



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

July 31, 2014 / KHRG #13-49-I1

Hpapun Incident Report: Destruction of paddy nursery field in Dwe Lo Township, November 2012

This Incident Report describes the destruction of farm land caused by a local gold mining project in K--- village, Meh Hkyoh village tract, Hpapun District. Saw A---'s paddy nursery field was destroyed by the construction of an access road to the gold mine through his field. This has adversely affected Saw A---'s livelihood, as he must find and clear a new field in order to continue farming. Furthermore, he describes the negative impact on the environment and surrounding wildlife, as well as the subsequent strain this puts on his fellow villagers.

Incident Report | Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (November 2012)

The following Incident Report was written by a community member who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights abuses in Dwe Lo Township. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This report was received in May 2013 along with other information from Hpapun District, including two other incident reports, one situation update and 88 photographs.²

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Paddy nursery field destroyed
Date of Incident(s)	November 10 th 2012

¹ KHRG trains community members 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.

² 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 categorised by Type, Issue, Location and Year, please see the Related Readings component following each report on KHRG's Website.

Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	K--- village, Meh Hkyoh village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District
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Victim Information	
Name	Saw A---
Age	62
Sex	Male
Nationality	Karen
Family	Married
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager
Village	K--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Dah Muh	Leader of women's organisation		Kwee T'Ma village	Wealthy individuals from the town
Hpaw Nay Thah Moh	SPDC [Burma government] ³ Chairman		Waw Muh village	

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.
On November 10 th 2012, a gold mining project was implemented and the people who work as brokers [between businessmen and the villagers] are Dah Muh and Hpaw Nay Thah Moh. They requested that the [local] Karen leaders give them permission to conduct a gold mining [project] and they constructed a vehicle road through my [paddy] nursery field. Therefore, in the rainy season [when I work on my fields], I cannot work on the same nursery field. As I am too old, I cannot prepare a new nursery field. This causes difficulties [for me].

2. Explain how the source verified this information.
Regarding this case, the nursery field is my own nursery field which was destroyed because of the construction of a new road and this is a true case.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

³ In Karen, the Burmese phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) is commonly used to refer to the Burma government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) continue to use that phrase, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011; see: "[Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'](#)," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011.

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.

[The following is an account of the incident in the words of Saw A---]:

"I live in K--- village and my name is Saw A---. I have been living in K--- since I was a child. I am a farmer and I have worked on this paddy nursery field every year. This year, there is a gold mining [project in the area] and they constructed a road [to facilitate access to it]. My nursery field was destroyed so I cannot scatter seeds and have to face very big difficulties. On November 10th 2012, Naw Dah Muh and Hpaw Nay Thah Moh requested permission from the [local] Karen leaders to mine for gold. On the [same] day they received permission and they constructed a vehicle road in order to transport materials [to the mining project]. They constructed a road in Meh Hkyoh village tract, K--- village that ran through my paddy nursery field, which destroyed my field. Now, because the nursery field was destroyed, I do not have a nursery field [anymore]. In order to create this paddy nursery field, I had to dig out the trees [as the land was overgrown]. I had to work very hard for three or four years and it [eventually] became a paddy nursery field. Now, it has just been destroyed and I am very upset. In the coming year, in order to sow paddy [seeds], I have to find a new place for a paddy nursery field and it will be very difficult for me. If I look at [think about] the gold mining [project], I am not the only person who has had to suffer. The people from my surrounding area also might have suffered a lot. For some people, their sluices are being destroyed. Some of the people's lands are being destroyed, and for some people, their crops are being destroyed. Moreover, the natural environment, trees, bamboo and the rivers and streams are also being destroyed. The animals, [such as buffalos, cows and fish], have to drink murky water and it causes them illness and death. If we look at the gold mining [project], the rich people and the brokers work on it and there is no benefit for the local people. It only benefits those individual people. I think the Karen leaders might have thought that this gold mining would benefit the civilians and opened [gave permission for] gold mining, but because there is no benefit for the civilians, I think they should stop it. Finally, I will just say this: if the Karen leaders forbid gold mining, I will be very happy and also the civilians will be very happy."

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

If you use the information and the issue is resolved such that there is no gold mining, I will be satisfied.

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

- “Tatmadaw mortar shelling and other military activities in Hpapun and Toungoo Districts, December 2012,” (July 2014)
- “Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, February 2013,” (July 2014)
- “Coercive land appropriation and KNLA landmine incident surrounds construction of a BGF army base in Hpapun District,” (July 2014)
- “Hpapun Short Update: Ongoing militarisation and displacement in Lu Thaw Township,” (July 2014)
- “Chapter: The impact of anti-personnel and other mines in Southeast Myanmar since the January 2012 ceasefire,” (July 2014)

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