



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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**Pa'an interviews: Conditions for villagers returned from temporary refuge sites in Tha Song Yang**

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*This report contains the full transcripts of seven interviews conducted between June 1<sup>st</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District by a villager trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. The villager interviewed seven villagers from two villages in Wah Mee Gklah village tract, after they had returned to Burma following initial displacement into Thailand during May and June 2009. The interviews report that they did not wish to return to Burma, but felt they had to do so as the result of pressure and harassment by Thai authorities. The interviewees described the following abuses since their return, including: the firing of mortars and small arms at villagers; demands for villagers to porter military supplies, and for the payment of money in lieu of the provision of porters; theft and looting of villagers' houses and possessions; and threats from unexploded ordnance and the use of landmines, including consequences for livelihoods and injuries to civilians. All seven interviewees also raised specific concerns regarding the food security of villagers returned to Burma following their displacement into Thailand.*

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The following interviews were conducted by a villager from Pa'an District, who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma to document individual incidents of abuse using a standardised reporting format; conduct audio-recorded interviews with other villagers; and write general updates on the situation in areas with which they are familiar. When conducting interviews, villagers are trained to ask interviewees questions based upon loose question guidelines. However, villagers are trained to encourage interviewees to speak freely about recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important and share their opinions or perspectives on abuse and other local dynamics in their area.

In order to give the villagers an opportunity to speak without mediation by KHRG, these audio-recorded interviews are presented below exactly as translated, save for minor edits for clarity and security. KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Pa'an District can be found in the Field Report, "Functionally refolement: Camps in Tha Song Yang abandoned as refugees bow to pressure," *KHRG*, April 2010. The following interviews present confirmation that refugees who abandoned temporary refuge sites in Tha Song Yang District in early 2010 did not do so voluntarily. The interviews also describe the human rights concerns of villagers since their return, including: the firing of mortars and small arms at villagers; demands for villagers to porter military supplies, and for the payment of money in lieu of the provision of porters; theft and looting of villagers' houses and possessions; and threats from unexploded ordnance and the use of landmines, including consequences for livelihoods and injuries to civilians. All seven interviewees also raise specific concerns regarding the food security of villagers returned to Burma following their displacement into Thailand.

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**Interview | Saw B---, (male, 50), P--- village, Wah Mee Gkiah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 1st 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**Have you gone and lived in Oo Thu Hta, the temporary refugee camp on the Thai side before?**

Yes, I have.

**When did you flee to go there?**

It was in May 2009.

**How long did you live there?**

Around four months.

**Did you have enough food and good accommodation when you were there?**

Yes we had but after four months we had to live in fear due to the poor temperament of the Thai authorities.

**Did you decide to return home yourselves?**

No, we were not allowed to live there any longer.

**How many Thai soldiers came to you and how long did they live there?**

Many Thai soldiers came and stayed there for a long time.

**Did they always live there?**

They set up a base there.

**When did you return home?**

I returned home earlier but they returned home in November 2009 when people finished their hill fields, plantations and paddy fields.

**How was the condition of your homes when you arrived back?**

It was not in the same condition as before we left.

**Do you have any difficulty in your livelihood?**

Yes, now we really have difficulty. We don't have any rice to eat.

**How will you continue your livelihood?**

I can't continue my livelihood because I can't farm a hill field or a paddy field alone. We will be happy if there is an arrangement for us to continue getting food. And we have no idea [how we will get food] if there is no arrangement for us.

**How many armed groups are operating in your village area?**

There are both DKBA and KNLA operating in my village area.

**Please tell us how do these armed groups harm village people?**

The KNLA do no harm to village people but the DKBA open fire and shell mortars to the villagers who are fleeing from them into the jungle and also they take all of the villagers' food and animals the first time they come to the village. Some village people didn't flee and continued living in the village.

**Do you know any of the names of those DKBA soldiers?**

I only know one of them is named Pah Thah Wah.

**Where were they come from?**

I don't know. I only know that they were from somewhere in the lower land.

**Who was their leader that led or came with them?**

Their leader was working jointly with Kyaw Nyain before.

**Do you think they are from DKBA Brigade #999?**

I don't know and I can't tell you about that.

**How many times did they come to your village?**

They came to my village only one time and then they never came again.

**Did you hear anything about village people detonating landmines or getting injured by bullets or mortars?**

There are two children, one died and another one was seriously injured from a mortar explosion when they played with it.<sup>1</sup>

**Who died and who was injured?**

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG reported this incident on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 in the Pa'an District Field Report titled "Functionally refolement: Camps abandoned in Tha Song Yang District as refugees bow to pressure", *KHRG*, April 2010. According to reports received at the time from relatives of the victims and local villagers, Saw Pe---, 10, and Saw Po---, 7, found an undetonated round from an M79 grenade launcher in the forest, which exploded when they played with it. It should be noted that determining the exact age of these boys has proven difficult due to the fact that rural villagers often do not keep formal calendars and do not possess identification papers or birth certificates, making the identification of exact birth dates difficult. Their grandfather and older brother could not agree on their ages, though they arrived at the ages of seven and ten. Local villagers interviewed by KHRG, meanwhile, estimated the boys to be between the ages of three and seven.

The younger one died and the older one was injured.

**How old was the younger one?**

He was around three years old.

**How old was the older one?**

He was around six or seven years old.

**Which parts of his body were injured?**

The whole body was injured but serious injury took place to his head and the blood came out.

**How did they play with the mortar?**

I don't know. They found it in the jungle and it exploded. Both of them were hit by the mortar.

**What is the name of the older one who died?**

He did not die. He was injured and his name is Saw Pe---

**What is the name of the younger one who died?**

His name is Saw Po---

**Have you ever heard that other villagers were detonated by a landmine?**

No, I have not heard about any incident here. We have one named Saw M---

**What happened with him?**

He was detonated by a landmine.

**When was he detonated?**

It was in October 2009.

**Where was he detonated?**

He was detonated at a place near the paddy field.

**How do you think who planted this landmine?**

I can't guess because I have not seen it for myself.

**Do you think the DKBA planted this landmine?**

I think it would be planted by one of these two groups [DKBA or KNLA]. We don't know exactly and they also didn't let us know when and where they plant those landmines. We dare not travel outside the village.

**Did this villager die or get injured?**

He died at once.

**Did anyone see him when he detonated it?**

Yes, someone saw him looking for the cows and he was detonated at that time.

**Did he stay alive for some days?**

No, he didn't. He died after he crossed the river.

**What is the plan for the village people to avoid landmine incidents?**

For the KNLA, they told us not to go to the place that they planted landmines and then we can avoid that place.

**How about the DKBA?**

The DKBA told us nothing because we are not together with them.

**Is it any other special plan for the villagers to avoid landmines?**

No, we have no special plan.

**How did you get food during the time when you came from the refugee camp to Mae Lah Ah Kee?**

We got food from nowhere. We just ate the rice that we brought along with us. We brought one big tin [10.45 kg / 23.04 lb] each.

**Was it enough for you all?**

No, it was not enough for us.

**Do you have any support from outside for you family?**

We really need support. We have difficulty for everything. We had nothing at home when we returned back. We have only an empty house. The DKBA took all the machetes and everything we had. We have nothing left at home.

**What kind of support do you need?**

We need everything especially rice and food. We can't do anything if we don't have it. We really need rice and other food supplies.

**Is there anything you would like to tell us more about?**

No, I don't have any ideas to talk more about.

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**Interview | Naw Ht---, (female, 45), P--- village, Wah Mee Gkiah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**When did you flee to Oo Thu Hta refugee camp?**

I can't remember the exact date. I think it was in June 2009 as it was the rainy season.

**How many months have you lived there?**

I can't guess it. The time that we returned home was in the summer, the month that people prepared to start doing their hill fields.

**How was the condition of food and accommodation when you were in the refugee camp?**

I don't know. When we lived there we also were afraid of Thai authorities and they forced us to go back home.

**How did they force you to return home?**

They forced us to return home. They didn't want us to live there any longer and then I and my children we returned back home.

**Why did you return earlier than the others?**

They told us that we would not be getting food any longer and they gave 100 baht to my daughter. They said that we have to return home. We had no choice. They said that you have to return this evening and my daughter told them that we can't leave this evening because it is too late. Then they told us not to go anywhere and to leave the next morning. You will get no food even if you continue to stay here.

**Who asked you to return?**

The Thai authorities ask us to return.

**What colour did the Thai authorities wear?**

They all wear black uniforms.

**How many soldiers came and asked you to return?**

Many soldiers came and asked us to return.

**How many times did they come and ask you to return home?**

They came many times and often. Sometimes they came to our temporary tent and sometimes they went to other huts. My children were afraid of them and returned home.

**Did you have any difficulty when you arrived home?**

Now, we don't have any difficulty yet and people tell us to continue living in the village.

**How is your livelihood for the future?**

We have a huge difficulty to continue working for our livelihood because we have nothing left with us. We don't have any food to eat since we arrived back home but we can't do anything.

**Is that causing a problem for you?**

Yes, it is because we have nothing left. We also don't any have money to buy food.

**How many armed groups came to your village?**

I don't know. I can't guess.

**How about the DKBA or the KNLA?**

The DKBA came to our village once.

**How about the Burma army?**

No, they never come.

**Did the DKBA do anything that harms the villagers and how do they do it?**

They didn't do anything to us but they shot and shelled at us when we were fleeing. They took everything, such as candles, coffee, tobacco and many other things from our shop.

**Can we say that they abuse our rights?**

Yes.

**Did they pay you the value of the things that they took from your shop?**

No, they paid nothing back to us.

**Were they DKBA?**

Yes.

**Did you hear anything about village people in P--- village detonating landmines or injured by bullets or mortars?**

No, I don't know. I can't talk about that.

**How do you protect yourselves when you are traveling?**

People tell us to travel in the area that is clear [of mines] and not to travel in the area that was prohibited.

**Who was telling you that?**

KNLA told us.

**Did you have enough food after you arrived back to your village?**

No, we didn't receive any food since we were on the Thai side. Only my older brother and two of my children received rations.

**What kind of food do you need now?**

We really need food because now we don't have any food to eat.

**How about the other things?**

We accept everything if people donate to us. But we can do nothing if people don't. We will be very happy if people donated us food.

**Do you think you will get enough food from your own paddy field?**

Now, we have to buy rice. We don't have any rice in hand and we also didn't do our paddy field last year.

**How many animals do you have?**

I have no idea. We already sold them all. We have nothing left.

**Do you have any other things to talk about?**

No, I don't have any other ideas to talk more about.

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**Interview | Saw M---, (male, 36), N--- village, Wah Mee Gkalah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**Did you have to go and live in Oo Thu Hta, the temporary refugee camp on the Thai side before due to the DKBA and SPDC operations?**

Yes, I had to.

**Can you remember the date that you fled to Oo Thu Hta?**

It was in May 2009.

**Did you have a good accommodation?**

No, we lived together in the same place that belongs to people there.

**Who is the owner of the place that you lived?**

The owner is Thai but I don't know the name.

**Who had to support you for food and accommodation?**

UNHCR and TBBC supported us for food and accommodation.

**Did you receive enough food from them?**

Yes, I did.

**How long have you live there?**

I'm not sure that how long I have live there but I return home in September 2009.

**Why did you have to return home?**

We thought we would come back when we were ready to start working on our paddy field but the Thai authorities forced us to return immediately.

**What is the colour of the Thai authorities' uniforms?**

Thai authorities with black uniforms forced us to return.

**What did they say when they forced you to return?**

They said we can't live there because it is not our country and they said we have our own country and we have to live in our country. They really didn't want us to live there.

**What difficulty did you have to face in you livelihoods after you arrived back home?**

Yes, we had to face difficulty. It is not easy to find food and we also don't have any job to do. We also dare not to travel.

**How about the weather?**

This year, our rice dried out due to the high temperatures and there was also not enough rain.

**How many armed groups are in your village area?**

There are three armed groups in my village area.

**Which armed group is doing human rights abuses the most?**

The DKBA and SPDC are doing human rights abuses the most.

**What kind of human rights abuses are they doing?**

They demand forced labour and porters. People who dare not go have to pay cash or go into hiding.

**How many people do they usually demand for porters each time?**

They [the SPDC] usually demands six or seven people each time.

**Where did they come from?**

Some of them are from Gk--- and some are from L--- camp.

**Where do villagers have to carry loads to?**

The villagers have to go to their camp called L--- camp.

**Is L--- near Bp---?**

Both are in the same place.

**Did you hear anything about villagers detonated by landmines or injured by bullets or mortars?**

Yes, there are many people who have been injured in my village.

**What did they get injured by?**

They got injured by landmines.

**Did they lose their legs or hands?**

No, but they were injured on their abdomen and other parts of their body because they detonated a mine that planted using a small thin string.

**Were there any who died?**

No, but there was one who was seriously injured and he went to S--- hospital [Thailand] for the treatment.

**Where did they detonate mines?**

They detonated mines when they are carrying loads for the SPDC.

**Did the SPDC take care of him after he was injured?**

I think the SPDC will not take care of him but he went with many friends and they carried and took care of each other. For the Burmese soldiers, they ran up to their military camp.

**Where was that place nearby?**

It is near Bp---.

**Was there any incident from landmines in your village after you came back?**

No, not yet.

**What is the plan for villagers to protect themselves from landmines?**

We let them know not to go to the place that we were warned about by the soldiers.

**Which group of soldiers are telling you about the place not to go to?**

It is DKBA.

**Did you still receive rations after you returned to your village from Oo Thu Hta camp?**

Yes, we received three months worth of rations after we left Oo Thu Hta camp and went back to our village and we finished them this month.

**Who provided you with these three months worth of rations?**

It was TBBC.

**Did they stop supporting now?**

Yes, they only supported us for the first three months.

**What do you think about food for the future?**

What can we do? The only way is that we have to buy food and some people who have no money will borrow from other people.

**Do you still need support from outside people and how much do you need?**

It would be good for us if our leaders can find some way to receive food.

**What kind of support do you need?**

The most important thing for us is rice as a basic necessity.

**How about clothes?**

We also need clothes but rice is more important. Now, it is very difficult for us to travel to get food.

**What kind of occupation do the villagers do for their livelihood?**

Most of the villagers are doing paddy fields.

**Are there any hill fields?**

Yes, but people are doing paddy fields more than hill fields.

**Were landmines planted close to your village?**

Yes, it is close to the village.

**Is it causing any difficulty for the village people to farm hill fields?**

Yes, it is. But they have to go only to the places that they dare.

**Would you like to talk more to us about your village situation?**

It is nothing special to talk about but the things that I would like to talk about the most are that it would be very helpful for the villagers if our leaders could arrange food for village people.

**Do the villagers still have their animals or not?**

Villagers still have their animals but they are very few. Some people sold their animals and some they ate.

**Why did they have to sell their animals?**

Because they couldn't move or flee along with their animals and some of their animals had stepped on landmines. Even children also stepped on landmines when looking after animals in Mae La Ah Hta village.

**How many children stepped on landmines?**

One child in my village stepped on a landmine when he was looking after his buffalos.<sup>2</sup>

**How long had it happen?**

It happened one or two months after we fled to Thailand. Some children still were looking after their animals in the Mae La Ah Hta village area and then stepped on a landmine. After that, they sold their animals to other people.

**How old was that child?**

He was around 13 or 14 years old.

**Is the child male or female?**

He is male.

**Where had he stepped on that landmine?**

It is just nearby Mae La Ah Hta village.

**Who saw that happen?**

His other two friends ran back to the village and told a woman to go and get the injured child and bring him home.

**Was that woman also staying in the village because she was looking after her buffalo?**

No, she just stayed with those children to look after them. For us, we already arrived to Oo Thu Hta. Only three or four of them were left behind to look after their animals.

**How is the situation of that injured child now?**

He lost one of his legs and now he has already recovered from the injury.

**Can he still work now?**

No, he can do nothing.

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<sup>2</sup> KHRG reported this incident on September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009 in the News Bulletin titled "Security concerns for new refugees in Tha Song Yang: Update on increased landmine risks", *KHRG*, September 2009.

**Does he have parents?**

Yes, he has.

**Who planted that landmine?**

I don't know and nobody else knows either.

**Do you dare to go to that area now?**

No, I dare not. People only use the truck road that was constructed by the SPDC.

**Did you already warn the villagers?**

Yes, I did.

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**Interview | Naw M---, (female, 70), P--- village, Wah Mee Gklah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**Have you joined the people fleeing to Oo Thu Hta camp due to the SPDC and DKBA operations?**

Yes I have joined that.

**When did you join that trip?**

It was at the beginning of the rainy season, last year.

**How many months did you have to stay in the camp?**

There were many months even though I wanted to stay longer.

**Have you received enough food and clothes?**

Yes, I have received.

**Why did you return back home?**

I can't say anything. I wanted to come back home.

**Was there anyone forcing you to return back?**

Yes, it was the Thai authorities.

**How many days did they come to you?**

There were many days.

**What did they say to you?**

They asked us to return back. They didn't want us to stay there.

**Can you guess when did you return back?**

It was the time when people started doing hill fields this year.

**How was the situation of working for your livelihood?**

I can't say anything. I have no idea about that.

**How did you do your paddy field this year?**

I think people will use machine to do their paddy fields because we don't have any buffalo to work on it and we also don't have money to buy them.

**Did you have any buffalo before?**

Yes, I did. We had some cows and sold them before we fled to Thailand for a small cost. And the money that we got from selling cows, we spent it all for our food during fleeing.

**Do armed groups have a lot of activities and operations?**

I have no idea about that.

**Do SPDC troops come to your village?**

Yes, they did this year after we returned back.

**What were they doing when they came?**

I think they were looking for food.

**Did they eat any of the villagers' animals?**

Yes, they did. They shot and killed other people's pigs and ate them.

**Any other things that they took?**

Yes, they took fruits and other vegetables.

**Do you know anything about the DKBA?**

No, I don't.

**Have you seen that the SPDC comes to here?**

No, I didn't.

**Are there any landmines around your village?**

I don't know because I don't go anywhere.

**How did the village head tell the villagers about traveling?**

He only told the villagers not to travel a lot.

**How is the food situation for your family after you returned back?**

We are not sure about food issues. We also have one or two family members. People are usually borrowing food to and from each other and people also borrow rice seeds to and from each other to farm paddy fields.

**Do you need any support for outside?**

Yes, we need support because we don't have anything.

**What do you need?**

We need food and clothes too. Now, we don't have enough food.

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**Interview | Saw P---, (male, 38), P--- village, Wah Mee Gkiah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**Did you also flee to Oo Thu Hta?**

Yes, I did.

**When did you flee to Oo Thu Hta?**

I fled to Oo Thu Hta in June.<sup>3</sup>

**How many months did you stay there?**

I don't know but it was nearly one year.

**Why did you return back?**

Thai authorities asked us to return back.

**What was the colour of their uniform?**

It was black colour.

**Didn't they want you to stay longer?**

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<sup>3</sup> Saw P--- used the Karen term 'Lah Nwee' which translates directly as 'month seven' but corresponds to the Gregorian month of June.

No, they didn't.

**When did you return back?**

It was at the beginning of summer [March]<sup>4</sup> this year.

**Who helped you to return?**

No, we didn't receive any help. The Thai authorities were standing up along the river beach when we come back to the Burma side.

**What kind of difficulty did you have to continue your livelihoods after you arrived back to the village?**

I have no idea. We have a lot of difficulties. We had to clean bushes that were growing in our fields and hire other people's machines on credit.

**Are there any landmines near your paddy field?**

I think not too many. They will be planted on the hills.

**Do you dare you travel beyond the village?**

Yes, we only dare to travel to the places that are close to the village. We dare not to travel to the far places.

**How about your food situation?**

We don't have any food because we have not worked on our paddy fields last year.

**Do you need any support from outside people?**

It will be very helpful for us if we have some support.

**What kind of help do you need?**

Food is very important for us to be alive. We need rice and other basic things. We really don't have any money to buy food. It will be better for us if our leaders can find a way to help.

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**Interview | Naw D---, (female, 37), P--- village, Wah Mee Gkiah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**Do you have difficulties with your livelihood?**

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<sup>4</sup> Saw P--- used the term 'Kay Gko' which corresponds to the month of March in the Gregorian calendar.

We have to face with many difficulties for everything. We sold all of our buffalo before we fled and spent all the money that we have when we were fleeing. Now, we have nothing left and have to stay on the ground like this. We couldn't bring our things along with us, not even a hen. So, we have nothing left, not even a hen. One of my hens was just having new babies and the DKBA came and ate them. All the chicks are dead.

**What do you use to do your paddy field?**

We have to borrow machines from other people to do our paddy fields because we don't have any cows or any buffalos left.

**Did you have enough food after you arrived back to your village?**

No, we didn't have enough food.

**Are the SPDC and the DKBA still active in your village area?**

Yes, DKBA recently came to our village.

**What did they eat or take from the villagers?**

They ate one of my hens and a pig of another villager when they came.

**How much did the pig that they ate cost?**

It cost between around 3,000 baht to 4,000 baht.

**Do you have any pigs or chickens left?**

I have nothing left.

**Do you have any difficulty with food now?**

Yes, we really have difficulty with food because we didn't have any rice when we arrived back.

**How will you continue surviving in the future?**

We can only work with other villagers and help each other.

**Do you need any support from outside people?**

Yes, we need.

**What do you need?**

We need food. You can see that we have nothing in the house to eat.

**Do you have a chance to work smoothly right now?**

We have no idea about that. Many different people say many different things. So, we can't predict our lives.

**Are there any landmines planted around the village?**

I think landmines will be planted on the hill in the jungle.

**Did the village head tell you anything about not traveling to the places where those landmines were planted?**

Yes, people said not to travel far away beyond the village. We only travel around to our paddy fields, which are close to the village. People will not travel outside a lot due to the lack of cows and buffalos.

**Are there any other things you would like to talk more about?**

No, nothing.

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**Interview | Saw Gk---, (male, 42), P--- village, Wah Mee Gklah village tract, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District (Interviewed on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Occupation:** Paddy field farmer

**When did you start fleeing from P--- to Oo Thu Hta on the Thai side?**

We started fleeing on June 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009.

**How did you have to face with problems?**

There are many kinds of problem we had to face when we were in Oo Thu Hta camp. The Thai authorities put restrictions on us and we had to follow their policy and do everything that they say since it is not our country. We also can't go outside the camp to work for food.

**Why did you have to return back home?**

We had to return back home because the Thai authorities forced us to return. They took photos of the villagers and some of the family members were not included in their family photo. So, they were forced by the Thai authorities to return back and, if not, they would be arrested and sent to Myawaddy. The Thai authorities also said they won't allow us to stay longer and just go back home. So, we had to return back even though we dared not.

**What is the colour of the Thai authorities' uniform?**

There are several colours and several groups of Thai authorities gathering together then coming and forcing us to return back home by the same word.

**How often did they usually come?**

They came two to three times a day and asked many questions to the villagers. Villagers returned home when they cannot face with their questions and threatening. I told the Thai authorities that we dared not to return back now because the battle is not over and

who will take responsibility for us if we step on landmines? After that they arrested me and sent me to Mae Tan then again to Mae Sot. And they stopped me from working for my people and also I was blocked to enter the camp.

**Do you remember the date that you came back home?**

No, I cannot remember the date.

**Was that before other people came back home?**

Yes, it was around one month before other people did.

**When did the other people come back?**

It was around April or May.

**What kind of difficulties do you have for food and others?**

We have to come back because the Thai authorities forced us to do so. Now, we came back and stay in our village but we dare not travel due to the landmines planted around. Now, we don't have anything to do and work for food. We just stay in our house. The only way is to cross the border and work to earn some wages to buy food in Thailand.

**Are there many landmines planted around your village and who planted them?**

There are many landmines planted around our village. The KNLA will plant the most landmines around their camp or area and the DKBA will plant the most along the border but we don't know clearly who planted the landmines and where they are planted. So we, the villagers, dare not to go anywhere.

**How do you plan to protect the villagers from injury or incident?**

We announce that we don't take responsibility for the people who are traveling beyond the village. Everyone will walk only in the street when they travel. We told them not to go far from the village for collecting vegetables in the jungle.

**Have there been any incidents from landmines or mortars and how did it happen?**

We already told the Thai authorities that we cannot look after everyone for their safety on the way back home and that's why we don't want to return home now. When we came back, some village children found a mortar and played with it. That mortar exploded when they played with it and the result was that one was killed and one was injured. Now he has not recovered from the injury yet.

**How old is the one who was killed?**

He is five years old.

**How old is the injured one?**

He is eight years old.

**Is the injured one already recovering?**

No, not yet. But he can come back home. However, he can never recover as well as before.

**Had you received any support after you arrived back home?**

We didn't have any way to get support from others. But there was a time that people came and distributed rice around five or six kg [11 – 13 lb] person for temporary support when we have nothing to eat.

**Is there any time after that?**

No, there is not.

**Do you still need any support from outside people and what kind of support do you need?**

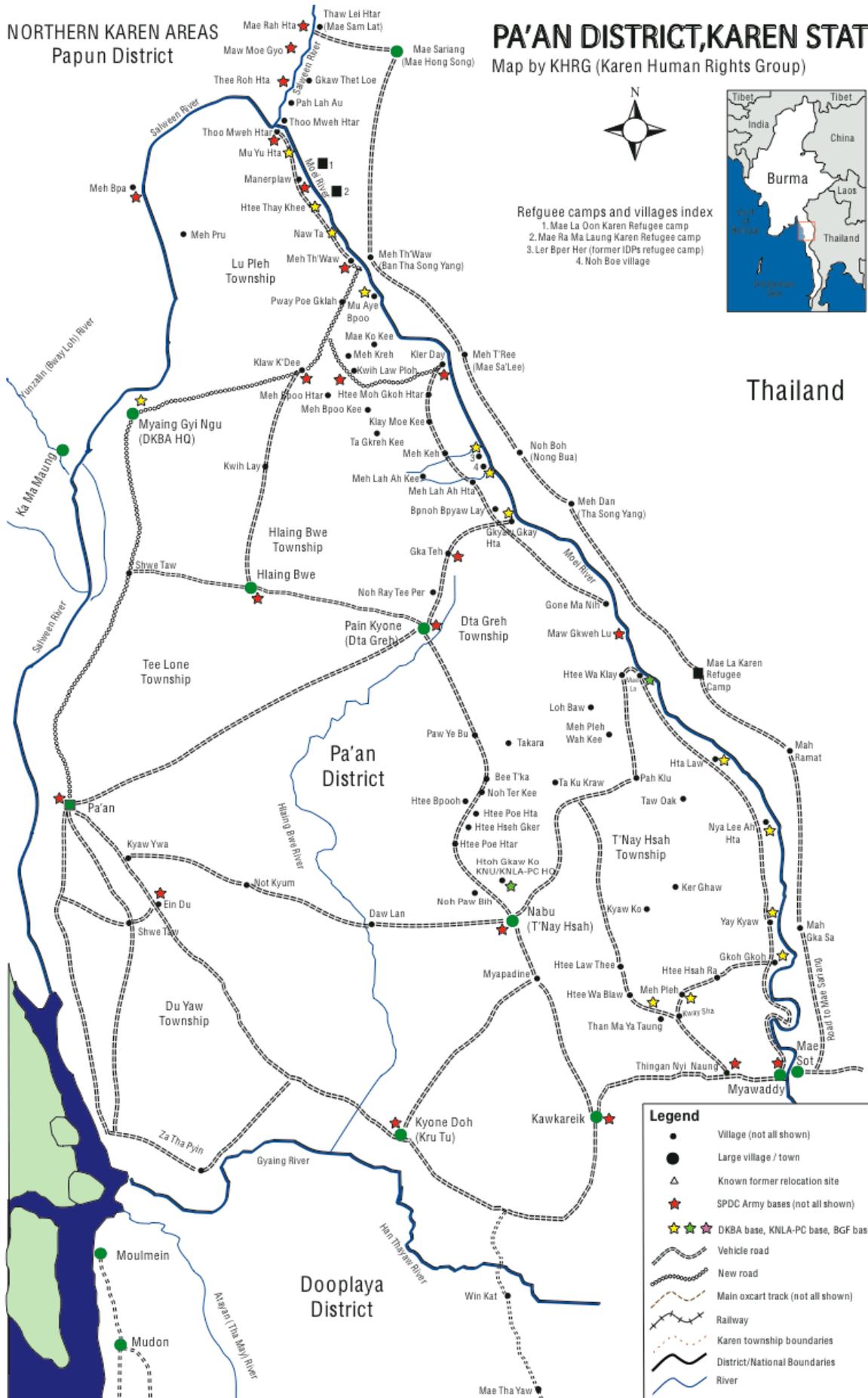
Yes, we need. There are many things we need in our lives but at least we need rice to eat and survive.

**Do you have anything more to talk about?**

No, I think that's all.

**NORTHERN KAREN AREAS**  
Papun District

**PA'AN DISTRICT, KAREN STATE**  
Map by KHRG (Karen Human Rights Group)



**Refugee camps and villages index**  
 1. Mae La Oon Karen Refugee camp  
 2. Mae Ra Ma Laung Karen Refugee camp  
 3. Ler Bper Her (former IDPs refugee camp)  
 4. Noh Boe village



Thailand

**Legend**

- Village (not all shown)
- Large village / town
- △ Known former relocation site
- ★ SPDC Army bases (not all shown)
- ★ ★ ★ DKBA base, KNLA-PC base, BGF base
- Vehicle road
- New road
- Main oxcart track (not all shown)
- Railway
- Karen township boundaries
- District/National Boundaries
- River

# Karen Districts



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Scale: 1 cm to 22 km  
1 in. to 35 miles