



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

November 30, 2018 / KHRG #18-69-S1

Toungoo Situation Update: Htantabin Township, March to April 2018

Between March and April 2018, there was an increase in Tatmadaw military activities in Htantabin Township. The Tatmadaw is building a military road from Kler Lah to Moh Hkee without permission from the Karen National Union (KNU). Tatmadaw soldiers have forced civilians to serve as forced porters. The local community is afraid of the increased Tatmadaw presence, and worried that fighting will resume.

Situation Update | Htantabin Township, Toungoo District (March to April 2018)

The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in May 2018. It was written by a community member in Toungoo 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 Toungoo District, including eight interviews.²

Tatmadaw Military Activities

Local people in Htantabin Township believe that the Tatmadaw military activities have increased since the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). The Tatmadaw soldiers are patrolling in the area more frequently.

From February 2018 onwards, the Karen National Union (KNU) and the local community have voiced their disapproval of the construction of a military road by the Tatmadaw from Kler Lah to Moh Hkee. The Tatmadaw has not stopped the construction. When the road reached Kler Lah, KNU authorities tried to stop further construction. Within three months of this incident, around 20-30 Tatmadaw soldiers came to the area with heavy weaponry, according to a local community member.

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.

To build this road, Tatmadaw soldiers cut down bamboo plants owned by local people. They also built their army camps close to local villages.

When the Tatmadaw reached Kaw Thay Der village, they ordered local people to be forced porters. Tatmadaw soldiers forced them to carry rations and bullets to the Tatmadaw army camp in Bu Hsar Hkee village.

Local community members from the surrounding area are worried about the fact that the Tatmadaw military road from Kler Lah will soon reach their village. They are worried that fighting will occur between the Tatmadaw and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).

The Tatmadaw road construction is impacting the livelihoods of the local populations, who are already struggling on their plantations because of difficult weather conditions. Villagers who have crops besides the road are afraid to farm their land because of the proximity to Tatmadaw soldiers. The KNU and the local community did not give permission to the Tatmadaw to advance into this area. Local villagers do not feel safe. They are afraid that Tatmadaw soldiers will see them when they are farming, and shoot them on sight.

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

- “Toungoo Interview: Saw Cn--- and Naw Dq---, November 2017”, (August 2018)
- “Toungoo Interview: Naw A---, February 2017,” (January 2018)
- “Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaungyi Township, March to May 2017,” (December 2017)
- “Toungoo Interview: Naw Ka---, October 2016,” (June 2017)
- “Toungoo Interview: Saw A---, January 2016,” (February 2017)

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District



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