



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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Papun Interview: Saw Kr---, October 2010

*This report contains the full transcript of an interview conducted during October 2010 in Lu Thaw Township, Papun District by a villager trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. The community member interviewed Saw Kr---, a 23-year-old hill farmer from L--- village, Pla Koh village tract, who described an incident where he was injured after stepping on a landmine while on Home Guard duty in Kaw Mu Day, which resulted in him losing his left leg. Saw Kr--- describes how the Tatmadaw deliberately laid landmines on a public pathway, knowing that villagers were likely to tread on the devices. He also mentions that local villagers are active in defending themselves against Tatmadaw troops in Lu Thaw Township, Papun District. This incident is also described in the report *Uncertain Ground: Landmines in eastern Burma*, published by KHRG on May 21, 2012.*

Interview | Saw Kr---, (male, 23), L--- village, Lu Thaw Township, Papun District (October 2010)

The following interview was conducted by a villager in Papun District, and is presented below translated exactly as it was received, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This interview was received along with other information from Papun District, including 14 incident reports, 12 other interviews and 82 photographs²

Religion: Animist

Ethnicity: Karen

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 conducting interviews, villagers are trained to use loose question guidelines, but also 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.

² 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 Interview: Saw T---, December 2011," KHRG, July 2012.

Family Status: Single
Occupation: Hill field farmer

What is your mother's name?

Naw S---

What is your father's name?

Kyaw T---

Which grade did you study to?

I went to school for only two years.

How did you get injured by the landmine?

I was a *gher der* [Home Guard].

Where is your *gher der* [Home Guard] office?

It is in P---

Where did you get injured by the landmine?

In Kaw Mu Day [village].

How long does it take from Kaw Mu Day to Waw Mu Der [village]?

It takes one hour.

Why did you go there?

I went there to guide people to Waw Mu Der.

Where were the people going?

I don't know. They were travelling.

Were they crossing the road?



The above photo was taken on September 18th 2010 in Day Poo Noh hospital, Lu Thaw Township, Papun District. It shows Saw Kr---, a 23-year-old Home Guard member from L--- village, Pla Koh village tract, Lu Thaw Township. After stepping on the landmine, Saw Kr--- was carried to hospital; his injuries resulted in him losing a leg. Saw Kr--- was on a year-long Home Guard post when the incident occurred.

Yes.

Were they villagers?

Yes, they were villagers.

Did the SPDC [Tatmadaw]³ put the landmine in Kaw Mu Day?

I didn't know where exactly the SPDC put the landmine. But the SPDC came and put the landmine on the place where the people would walk.

So the SPDC didn't walk on the road, they walked beside the road?

Yes, they walked beside the road and put the landmines on the walk-way.

When did you get your injury?

On Friday, after people measured out the paddy.

How many home guards went with you?

We went with four people [Home Guard members].

How many villagers?

Over 10 villagers.

Where did you send them?

To the other side of the road.

Do people rarely use this way?

No, people always use this way.

³ 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 army, 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 4-10th 2011. The term *Na Ah Paw* as used by the villager who wrote this conducted this interview and interviewee and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this interview

How many people walked in front or behind you?

Two people walked in front of me.

How many people were injured by the landmine?

The landmine was very small. It was only the size of two torch lights.

Who took care of you after you injured your leg?

One of my friends and one villager.

Who carried you back?

They carried me to Plaw Day [village].

Who carried you?

One of my friends and one other villager.

Where did the other villagers go? Did they carry you?

They went in front and carried me for a while.

Where were you sent?

They sent me directly to Ta Ho Der Hospital.

Where did you cross the road?

Ta Kaw Toh Baw [village].

Where were you sent after you arrived in Ta Ho Der Hospital.

They sent me to Day Poo Noh Hospital.

How long have you been in Day Poo Noh?

Already over two months.

How many days after you were injured did you come here?

I slept in Ta Ho Der for two days.

What about the situation now?

It's become good.

What will you do after you are given your false leg?

I will leave.

I mean, what work will you do?

I will farm; I won't be in the home guard anymore.

For what reason did you decide to enter into the home guard?

The people called. They called another villager but his parent's would not allow it, so they asked me. Everybody has to do this job.

Was this a one-year home guard post or a permanent Home Guard post?

Only one year.

What will you do after you are cured?

I will go back to my village.

How long did you work in the home guard before you got injured?

Only three months.

Does the SPDC hurt the villagers?

Not only does the SPDC [hurt the villagers], the Karen villagers also hurt the SPDC, to protect themselves.

Did anybody get injured before?

There are a lot of people who got injured before me.

Is fighting inside the country good?

That is not good.

Do you want fighting in your country in the future?

I don't want fighting. I want it to become good.

Do you have anything else you wish to report?

I don't have anything to tell.

You said after you put your false leg on, you will do what?

I will farm and work on hill fields.

Do you think it is easy for you to work or run?

That is not easy but I want to go and try.

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

- "Papun Interview: Saw T---, December 2011," (July 2012)
- "Photo Set: Villagers register concerns about proposed Hatgyi Dam," (June 2012)
- "Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, received April 2012," (June 2012)
- "Sustained Tatmadaw resupply operations in Thaton, Nyaunglebin and Papun during ceasefire," (May 2012)
- "Incident Report: Killings in Papun District, March 2012," (May 2012)
- "Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, January to March 2012," (May 2012)
- "Incident Report: Papun District, June 2011," (May 2012)

