



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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## **Rape and sexual harassment in Hpapun District, June and August 2013**

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*This News Bulletin describes rapes committed by a Tatmadaw Border Guard Force (BGF) soldier and a Burma Government Hpapun Agriculture Department employee in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District in June and August 2013. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, Hpapun Agriculture Department staff member Ko Ah Ei raped a 25-year-old woman while she went to use a village water pump near his house. Two months later, on August 21<sup>st</sup> 2013, BGF #1014 Sergeant Saw Dah Tu and his soldiers came to D--- village and stayed at Ma S---'s house, and Saw Dah Tu sexually harassed her that night. The next morning her mother met with Saw Dah Tu's commander and discussed her daughter's case. Afterward the incidents, Ma L--- was paid 300,000 kyat and Ma S--- received 200,000 kyat as compensation. In both cases, villagers say the compensation was insufficient.<sup>1</sup>*

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Villagers reported two cases of sexual harassment to KHRG that occurred in Hpapun District and were committed by different actors in the summer of 2013. The first incident was a rape committed by a staff member of the Burma Government Hpapun Agriculture Department, Ko Ah Ei, also known as Ko Ja Ei, and a case of forceful kissing was committed by Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014 Sergeant Saw Dah Tu. In each case, villagers say insufficient compensation was given to the victims.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, 25-year-old M--- villager Ma L--- went to Ko Ah Ei's house close to the village water pump to take a shower and wash her clothes. U Ah Ei, a 31-year-old employee of the Burma Government Hpapun Agriculture Department, was home alone at the time. Ko Ah Ei took advantage of this and raped Ma L--- in his house. Ko Ah Ei has a reputation for frequent drinking and gambling, and he is the son of Hpapun Agriculture Department Administrator U Htun Hla Shwe. He has four siblings, and one older brother works as a captain for the Burma Government and another is a police officer. Because of the crime he committed, Ko Ah Ei is kept in the Hpapun Town jail. His father paid Ma L--- 300,000 kyat (US \$308.25)<sup>2</sup> and Ko Ah Ei remains in jail.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This News Bulletin was written by KHRG office staff and is based on information from a community member from Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It summarizes information from three incident reports, one situation update and one interview received by KHRG in October 2013. 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. For additional reports categorized by Type, Issue, Location and Year, please see the Related Readings component following each report on KHRG's redesigned Website.

<sup>2</sup> As of November 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, all conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 977 kyat to the US \$1.

<sup>3</sup> This information was included in an interview received by KHRG in February 2013 from a KHRG community member from Hpapun District.

Likewise, on the afternoon of August 21<sup>st</sup> 2013, BGF Battalion #1014 Sergeant Saw Dah Tu and his soldiers came to D--- village with the intent of attacking KNLA soldiers in retaliation for several injuries suffered by BGF soldiers in a skirmish with KNLA forces in Weh Gyi two days prior. When they arrived in D--- village, they stayed at Ma S---'s house. According to Ma S---, that night, Saw Dah Tu became intoxicated and went into Ma S---'s room, where he forcefully kissed her without her permission. After learning of this, Ma S---'s mother, Ma P---, went to Saw Dah Tu's commander, BGF #1014 Officer Saw Tin Win, and talked to him about what Saw Dah Tu had done to her daughter. Ma P--- said, *"When the incident happened, I was home actually, but I didn't know that. When I found out about it from my daughter I was very angry, so I went to meet with the commander of the perpetrator. The commander also promised me that he will not let something like this happen again in the future."* Officer Tin Win compensated Ma S--- with 200,000 kyat (US \$205.50) after the meeting.<sup>4</sup>

The victim's mother reported that her daughter, Ma S---, is to be hospitalized in Myaing Gyi Ngu hospital due to trauma from the incident. The victim was reportedly questioned several times by BGF and KNLA authorities following the incident. The community member also explained that Ma S--- is afraid to report the incident to local authorities because she is unsure of the consequences of such action. Given the amount of compensation given to Ma S---'s family by Saw Dah Tu and the trauma she suffered, there is some indication that the incident could have been more severe than reported by Ma S---.

Further background reading on the situation in Hpapun District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- "Mining development damages farms and irrigation infrastructure in Papun District," (August 2013)
- "Incident Report: BGF #1014 Corporal Maw Nay Say violent abuse and extortion of villager in Papun District, November 2012," (August 2013)
- "Violent abuse and forced labour in Bu Tho Township, November and December," (July 2013)
- "Papun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, March 2012 to March 2013," (July 2013)
- "BGF and KNLA grenades injure villagers and their children in Papun District," (July 2013)

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<sup>4</sup> This information was included in an interview received by KHRG in February 2013 from a KHRG community member from Hpapun District.

**LU THAW TOWNSHIP, PAPUN DISTRICT**  
**Map by KHRG (Karen Human Rights Group)**

