestly, I

[militarised presence in villages in Hpapun District, June 2015](#),” KHRG, December 2015; [“Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014,”](#) KHRG, July 2015.

⁶ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the May 14, 2018 official market rate of 1,346 kyats to US \$1.

am not positive [whether he is telling truth or not]. I only know he hired masons twice. Actually, I just know what other people said. I don't know this first hand. The first time, the masons' salaries were 1,800,000 kyats [\$1,340.52 US] and the second time, they were 500,000 kyats [\$372.37 US]. I just heard like this. At first, I heard that [U Kyaw Htay] received only 6,000,000 kyats [\$4,468.39 US]; he had not received 10 million kyats [\$7,447.32 US] yet. We villagers had to do low-level [unskilled] labour, and carry stones and bricks. We were sure that we will not receive any payment. U Kyaw Htay asked us to work up to approximately six months and each person carried materials back and forth hundreds of times."

Compared to past years, more human rights violations occurred between 2017 and 2018. In this last update, sexual assault, forced portorage and forced labour also occurred in respective areas such as Lay Poe Hta and Ma Htaw village tracts of Dwe Lo Township and Meh P'Li and Htee Tha Daw Hta village tracts in Bu Tho Township.

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

- "Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, July to September 2017," (March 2018)
- "Hpapun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, 2016 to February 2017," (August 2017)
- "Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, July 2015," (April 2017)
- "Hpapun Interview: Saw B---, October 2016," (March 2017)
- "Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, March 2016," (January 2017)

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)