



**News Bulletin**

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**Papun Situation Update: Northern Lu Thaw Township,  
March to June 2012**

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*This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in June 2012 by a community member describing events occurring in Papun District, during the period between March and June 2012. Specifically described is the location of Tatmadaw operations in the twelve village tracts inside the Northern Lu Thaw Township, and the living conditions of the villagers from those village tracts. This report details military activities, such as sending rations and repairing bridges, and it also includes concerns the villagers have related to the military's activities and the permanence of the 2012 ceasefire. Other detailed information about the livelihood, healthcare, education, and the responsive strategies of the villagers, is also provided.*

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**Situation Update | Northern Lu Thaw Township, Papun District  
(March to June 2012)**

*The following situation update was written by a community member in Papun 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.<sup>1</sup> This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including 144 photographs.<sup>2</sup>*

**Northern Lu Thaw Township report**

**Introduction**

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG trains community members 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, community members 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.

<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 Interview: Saw E---, June 2012," (August 2012)

In Lu Thaw Township, there are altogether 12 village tracts and there are two SPDC [Tatmadaw]<sup>3</sup> vehicle roads that go across the township. One goes from Ler Doh to Saw Hta. The other one forks from the border of Der Kyoo, which is from the third Brigade and the fifth Brigade, and goes to Saw Muh Plaw and Hkay Poo, then on to the second Brigade. The civilians live separately and the village tracts are separated into two sides; two sides which are Saw Muh Plaw and Ler Muh Plaw village tracts, then Hkay Poo and Hpya Hkoh village tracts. The difficulty that the villagers face is that when they travel to find food, they have to cross the SPDC vehicle road. If the home guard<sup>4</sup> doesn't accompany them, they dare not travel. Even though the ceasefire was made, they dare not face the SPDC soldiers as the SPDC military repairs their places [camps] and sends more rations.

## SPDC military locations

### A. Hkay Poo village tract

- i. Hsa Law Kyo
- ii. Khaw Daw Hkoh
- iii. Htee Htaw Per

### B. Ler Muh Plaw village tract

- i. Htoh Loo Pleh Meh- Htaw Muh Pleh Meh

### C. Saw Muh Plaw village tract

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<sup>3</sup> 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 Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

<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.

- i. Way Klay Too
- ii. Koh Kaw Day
- iii. Der Kyoo Hkoh
- iv. Paw Khay Hkoh
- v. K'Ser T'Kwe
- vi. Maw Kyaw Hkoh

D. Hpla Hkoh village tract

- i. Kuh Hkoh
- ii. Keh Deh Kyo
- iii. Dweh Ahoh Thih Kyo
- iv. Kaw Thway Kyo
- v. Hpya Hkoh
- vi. K'Baw Too

E. Kaw Loo Der village tract

- i. Plaw Ka Muh Loo
- ii. Kaw Way Kyo
- iii. Moh Loh Day
- iv. Ler Kyay

F. Tay Muh Der village tract

- i. Maw Phoo
- ii. Maw Kyoh Hkoh
- iii. Kyu Loo Thay.

## **SPDC activities**

On May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012, the SPDC military LID [Light Infantry Division] #66, which is based in Hsa Law Hkoh, came and repaired a bridge on Hploh Loh River, which runs from the Ta May Hta area in Hkay Poo village tract, they built it with bamboo.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> 2012, the SPDC military repaired a bridge in Toh Loo Hkoh, Ta Hkeh Der zone in Hkay Poo village tract, on the Pweh Loh River.

On March 6<sup>th</sup> 2012, an SPDC military bulldozer “D4” and petrol truck arrived in Hsa Law Kyoh, Hkay Poo village tract, at 3:00 pm.

On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2012, 12 six-wheeled tractors, which carried rations, arrived in Khaw Daw Hkoh; small cars and motorcycles also arrived, later. Some of the people estimated that there would be 60 small cars. Many monks were also in the vehicles and they went back sooner.

In Northern Lu Thaw Township, the SPDC Military Operation Command #4 (three groups) is responsible for Paw Khay Hkoh to Ler Klay Kyoh and Ler Muh Plaw. For LID #55, it is responsible for Ta’Khaw Hta to Thee Muh Hta, and Saw Hta to the site of Plaw Ka Muh School. For LID #66 and IB [Infantry Battalion] #11, they are responsible for Hkler La to Hkaw Daw Hkoh, which is in the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Hkay Poo village tract. All of the places where the SPDC military is based, are being repaired; there are also preparations with rations and bullets. The villagers who have their own radios, or the radios that they receive from KHRG, listen to the radio but they are still wondering whether they have to move or not.

## **Civilians’ livelihood situation**

In this year, 2012, the civilians face difficulty mostly with the staple food: rice. The reason for this is that during last year, 2011, there was heavy rain and flooding which destroyed the trees. People could not burn their fields for cultivation, so the civilians faced difficulties, mostly with food. Some of the people could not do their hill farming, and some could only get one or two baskets<sup>5</sup> of paddy grain. It was only enough for them for two or three months, then their rice was gone; this mostly happened to the hill farmers.

In the present situation, [villagers] are worried about insufficient food, so they have to porter. When they get money for one tin of rice, they have to go and buy [it] in Ta’Hkaw

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<sup>5</sup> A Basket is a unit of volume used to measure paddy, milled rice and seeds. One basket is equivalent to 20.9 kg. or 46.08 lb. of paddy, and 32 kg. or 70.4 lb. of milled rice. A basket is twice the volume of a big tin.

Hta, and it costs 300 baht for one big tin.<sup>6</sup> This takes two days, but for some of the people, it takes three days to go and come back. After they come back two or three days later, their rice runs out and they have to go again. They are not even free to do their jobs. They also face food [problems] for the coming year. If one family has a lot of family members, some do their own [farming] and some work as porters, and it [survival] is easier. For the ones who have lots of little children, it is very difficult for them to face a food problem. [The villagers] keep a paddy store in L--- area in Naw Yoh Hta village tract, where there are 500 baskets (10,450 kg. / 23,040 lb.) of paddy. Because four villages have to rely on it now, there is no paddy in the paddy store; it is all is gone. To get to the time for the paddy to be ripe in November, there are still five months left. There is a paddy store of the villagers, with 300 baskets (6,270 kg. / 13,824 lb.) of paddy, in a place next to B---, but only half is left now. Therefore, it is a really sorrowful situation. Most of the sections in the villages express that they have to search for food. They report it to the regional authorities and, because the number of the people [civilians] is a lot, the regional authorities cannot help them.

## **Healthcare situation**

For health, now, the diseases that often occur are malaria, coughing, diarrhoea, cholera, gammy and sore eyes. These diseases occur a lot and the information is according to what the head of the health department mentioned. There are four clinics, which are: (1) M---, (2) S---, (3) D---, and (4) W---. However, there is not enough medicine, so it is also a problem. [The villagers] also have to go a long distance [for the clinic].

## **Education situation**

For education, it goes as well as possible. The students can learn in a better [situation] as the SPDC military activities have become less. The students also receive distributed books, pencils and educational materials, sports equipment and [other] learning materials. The students do not need to buy books, pens or sport equipment because the schools receive these things; there are only a few schools that do not receive [them]. For the teachers, they receive 200 baht each as a stipend, however, ones with a family cannot rely on this.

## **Villagers' strategy**

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<sup>6</sup> A big tin is a unit of volume used to measure paddy, milled rice and seeds. One big tin is equivalent to 10.45 kg. or 23.04 lb. of paddy, and 16 kg. or 35.2 lb. of milled rice.

They [villagers] do not have a desire to live under military [rule]. They do not have enough clothing or food, but they go together, work together and live together. After the SPDC entered the ceasefire, when they see villagers on Ler Muh Plaw vehicle road, they tell the villagers, *“Come back and work in your own place. You fled and are spreading so you can’t get sufficient food or clothes. We will give you food and we will not take any money. We are human beings; we will help each other.”* However, the villagers do not listen to them. They also talk to the people in a nice way on the walkie-talkie. They also said that the KNU [Karen National Union] has already entered the ceasefire, so they will not shoot each other again. However, the villagers do not listen to them.

## **Conclusion**

This is a report for March to June. The report is about the Lu Thaw Township K’Lee region, Papun District, and the situation is as mentioned above.

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

- “Papun Interview: Saw E---, June 2012,” (August 2012)
- “Papun Interview: Saw N---, January 2012,” (July 2012)
- “Papun Interview: Saw K---, June 2012,” (July 2012)
- “Papun Interview: Saw D---, January 2012,” (July 2012)
- “Papun Interview: Saw Kr---, October 2010,” (July 2012)
- “Papun Interview: Saw T---, December 2011,” (July 2012)

