



Incident Report

September 28, 2018 / KHRG #18-53-I3

Hpapun Incident Report: Explicit Threats in Dwe Lo Township, April 2018

This Incident Report describes the fighting that broke out between Tatmadaw and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) on April 6th 2018 after Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division (LID) #22 trespassed the Karen National Union (KNU) controlled area. Armed LID #22 personnel entered Hm--- village right after the fighting took place and intimidated villagers by firing guns and making explicit oral threats. The village head was ordered to purchase chicken for Tatmadaw soldiers. However, no remuneration was provided in return.

Incident Report | Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (April 2018)

The following Incident Report was written by a researcher in Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local 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 in May 2018 along with other information from Hpapun District, including two other incident reports, 16 interviews, one situation update, and 177 photographs.2

Part 1 – Incident Details

Table with 2 columns: Incident Detail and Description. Rows include Type of Incident (Explicit threats), Date of Incident(s) (April 6th 2018), and Incident Location (Village, Township) (Hm--- village, Lay Hpoe Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District).

1 KHRG trains community members in southeastern Burma/Myanmar to document individual incidents of abuse 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 incident reports, community members are encouraged to document incidents of abuse that they consider to be important, by verifying information from multiple sources, assessing for potential biases and comparing to local trends.

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.

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Victim Information	
Name	Saw Hn---
Age	60
Sex	Male
Nationality	Karen
Family	Married
Occupation	Hill farmer
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Village head
Village	Hm--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
-	-	Light Infantry Battalion (LID)#22, Battalion #203	Maw Law Klo Army Camp	-

## Part 2 - Information Quality

### **1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.**

After I arrived to Hm--- village, I received information that Tatmadaw are using gunfire and explicit oral threats to frighten local villagers. Therefore, I interviewed Hm--- village head Saw Hn---'s wife on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018 in order to learn more about the incident.

### **2. Explain how the source verified this information.**

Saw Hn---'s wife reported her firsthand account of Tatmadaw committing explicit threats against civilians in her village.

## Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

### **Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.**

The Tatmadaw trespassed the Karen National Union [KNU] controlled territory. They extended their patrols into nearby villages and destroyed KNU's gate in 2018. KNU requested the Tatmadaw to stop patrolling in the KNU territory and the nearby villages. However, the Tatmadaw responded to the KNU with the following: "*This is an order from above [upper Tatmadaw command]. Therefore, we cannot stop these activities*".

Consequently, on April 6<sup>th</sup> 2018, at 5 pm, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) attacked Tatmadaw's Light Infantry Division (LID) #22<sup>3</sup>, Battalion #203 at Htaw Yeh Hta, the Tatmadaw water access point. One Tatmadaw soldier was injured. The injured soldier is based in Maw Lo Kloe army camp, Lay Hpoe Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District.

After the fighting finished, around 8:00 pm, Tatmadaw went to the shop that belongs to the Hm--- village head. An [unknown] Tatmadaw soldier grabbed the village head and squeezed his neck, dragged him out of the house and threw him onto the ground.

Tatmadaw took the village head back to the village and then an [unknown] Tatmadaw soldier fired his gun seven times [in order to frighten the villagers]. The Tatmadaw told the villagers that the KNLA must not shoot at them [Tatmadaw] ever again. If they [KNLA] were to attack them [Tatmadaw] again, they would burn down the entire village, and detain and kill the village head.

Moreover, Tatmadaw ordered the village head to buy a chicken for them. After the village head did as ordered, he asked the Tatmadaw [soldier] to pay him back for the chicken. However, the soldier responded: "*I will pay for it when I am about to leave [the village]*". The soldier planned to leave on the day of Tatmadaw LID#22's troop rotation with LID #44.

[As the rotation took place], the LID #44 commander ordered the village head to meet with him at the Maw Loh Klo army camp. However, the LID #22 left the camp when the village head was away. The LID #22 commander did not leave any money for the chicken either. The village head had to pay for the chicken on behalf of the Tatmadaw LID #22, which cost him 10,500 kyat [USD 7.23<sup>4</sup>].

The village head noted that he does not have a way to earn income for his family's livelihoods, yet he had to buy a chicken for the Tatmadaw as he was not given any other options.

#### **Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details**

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

Saw Hn---'s wife reported this information to me [KHRG researcher] and she gave the KHRG a permission to use the information for publication.

<sup>3</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. Yet up to date information regarding the size of battalions is hard to come by, particularly following the signing of the NCA. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

<sup>4</sup> All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 31/07/2018 official market rate of 1,451 kyats to US \$1.



These photos were taken on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018 in Hm--- village, Lay Hpoe Htah village tract, Dweh Lo Township, Hpapun District. The first photo shows Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division [LID] #22, Battalion #203's handkerchief and water bottle that were left in Hm--- village. The second photo shows the interviewee Naw Ho--- who is the wife of the Hm--- village head. She reported the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Tatmadaw in her village. [Photos: KHRG]

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

- “Hpapun Incident Report: Tatmadaw road construction results in the indiscriminate firing or mortars and displacement in Lu Thaw Township, March 2018”, (June 2018)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, September 2017 and February 2018”, (June 2018)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Lu Thaw Township, February to March 2018”, (May 2018)
- “Attacks on villagers, ongoing fighting and displacement in Hpapun and Toungoo districts from January to April 2018”, (May 2018)

# Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)