



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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Dooplaya Situation Update: August 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in August 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Kawkareik, Kya In and Waw Raw (Win Yaw) townships of Dooplaya District between April and August 2011. The villager describes human rights abuses committed by soldiers from at least three Tatmadaw battalions, including: shelling of villages, resulting in civilian injuries and destruction of houses and food supplies; demands for the fabrication and delivery of thatch and bamboo, and for the provision of food; restrictions on villagers; detention, physical abuse, and killing of villagers; shooting of villagers; and a demand for villagers, including children, to clear the perimeter of a Tatmadaw camp. The villager also expresses concern that these abuses disrupt villagers' livelihoods and the provision of education for children.

Situation Update | Dooplaya District (August 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Dooplaya 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

Area Situation, April 2011 – August 2011

Kawkareik Township

On April 26th 2011, SPDC [Tatmadaw]² IB [Infantry Battalion] #283, based in Meh Naw Ah, shelled a village with mortars and two villagers were injured. The two villagers' names are Saw N---, 40 years old, and Naw N---, 41 years old. One house and [several] things belonging to villagers were destroyed. Three pots belonging to a villager named Saw L--- and one house belonging to Saw G--- were destroyed, and one cow belonging to Saw P--- was injured.

¹ KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma 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, villagers 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. KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Dooplaya District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Displacement Monitoring: Regular updates on Protection Concerns for villagers in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts and adjacent area in Thailand," KHRG, August 2011.

² In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the researcher and informants, and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

K--- village, Kawkareik Township

On May 13th 2011, commanding officer Win Naing Tun of SPDC Army IB #283, based in K--- army camp, demanded 400 thatch shingles from each [of the following] villages: K---, P---, G---, N---, A--- and O---. They had to deliver the thatch shingles on May 14th 2011.

Presently, villagers cannot work freely. The children can study in school, but villagers must always be aware.

T--- village, Kawkareik Township

On August 23rd 2011, an incident occurred, leading to villagers having to be cautious all the time.³ [Now] villagers are no longer allowed to wear *longyis*, rain clothes or traditional palm leaf hats. They [local Tatmadaw forces] only allow villagers to carry umbrellas and wear trousers.

Villagers can no longer work as normal and children can also no longer go to school as normal because the SPDC Army camp is now based in their village. Villagers do not know which battalion [is based in the camps] or who the [commanding] officer is.

I recently received accurate [credible] information that SPDC soldiers [from the camp in T---] killed two people on August 24th 2011. I did not obtain information about who these two people were, but I know one person was a Thai citizen who was returning from his parent-in-law's funeral.

W--- village, Kawkareik Township

On May 30th 2011, KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] and SPDC soldiers were fighting. After the fighting, SPDC soldiers arrested one villager. They bound him and beat him badly. His name is Saw A---. He is 22 years old. They also demanded three ducks from a villager named Naw P---, 40 years old, and three chickens from a villager named Saw S---, 43 years old.

On June 4th 2011, SPDC Army LIB #208, Column #2 Commander Nay Myo Aung demanded several villages each to provide 35 bamboo poles. The bamboo had to be very tall, ten times the length of one's fingertips to elbow [ten cubits]. Villages which had to cut and send the bamboo poles were M---, Ny---, Dt--- and Gk---, and two people from each village had to go and build [military] shelters in La--- village. If the villagers did not go, they [Tatmadaw LIB #208] would take action [to punish] the villagers.

As of August 28th 2011, some villagers in Kawkareik Township can work as normal and some are having difficulties working. Villagers here are mostly farmers, cultivating hill fields and rubber plantations. Villagers are working, but they work in fear. Armed groups that are active in Kawkareik Township are KNLA Battalion #18, KPF [Karen Peace Force], DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] Brigade #5,⁴ SPDC LIB #208, and SPDC IB #283. The SPDC units are

³ The KHRG researcher did not specify the type of incident that affected local security dynamics and led to the imposition of clothing restrictions on villagers.

⁴ DKBA forces in Dooplaya District that refused to transform into Tatmadaw Border Guard battalions, and have been fighting Tatmadaw forces since November 7th 2010, have been variously referred to as DKBA #907, K'lo Htoo Baw [Golden Drum], and Brigade #5. Each of these terms refers to different configurations of DKBA units commanded by Na Kha Mway. Na Kha Mway left the KNU/KNLA in 1997 and became the commander of DKBA Battalion #907; in 2007 he was promoted to head four DKBA battalions (#901, #906, #907 and a security battalion) as the commander of the *K'lo Htoo Baw* [Golden Drum] Tactical Command. In May 2009 this unit was reconfigured as DKBA Brigade #5, with Na Kha Mway commanding Battalions #901, 905, 906, 907 and 909; Brigade #5 was active in the Kya-In Seik Kyi, Kawkareik and Myawaddy areas of Dooplaya and Pa'an districts. In September 2011,

the ones who oppress the civilians. If the DKBA or KNLA forces attack them, they [Tatmadaw forces] come back and abuse civilians.

Kya In Township

In the Kya In Township area, villagers are mostly farmers, cultivating hill fields and rubber plantations. The children attend school as normal.

On May 18th 2011, Commander Nay Myo Aung of Column #2 of Tatmadaw LIB #208 ordered 90 KI--- villagers to go and clear [vegetation from] the army camp's perimeter. I know that children were included with the villagers who did this [forced labour].

Waw Raw (Win Yaw) Township

On April 1st 2011, soldiers from SPDC LIB #588's army camp, led by Commander Than Zin La and based in the area of the Doo Wa Koh mountains, arrested U--- villager Saw B---, 25 years old, and they shot him directly in the left side of his chest. He was badly injured and they sent him to Tatmadaw Battalion #588. In Waw Raw Township, villagers can work as normal [without disruption]. KNLA Battalion #16 is [active] there.

Further background on the current situation in Dooplaya District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- *Displacement Monitoring: Regular updates on protection concerns for villagers in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts and adjacent areas in Thailand* (October 2011)
- *Village heads negotiate with Tatmadaw, armed groups to forestall human rights threats amid continued conflict in Dooplaya District* (August 2011)
- *Dooplaya Interview: U Sa---*, July 2011 (July 2011)
- *Tatmadaw shelling kills one child, injures another in Mae T'Ler village* (June 2011)
- *Three villagers killed, eight injured during fighting in Kyaikdon area* (May 2011)
- *Human rights abuses and obstacles to protection: Conditions for civilians amidst ongoing conflict in Dooplaya and Pa'an Districts* (January 2011)
- *Villagers flee to avoid fighting and portering: Conflict continues to impact civilians in Dooplaya District* (December 2010)

it was reported that remaining DKBA forces were to be reconfigured into two tactical commands, *Klo Htoo Wah* and *Klo Htoo Lah*, and that Na Kha Mway would be the senior commander of these forces; see: "DKBA to accelerate military tactics," *The Irrawaddy*, September 8th 2011. For more on the origins of the current conflict and the transformation of DKBA troops into Border Guard battalions, see: "Protection concerns expressed by civilians amidst conflict in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts," KHRG, November 2010.

