



News Bulletin

March 25, 2013 / KHRG #2013-B10

Incident Report: Looting in Papun District # 1, May 2012

The following incident report was submitted to KHRG in May 2012 by a community describing an incident that occurred on May 17th 2012, where Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014 soldiers looted livestock and durian from H---, X--- and Y--- villages in Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, Papun District. The report also includes villagers’ opinions on the changing human rights situation, and expresses concern that looting and forced labour demands by armed groups is likely to persist.

Incident report | Bu Tho Township, Papun District (May 2012)

The following incident report was written by a community member trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It is presented below exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including four other incident reports,² one interview and two situation updates.³

Part 1 – Incident(s) detail

Type of Incident	Looting
Date of Incident(s)	May 17 th 2012
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	H--- village, X--- village, Y--- village, Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, Papun District

¹ KHRG incident reports are written or gathered by community member in Papun District who have been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. KHRG trains community member 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, community members 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.

² Two other Incident Reports involve the same victims and Battalion # 1014, and are published as “Incident Report: Looting in Papun District #2, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013, and “Incident Report: Forced Labour in Papun District #1, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013. See also “Border Guard #1014 demands for labour and goods in Papun District, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013.

³ 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, “Border Guard Battalion #1014 forced demands in Papun District,” KHRG, March 2013.

--

Victim Information								
Name	Age	Sex	Nationality	Family	Job	Religion	Position	Village
Saw L---	35	Male	Karen	Married	Farmer	Buddhist	Civilian	H--- village
Saw M-- -	40	Male	Karen	Married	Farmer	Buddhist	Village Leader	X--- village
Saw N---	33	Male	Karen	Married	Farmer	Buddhist	Second Village Leader	Y--- village

Perpetrator				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Saw Nyunt Thein	Commander	Border Guard ⁴ #1014	D--- village, Border Guard Camp	Battalion Commander Maung Chit

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain the specific manner how you collected this information.

During the previous rainy season, I went to [censored for security] and I met with them [the villagers] as usual. When I arrived, and when difficulties [accident] occurred, they wrote to me about the information.⁵

2. Explain how the source verified information accuracy.

In order to make sure whether this information is true or not, we went and compared [the information gathered with] the information that the “mother organization” [Karen National Union (KNU)]⁶ had already reported to the District [office of the KNU]. This information is meaningful and, we can say, and we dare to say, that this information is true.

PART 3 – Incident Details

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please, use the space prepared below and create attach if needed.

⁴ Border Guard battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalized ceasefire agreements with the Burmese government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw. Border Guard battalions are assigned four digit battalion numbers, whereas regular Tatmadaw infantry or light infantry battalions are identified by two or three digit battalion numbers. For more information, see “DKBA officially becomes Border Guard Force” Democratic Voice of Burma, August 2010, and, “Exploitation and recruitment under the DKBA in Pa’an District,” KHRG, June 2009.

⁵ Villagers from H---, X--, and Y--- villages first wrote the information provided in this incident report before giving it to the KHRG community member.

⁶ Because the KNU has been active for many decades, it is common for Karen people to refer to it as the “mother organization,” but this does not necessarily denote the speaker’s actual affiliation with the KNU.

This time, to be able to report, we searched for the civilians' problems, and we discovered a problem that happened on May 17th 2012. The problem was about the actions of Commander Nyunt Thein and his people, the subordinates of the NPD [Nay Pyi Daw] government's Border Guard Military #1014,⁷ [led by] Battalion Commander Maung Chit.⁸ Their activities were different from the others, because they went and looted [things] from civilians.

The information that we are reporting on is about an event that happened on May 17th 2012. The place where the event happened was in H--- village, X--- village and Y--- village. The villages that we are reporting about are in Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, Papun District. The people who created the problem, and who have abused the human rights [of villagers], were Commander Nyunt Thein and his followers, who are the subordinates of the Battalion Commander Maung Chit from the NPD government's Border Guard #1014. Almost all the people who live in Burma experience patterns of bullying, intimidation and torture. Mostly, all of the armed groups often engage in these practices, which were continued by one Burmese [Burma] government after another. Therefore, the group under Commander Saw Nyunt Thein is also engaging in the practice of frightening civilians and looting things from them, time after time; Commander Nyunt Thein and his group are frightening civilians and looting the civilians' things.

On May 17th 2012, Commander Nyunt Thein and his people looted things from the civilians of X---, Y---, and H--- villages; they looted durians and chickens. They demanded six durians and five viss⁹ of chicken from Y--- village. Then, they looted 50 durians from X--- village and 50 durians from H--- village. For the villagers, whether they wanted to give [the things] or not, they had to give [them]. According to the demands from Commander Nyunt Thein, villagers had to go and send the durians to B--- village. Even though they sent the durians, they didn't get any payment for them. We can say that those kinds of human rights abuses could happen continuously in the future. It is not easy for them [soldiers] to change their behaviour and the enthusiasm that they have demonstrated.

These are the human rights abuses that have occurred in the ethnic area. President Thein Sein and the Operations Commander Min Aung Hlaing said that they will eradicate forced labour from the army [Tatmadaw], but I can assume that there is no agreement within the army.¹⁰

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

⁷ KHRG received reports on the activities of Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, which has been active along the border of Papun and Thaton Districts. Battalion #1014 is commanded by Major Maung Chit, which is also sometimes spelled Maw Hsee, whom is allegedly to be a part of an advisory committee that oversaw the 2010 transformation of the DKBA into the BGF, and assumed responsibility for business activities for the group. See "The Situation In Karen State After the Elections," EBO (Euro-Burma Office) Analysis Paper No. 1/2011, April 2011. More recently, on August 5th 2012, the KNLA and BGF #1014 engaged in a firefight in Mae Seik village, Papun Township, despite the terms of the ceasefire. KNLA and Government's Militia Fight – Four Soldiers Killed Karen News, August 7th 2012. For additional articles discussing abuses perpetrated by BGF #1014, see these KHRG reports: "Torture and killing in Thaton District," KHRG, October 2012; "Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, received April 2012," KHRG, June 2012; "Papun Interview: Saw T---, August 2011," KHRG, January 2012; "Thaton Situation Update: June to October 2011," KHRG, November 2011; *All the Information I've Given You, I faced it myself*, KHRG, December 2011, page 14.

⁸ Commander Maung Chit's name is sometimes spelled "Maw Hsee." Commander Maung Chit is not to be confused with Maung Chit Thu, who is a top-tier officer in the Border Guard, while Maung Chit is the commander for Battalion #1014. Maung Chit Thu is part of the intelligence division for the Border Guard and not much is currently known about his actual role in the command structure. In December 2012, KHRG verified that these two names do not refer to the same officer. For more information on Maung Chit Thu's authority, see this KHRG report: "Pa'an Situation Update: June to August 2011," KHRG, October 2011.

⁹ A viss is a unit of weight equivalent to 1.6 kg, or 3.52 lb.

¹⁰ The Burmese government has pledged to the International Labor Organization (ILO) that it will end forced labor in Burma by 2015. These pledges were embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the ILO, signed on March 16th 2012. For more information on the issue of forced labor and Burma's relationship with the ILO, see *Civilian and Military order documents: August 2009 to August 2012*, KHRG, October 2012.

Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.

We can use wherever it is appropriate.

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

- “Border Guard Battalion #1014 demands for labour and goods in Papun District, May 2012,” (March 2013)
- “Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, September to December 2012,” (March 2013)
- “Incident Report: Religious discrimination and restrictions in Papun District, September 2012,” (March 2013)
- “Papun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, July to October,” (February 2013)
- “Papun Situation Update: Lu Thaw Township, March 2012 to November 2012,” (February 2013)
- “Papun Situation Update: DweLoh Township, July to October 2012,” (December 2012)

