



## News Bulletin

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### Incident Report: Killings in Papun District, March 2012

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*The following incident report was written by a community member who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights abuses. It describes an incident involving four villagers at A---, including two home guard members and their relatives, as they were trying to covertly cross a Tatmadaw-controlled road near See Day army camp. Two home guard villagers, Saw M--- and Saw W---, were shot by Tatmadaw soldiers, resulting in the death of Saw M--- and injuring Saw W---. The community member also described a previous incident that took place while home guard villagers were monitoring Tatmadaw troop movements in their area, during which Tatmadaw soldiers reportedly stepped on landmines and were killed during the confrontation.*

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### Incident Report | Lu Thaw Township, Papun District (March 2012)

*The following incident report is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security<sup>1</sup> This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including one situation update.<sup>2</sup>*

The incident happened between March 6th and April 5th 2012<sup>3</sup> in Lu Thaw Township, Papun District. In the first week of March, four villagers who were returning to their homes in H--- village were trying to cross the Tatmadaw vehicle road at A--- [an area of forest near See Day army camp] after staying in P--- village, Kay Bpoo village tract. Two

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<sup>1</sup>KHRG incident reports are written or gathered by villagers in Dooplaya District who have 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 interviews with other villagers; and write general updates on the situation in areas with which they are familiar. When writing incident reports, villagers 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.

<sup>2</sup>In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in eastern Burma, 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. As companion to this, a redesigned website will be released in 2012. In the meantime, KHRG's most recently-published field information from Papun District can be found in the report, "Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, January to March 2012," KHRG, May 2012.

<sup>3</sup>The incident documented in this report was described to a community member trained by KHRG as having happened sometime between March 6<sup>th</sup> and April 5<sup>th</sup> 2012. However, the incident was also reported by the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), which specifies the incident involving Saw W--- and Saw M--- as having occurred on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2012; see "FBR Report: Burma Army kills one, wounds one as villagers try to cross road in Northern Karen State," FBR, March 10, 2012.

of the villagers were members of the home guard.<sup>4</sup> The two home guard villagers were trying to cross the Tatmadaw vehicle road, which supplies the See Day army camp, in order to send the other two villagers to the other side of the road. While crossing the Tatmadaw vehicle road however, the Tatmadaw soldiers shot at them. The two villagers were relatives of the two home guard villagers.

The road they were trying to cross begins further north in Toungoo District, running from Kaw Thay Der army camp and Bu Hsah Kee army camp, and leads south connecting with See Day army camp, which is situated in Papun District. During the incident, one villager named Saw M--- died on the spot and another villager named Saw W--- was shot with two bullets; one shot struck Saw W--- at his waist and another bullet hit his hip. He was treated by a KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] medic in one of the KNLA clinic's at L--- village in Papun District. The other two villagers escaped, as they did not get hit by any bullets.

Saw M--- and Saw W--- are cousins. These two villagers were serving as home guards for their community. After the incident, the other home guard members went to check Saw M---'s dead body. When they arrived, they found that the Tatmadaw soldiers were still waiting close to Saw M---'s dead body. After one week, the home guard villagers went to check for the body again. This time they did not see any Tatmadaw soldiers, but they found that the Tatmadaw soldiers had cut off one of his legs.

Five days before the incident happened, Saw M--- and some other home guard members were patrolling around to monitor the Tatmadaw soldiers presence in their area, and there was an encounter with the soldiers. A skirmish happened and some of the Tatmadaw soldiers stepped on landmines and died. The home guard villagers took one of the Tatmadaw soldier's guns during the skirmish.

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

- "Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, January to March 2012," (May 2012)
- "Incident Report: Papun District, June 2011," (May 2012)
- "Papun Interview Transcript: Naw P---, November 2011," (April 2012)
- "Papun Interview Transcript: Saw L---, June 2011," (March 2012)
- "Papun Interview: Maung R---, August 2011," (February 2012)
- "Papun Interview: Saw H---, March 2011," (February 2012)
- "Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, May to June 2011," (February 2012)

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<sup>4</sup>'Home guard' or *gher der* groups have been organized locally in parts of northern Karen State threatened by Tatmadaw operations targeting civilians, and the resulting acute food insecurity. Villagers interviewed by KHRG have reported that *gher der* were established with the objective of providing security for communities of civilians in hiding, particularly when those communities engage in food production or procurement activities, and when other modes of protection are unavailable. For more on the *gher der* see: *Self-protection under strain: Targeting of civilians and local responses in northern Karen State*, KHRG, August 2010, especially pp.88-95.

