



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Complaint Letter

June 25, 2014 / KHRG #12-79-CL4

**Complaint Letter to the Mergui-Tavoy District
administrator concerning land damage from mining**

The Complaint Letter below was written by a villager from Kyauk Me Taung village tract and sent to the Myanmar Pongpipat Company Limited (MPC) and the Mergui-Tavoy District administrator, as well as other local offices. Ma A--- explains that, in 2004, the MPC's mining project led to the flooding of her father's agricultural land and destruction of crops, for which her family was compensated. The letter explains, however, that the flooding expanded beyond the original area, causing additional damage for which the family was not compensated. Consequently, Ma A--- has been unable to send her children to school due to the loss of income. This Complaint Letter was initially published in May 2014 in the Appendix of KHRG's in-depth report, [Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire](#).

**Complaint Letter | Ler Doh Soh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
(March 2012)¹**

To: Administrator
Myitta sub-Township
Dawei District²

Date: March 1st 2012

I, Ma A---, am 38 years old [and I] live in B--- village, Kyauk Me Taung village tract, Myitta sub-Township, Mergui-Tavoy District, Tanintharyi Region. [In 2004], the Myanmar Pongpipat Company Limited (MPC) obstructed the water [lake] to [enable them to] mine for metal in the agricultural land that is owned by my father U C---. [As a consequence of the obstruction], the water rose and the plants were destroyed.

Regarding the damage mentioned above, if [we] see [remember] the damage of the plantations in 2004, [they] paid 500,000 kyat (US \$506.58)³ [as compensation]. However, because the water continued to rise more and more, [the area containing] 200

¹ This Complaint Letter was submitted to KHRG in June 2012 and is presented here, translated into English exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security. It was received along with eight interviews and 429 photographs.

² The villager is referring to Mergui-Tavoy District in the locally-defined Karen districts map. Tavoy and Dawei refer to the same place in Karen and Burmese, respectively.

³ As of January 13th 2013, all conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 987 kyat to the US \$1.

cashew plants, over 1,000 big and small areca palms, lime trees, mango trees, coconut trees and papaya trees flooded again.

As a consequence of this damage, I could not afford to continue sending my children to school, so they lost their education. Therefore, I am reporting this to the relevant [people, asking them] to provide assistance, as it is necessary.

With respect,
The person who reports,
Sd.
Ma A---

[Identification number censored for security] / Ta Wa Na (Naing) 1093708

Copy

- District governor office;
- No.2 Strategic Operations Commander office;
- Local news group;
- Local military security group;
- Myanmar Pongpipat Company Limited (MPC);
- Village governor office;
- Kyuak Me Taung police station;
- Karen ethnic minister office.

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

- “Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: K’Ser Doh Township, 2013,” (June 2014)
- “Mergui-Tavoy Incident Report: Tatmadaw tortures villager and demands forced labour in Ler Muh Lah Township, 2002-2011,” (May 2014)
- *Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire*, (May 2014)
- “Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Te Naw Th’Ri Township, August 2012 to March 2013,” (August 2013)
- *Losing Ground: Land conflicts and collective action in eastern Myanmar*, (March 2013)

