



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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**Incident Report: Religious discrimination and restrictions in  
Papun District, September 2012**

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*The following incident report was written by a community member trained by KHRG to monitor human rights abuses in Dwe Lo Township, Papun District, and is based on an interview with a Muslim villager named Saw W---. Saw W--- is a resident of M--- village, situated 20-minutes on foot from K'Ter Tee village, where the incident happened. In the interview, the villager detailed events taking place around the time of September 10<sup>th</sup> 2012, regarding deterioration in the relationship between Muslim and Buddhist villagers, including a reported attack on a mosque. Further, the community member details the Border Guard Battalion #1013 Company Commander Saw Bah Yoh's issuing of an order prohibiting villagers from buying products from or selling to Muslims and how, after the KHRG community member documented the incident, a Tatmadaw Operations Commander based near K'Ter Tee called a meeting to encourage Buddhist and Muslim villagers to live beside each other peacefully. The community member describes the dissemination of these pamphlets by a monastery to Border Guard soldiers and local monks in K'Ter Tee in a separate situation update, "Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo Townships, September to December 2012," KHRG, March 2013.*

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**Incident report | Dwe Lo Township, Papun District (September 2012)**

*The following incident report 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 four other incident reports, one situation update and 39 photographs.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<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 2013. In the meantime, KHRG's most recently-published field information from Papun District can be found in the report, "Papun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, July to October 2012," KHRG, February 2013.

## Part 1 – Incident(s) detail

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Restrictions placed upon a religious group
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	September 10 <sup>th</sup> 2012
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	K'Ter Tee [village], K'Ter Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Papun District



This photo was taken by a community member on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2012 in M--- village, K'Ter Tee village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Papun district, and shows Saw W--- as he described discrimination towards and restrictions placed upon Muslim villagers in K'Ter Tee.

Name	Age	Sex	Family	Occupation	Religion	Position	Village
Saw W---	46	Male	Yes	Flat field farmer	Muslim	Villager	M--- village

Perpetrator information				
Name	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander
Saw Bah Yoh	Company commander	Border Guard #1013, K'Ter Tee village	K'Ter Tee village, Border Guard army camp	Border Guard #1013, Battalion Commander Saw Hla Kyaing

## Part 2 - Information Quality

### **1. Explain the specific manner in which you collected this information.**

At first, we heard there were problems regarding religion that almost happened in K'Ter Tee village, so we decided to go to K'Ter Tee village. Before we arrived at K'Ter Tee village, we arrived at M--- village first and then, we met with a M--- villager named Saw W--- (a Muslim) and we interviewed him about the problems. The distance between M--- village and K'Ter Tee village is only 20 minutes on foot.

### **2. Explain how the source verified information accuracy.**

It [the interviewee] is Saw W---, a Muslim. [He was interviewed] while he was going to worship on Friday [September 10<sup>th</sup>] at the mosque, which is in K'Ter Tee village. He brought us the papers that were attached to a tree by Border Guard Company Commander Saw Bah Yoh. He himself dares not approach Buddhists.

### **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 an attachment if needed.**

At first, there was news regarding the distribution of a pamphlet, and these pamphlets were spread to many places in Karen State. Later, the pamphlets reached the Border Guard and the Border Guard stuck them up on trees.<sup>3</sup> Related to the distributed pamphlets, the Border Guard made an order that *“No one is allowed to sell food or products to Muslims and no one is allowed to buy from them, and if they do, they will be fined.”*

The people who made the order and stuck the pamphlet to the tree were the company commander Saw Bah Yoh and his Border Guard soldiers. Since then, the Muslims and Buddhists do not dare to continue their relationship anymore. During the night-time, the Buddhists went and destroyed the mosque.<sup>4</sup> This problem almost became a serious problem.

When it was becoming a serious problem, one of the KHRG field researchers [community members from Papun district] arrived at a village near to K'Ter Tee. While documenting the abuses, he met with the Muslim to collect the information. After collecting the information regarding the incident, the researcher encouraged and advised the Muslim in an attempt to avoid further problems. Later, the operations commander from K'Ter Tee Tatmadaw Army Camp found out that KHRG's community member came to K'Ter Tee and already collected the incident, so he gathered all of the K'Ter Tee villagers and set up a meeting in their army camp.

In the meeting, the operations commander [Tatmadaw] told all of the villagers that whether [someone] is Buddhist or Muslim, everyone has to treat each other as they used to treat in the past. They will have to get back their good relationship again and live peacefully together, as before. They also told the villagers not to hate each other.

Since the Tatmadaw told the villagers to live like that, the problem did not continue anymore. This case, that nearly happened in our Karen State, is similar to the case that is happening in Rakhine State.<sup>5</sup>

### **Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details**

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

The villager who provided the information for us has never reported any information to us [before], so he dares not to be interviewed with the audio recording, however, we can use this [written] information as we need.

<sup>3</sup> A separate situation update written by the same community member in Papun District explains that the pamphlets were initially developed during a meeting at Meh Baw Monastery in Hpa-an town on September 10<sup>th</sup> 2012, before being distributed to Border Guard soldiers and local monks in K'Ter Tee village; "Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, September to December 2012," KHRG, March 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Because the community member indicates that the “problem almost happened”, it is likely that the mosque was not destroyed or only partially destroyed; KHRG is currently following-up on this incident and, if additional information is obtained, will publish a report to clarify.

<sup>5</sup> Here the community member is referring to ongoing tension and violence erupting as of June 2012 primarily between Rakhine Buddhist and Rohingya Muslim communities in Rakhine state.

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

- “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: Bu Tho Township, June 2012,” (October 2012)
- “Villager shot and killed in Papun District,” (September 2012)
- “Papun Situation Update Dwe Lo Township, February to June 2012,” (September 2012)

