Hpa-an Short Update: Nabu Township, April to March 2015

This Short Update describes the general situation in Nabu Township, Hpa-an District during the period between April and March 2015, including updates on health and education, as well as improvements to villagers' freedom of movement.

- Since the preliminary ceasefire was signed in 2012, the villagers have been freer to work for their own living, rather than being subjected to forced labour. Villagers have also been able to travel more freely, as the number of landmines being planted in the area has also been decreasing.
- Prior to the preliminary ceasefire, there were only Karen National Union (KNU) funded schools in Nabu Township. Since 2012, the Burma/Myanmar government has opened many of their own schools there, however villagers see this situation as unstable, as the nationwide ceasefire has not been signed yet and it is unclear if students will be able to depend on the Burma/Myanmar government teachers in the long term.

Areas' situation
Thein Sein’s troops [Tatmadaw], KNLA-PC [Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC)], BGF [Border Guard Force], DKBA [Democratic Karen

Thein Sein’s troops are based in T’Nay Hsah and Meh Pleh [villages] and Kaw T’Ree Town. The [Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs)],[^6] which are [battalions] #548, #549 and #547 under the control of MOC [Military Operations Command]^[^7], are based in T’Nay Hsah army camp in Kaw T’Ree [Town]. The name of BGF [Battalion] #1016’s army camp is K’Lah Kon; it is based in Hser Boh Kon Loh Baw village tract. The BGF [Battalion] #1020 is based in Maw Naw Koo [village] and BGF [Battalion] #1019 is [based in] Hpah Kloo village tract. DKBA’s troops are based in Kaw T’Ree [Town] and Myawaddy areas.

**Villagers’ situation**
Since the KNU and Thein Sein’s [Burma/Myanmar] government signed the ceasefire agreement,[^8] the villagers are a bit freer to work on farms and cultigations and can travel a bit more freely. The forced labour [incidents] and the dangerous [planting of] landmines have been diminishing.

**Education**
In terms of education in T’Nay Hsah [Nabu] Township, the situation of schools [is that they are] still running the same as before Thein Sein’s [Burma/Myanmar] government and the KNU [had signed the ceasefire agreement]. Some KNU schools, KNU-PC [KNU/KNLA-PC] schools, and many Thein Sein [Burma/Myanmar government] government schools are located there. The KNU and Thein Sein [Burma/Myanmar government] have not finished their [nationwide ceasefire] discussions yet, therefore the situation of the schools is not stable. [In the past there were only KNU schools, but after the ceasefire has taken place, the schools which are funded by the Thein Sein’s government are also based in there],[^9] therefore the situation of the schools is not stable because some teachers are from the KNU and some teachers are from the [Burma/Myanmar] government.

**Healthcare**

[^5]: The Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), formerly the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, was formed in December 1994 and was originally a breakaway group from the KNU/KNLA that signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burma/Myanmar government and directly cooperated at times with Tatmadaw forces. The formation of the DKBA was led by monk U Thuzana with the help and support of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the name of the military government in Burma/Myanmar at that time. For more information on the formation of the DKBA, see "Inside the DKBA," KHRG, 1996. The DKBA now refers to a splinter group from those DKBA forces reformed as Tatmadaw Border Guard Forces, also remaining independent of the KNLA. As of April 2012, the DKBA changed its name from "Buddhist" to "Benevolent" to reflect its secularity.

[^6]: Light Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Primarily for offensive operations but sometimes used for garrison duties.

[^7]: Military Operations Command. Composed of ten battalions for offensive operations. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs), made up of three battalions each.

[^8]: On January 12th 2012, a preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. Negotiations for a longer-term peace plan are still under way. For updates on the peace process, see the KNU Stakeholder webpage on the Myanmar Peace Monitor website. For KHRG's analysis of changes in human rights conditions since the ceasefire, see Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response since the 2012 ceasefire, KHRG, May 2014. In March 2015, the seventh round of the negotiations for a national ceasefire between the Burma/Myanmar government and various ethnic armed actors have begun in Yangon, see "Seventh Round of Nationwide Ceasefire Negotiations," Karen National Union Headquarters, March 18th 2015. Following the negotiations, the KNU held a central standing committee emergency, see "KNU: Emergency Meeting Called To Discuss Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement And Ethnic Leaders’ Summit," Karen News, April 22nd 2015.

[^9]: This information was obtained from local KHRG staff when following up on this Situation Update.
As for healthcare in T’Nay Hsah [Nabu Township], the sicknesses that the villagers [have experienced] there are only fever and malaria. If they get a serious disease they have to go to the hospital in Kaw T’Ree, Kruh Tu or Hpa-an [towns].

There are nine armed groups in T’Nay Hsah [Nabu] Township, Hpa-an District. They have no special activities. I will gradually let KHRG know if they [start] having special activities.

Further background reading on the situation in Hpa-an District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- “Fighting between Tatmadaw and DKBA soldiers along the Asian Highway displaces villagers in Dooplaya District, July 2015,” (September 2015)
- “Hpa-an Situation Update: Paingkyon Township, June to October 2014,” (August 2015)