



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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Torture and killing in Thaton District

On June 25th 2012 in Pa'an Township, Thaton District, Saw R---, 52, was killed and Saw A---, 67, tortured by Border Guard Battalion #1014 soldiers, after being accused of being spies for the Karen National Union (KNU). This news bulletin includes a description of the incident written by a source close to the family of the deceased man, which was received by KHRG on September 23rd 2012.

On September 23rd 2012, a KHRG researcher met with Saw N---, 23, a source close to the family of one of the victims. Saw N--- described the torture and killing of Saw R---, 52, and the torture of Saw A---, 67, by Border Guard Battalion #1014 soldiers.

According to Saw N---, on June 25th 2012, Saw R---, a 52-year-old resident of M--- village, and Saw A---, a 67-year-old resident of H--- village, were going to give 55,000 kyat (US \$63.88)¹ to Saw A---'s daughter, who was going to give birth.

When they reached T--- village, they met with Border Guard Battalion #1014 soldiers and were interrogated. The soldiers accused them of being KNU spies. Both men were beaten and pummelled repeatedly with the butt of a gun and sticks until they were unconscious. Saw A---, was seriously injured as a result of the torture and Saw R--- died from his injuries on the same day. According to Saw N---, Saw R--- died because he was tortured more.

According to Saw N---, Border Guard Battalion #1014 is based in Gyo Pin Seik village in Pa'an Township, Thaton District. The Battalion Commander is Bo Maung Chit and the Company Commander is Saw Tin Win. The soldiers who tortured the two men were from *Saw Thaw Ma Na* Company, which includes eight soldiers in total.

¹ As of October 1st 2012, all conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 861 kyat to the US \$1. This reflects new measures taken by Burma's central bank on April 2nd 2012 to initiate a managed float of the kyat, thus replacing the previous fixed rate of 6.5 kyat to US \$1.

“Saw R--- (also known as) Saw S--- was accused of being KNU intelligence. While Saw R---, also called Saw S---, and his uncle, Saw A---, were going to [T--- village] in order to send [money] to a T--- villager, Saw A---’s daughter, who needed 55,000 kyat for giving birth, 8 soldiers from the company led by Saw Tin Win and the company led by Saw Thaw M’Na, which are under the control of Border Guard Battalion #1014, met with them in T--- village, and started questioning them. Eventually, after questioned, [the Border Guard soldiers] accused them of being KNU intelligence; then, [they] pummelled, beat and killed [Saw S---] using sticks and guns. After, Saw S---’s uncle, Saw A---, was pummelled and beaten, [he] was seriously injured.”

Saw N---, male, 23-years-old, M--- village, Pa’an Township, Thaton District
(Received by KHRG on September 23rd 2012)



These photos were received by KHRG on September 25th 2012, and show the two villagers from Pa’an Township, Thaton District who were tortured by Border Guard Battalion #1014 soldiers on June 25th 2012 on suspect of being KNU intelligence. The photo on the left shows 52-year-old Saw R--- after his torture led to his death and, on the right, 67-year old Saw A--- who survived the torture.

Despite the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the Burma government and the KNU in January 2012,² KHRG has continued to receive sporadic reports of incidents in which

² The ceasefire agreement signed between the KNU and RUM officials on January 12th 2012 in Pa’an Town, was an agreement in principle on ‘key points’, to be followed by more in-depth talks after 45 days. Senior KNU officials had since announced that the deadline of 45 days was unlikely to be met; see: “KNU ceasefire meeting with government behind schedule,” Karen News, February 23rd 2012. The second round of ceasefire negotiations began on April 4th 2012, which focused on building trust amongst local actors; see “Second-round KNU peace talks begin,” Mizzima, April 5th 2012. Most recently, on September 4th 2012, a third round of negotiations took place including Naypyidaw representatives in Pa’an Town and the parties signed an agreement over a draft of a ‘code of conduct’, which both government and non-state armed groups are to obey; see “Burmese government, KNU agree to cease-fire code of conduct,” Mizzima, September 5th 2012. Meanwhile, KHRG information received since January 2012 suggests that there have been clashes between government forces and non-state armed groups in Pa’an District in February 2012 and that recent military re-supply operations carried out by Tatmadaw forces have been ongoing across the Karen districts. See “Villagers return home four months after DKBA and Border Guard clash, killing one civilian, injuring two in Pa’an,” KHRG, June 2012. Local media sources have also reported ongoing fighting in Pa’an and Nyaunglebin Districts since January 12th 2012; see: “Killings and attacks between DKBA and BGF drives villagers from their homes,” Karen News, February 24th 2012; “Ceasefires, Continued Attacks and a Friendly Encounter Between Enemies,” Free Burma Rangers, February 3rd 2012. For additional information regarding resupply operations since the January 2012 ceasefire, see “Sustained Tatmadaw resupply operations in Thaton, Nyaunglebin and Papun during ceasefire,” KHRG, May 2012; for information on rations resupply operations in Toungoo District, see “Toungoo Situation Update: Tantabin and Than Daung Townships, November

government and non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have attacked civilians.³ Patterns of abuse documented by KHRG over the last 20 years show a link between increased military activity and increased distrust of civilians and accusation of military connections.⁴

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

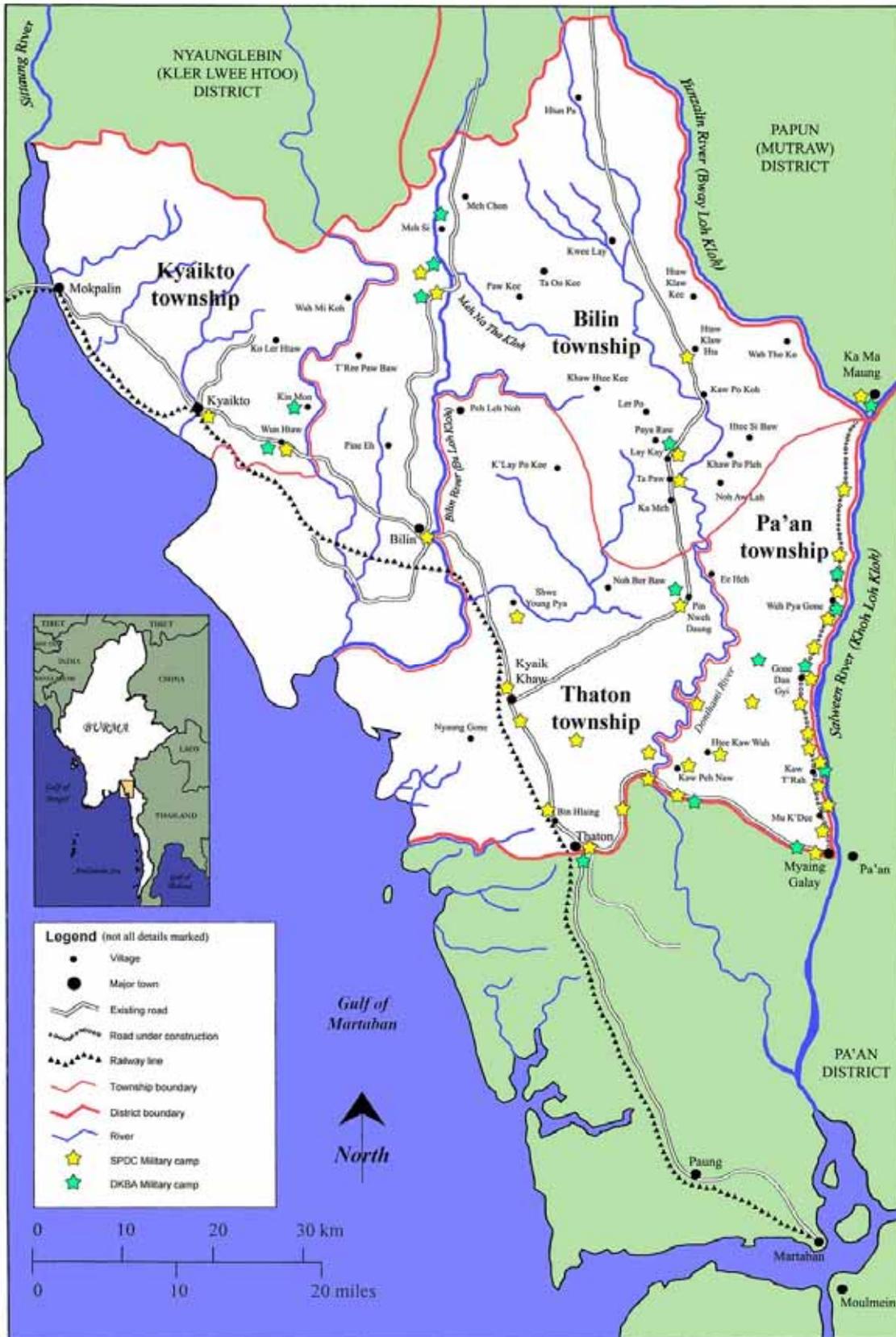
- “Thaton Interview: Saw L---, October 2010,” June 2012
- “Sustained Tatmadaw resupply operations in Thaton, Nyaunglebin and Papun during ceasefire,” KHRG May 2012
- “Forced labour in Bilin Township,” KHRG May 2012
- “Thaton Situation Update: Bilin and Kyaikto Townships, October 2012 to June 2011,” March 2012
- “Thaton Interview Transcript: Saw S---, April 2011,” KHRG March 2012
- “Thaton Interview Transcript: Saw T---, April 2011,” KHRG February 2012

2011 to January 2012,” KHRG, March 2012 and “Tatmadaw soldiers fire at four villagers carrying rice, order forced labour in Toungoo District,” KHRG, July 2012; in Papun District see: “Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, January to March 2012,” KHRG, May 2012 and “Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, received April 2012,” KHRG, June 2012 and “Papun Situation Update: Northern Lu Thaw Township, March to June 2012,” KHRG, September 2012 and “Papun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, February to June 2012,” September 2012.

³ For instance, on June 13th 2012, a villager was shot and killed by Tatmadaw soldiers while he and a group of other villagers were collecting truffles outside of a camp for internally-displaced persons (IDP) in Papun District; see “Villager shot and killed in Papun District,” KHRG, October 2012. In early June 2012, four villagers were shot at, but none were injured, after fleeing a Tatmadaw resupply convoy near an abandoned military base in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District; see “Tatmadaw soldiers fire at four villagers carrying rice, order forced labour in Toungoo District,” KHRG, February 2012.

⁴ For additional KHRG documentation of killing or other abuse of villagers suspected of involvement with the KNU/KNLA, see “Incident Report: Arbitrary detention and violent abuse in Dooplaya District,” December 2011, KHRG, March 2012 and “Incident Report: Dooplaya District, August 2011,” KHRG, March 2012.

Thaton (Doo Tha Htoo) District



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