



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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BGF Battalion #1014 forced labour and forced recruitment, April to May 2012

This report is based on information submitted by a community member in June 2012 describing events occurring in April and May 2012.¹ The information described the activities of BGF Battalion #1014, which operates along the border of Thaton and Papun districts. According to the community member, the group that is based out of Hpa-an Township, in Thaton District, has committed different abuses against the villagers who are in Hpa-an Township. Between April and May 2012, the Battalion forced local villagers from Meh K'Na Hkee village tract to clear plantation land for two companies, from whom the Battalion officers received money. In Kyon Mon Thweh village tract, villagers were required to serve as soldiers in a local militia.

At the end of April 2012, Tatmadaw Border Guard Force (BGF)² Battalion #1014³ confiscated 500 acres of villagers' land in Meh K'Na Hkee village tract, Hpa-an

¹ 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. This information was provided to KHRG in incident reports that have been summarized here for readability, and the original reports are published as: "Incident Report: Land confiscation and forced labour in Thaton District, April 2012," KHRG, May 2013; "Incident Report: Forced Labour in Thaton District," KHRG, May 2013; "Incident Report: Forced recruitment in Thaton District # 1, May 2012," KHRG, May 2013; and "Incident Report: Forced recruitment in Thaton District # 2, May 2012," KHRG, May 2013.

² Border Guard Force 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.

³ 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 fire fight 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

Township, in Thaton District. Villagers reported that one of the BGF advisers, named U Han Soe, had cooperated with two domestic companies to establish a rubber plantation and a teak plantation on the confiscated land. Villagers told the community member, who prepared the reports, that the company names are Thein Lay Myaing and Shwe Than Lwin. The villagers reported that the BGF accepted bribes from Thein Lay Myaing and Shwe Than Lwin companies. On April 25th 2012, Battalion #1014 required each household in the area to clear the plantation land that the companies owned. That work took the villagers three weeks to complete and no wages were paid. Because of the confiscation, villagers now lack sufficient land to graze their livestock and farm crops. The community member anticipates that the villagers will face food shortages in the coming years.

In Kyon Mon Thweh village tract, the BGF Battalion #1014 Noh Hpoh Moh Camp Commander, Moe Nyo, called a meeting with the village leaders from H---, B---, Y---, X--- and W--- villages on May 29th 2012. At the meeting, Commander Moe Nyo issued an order demanding five civilians from each of villages to be selected to serve as soldiers in a newly formed militia. Those who attended the meeting were required to sign a pledge that they would provide the requested number of civilians. The militia is an anti-insurgency group, called a *Thaung Kyan Thu Sant Kyin Yay A Hpwe*. Although the order for service was compulsory, villagers could avoid it if they paid Battalion #1014 50,000 kyat (US \$58.07)⁴ each month for the expense of hiring a soldier. Villagers reported to the community member that paying this amount is not feasible, and those who wish to avoid service have had no choice but to serve or flee their homes. In the past, when such orders were made, several villagers did in fact flee the area in order to avoid serving in the militia.

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

- “Incident Report: Forced recruitment in Thaton District # 2, May 2012,” KHRG, May 2013.

discussing abuses perpetrated by Border Guard #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,” 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, p. 14.

⁴ As of March 4th 2013, 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.

- “Incident Report: Forced recruitment in Thaton District # 1, May 2012,” KHRG, May 2013
- “Incident Report: Forced Labour in Thaton District,” KHRG, May 2013
- “Incident Report: Land confiscation and forced labour in Thaton District, April 2012,” KHRG, May 2013
- “Torture and killing in Thaton District,” (October 2012)
- “Thaton Interview : Saw L---, October 2010,” (June 2012)