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Update 37: December 30, 2010 – 12:30 pm

More shelling in Palu as villagers make plans to hold Christmas celebrations elsewhere

On December 22nd 2010, a KHRG researcher reported that more shelling occurred in Palu village at around 11:00 am on December 21st 2010. The KHRG researcher reported that, when the Palu villagers heard the sound of shelling, they fled from the fields and plantations where they were working and hid in their houses, but did not flee Palu village. Conflict between the DKBA and Tatmadaw soldiers has been impacting the community in the Palu village area since the breakdown of peace talks between the DKBA and the Tatmadaw there on November 26th 2010¹ and continues to create an unstable situation for many villagers. Some villagers have chosen to seek refuge in Thailand because they are afraid that the fighting will endanger them or that they will be arrested and forced to porter military supplies and equipment for the Tatmadaw soldiers. Others, like those who fled the shelling on December 21st 2010, have chosen to remain in the Palu area; some residents have cited the urgency of completing the harvest of bean, corn and paddy crops, the main agricultural products cultivated in eastern Dooplaya, among their reasons for remaining in the area. As Christmas approaches and regular shelling in Palu continues, the KHRG researcher reports that Christian villagers from Palu do not dare to hold celebrations there. They have instead made arrangements to celebrate Christmas in nearby H--- village, where there is no Tatmadaw army camp. The villagers from both Palu and H--- villages will begin their Christmas celebrations a few days before Christmas Day.



This picture, taken on December 22nd 2010, shows villagers from Palu and H--- villages preparing and cleaning an area of H--- where they will hold Christmas celebrations. Even as villagers in Dooplaya continue to face physical and human rights threats from the unstable military situation near their homes, they are still cooperating and making arrangements to maintain education and community traditions. *[Photo: KHRG]*

¹ See the report; Villager injured, community flees: Conflict continues to impact civilians in Dooplaya District, released on November 28th 2010 or click the link at: <http://www.khrg.org/khrg2010/khrg10b14.html>