



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**Situation Update**

June 27, 2014 / KHRG #13-6-S1

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## **Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho, Lu Thaw and Dwe Lo townships, January 2013**

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*This Situation Update describes events occurring in Bu Tho, Lu Thaw and Dwe Lo townships, Hpapun District during January 2013. It includes the villagers' views on the ceasefire and the activities of the Tatmadaw in the area.*

- *The Tatmadaw continues to militarise in the area, including building roads, repairing their military camps and sending food rations and supplies.*
- *Due to the Tatmadaw's ongoing activities, villagers report feeling sceptical about the ceasefire and their continued safety.*

*This Situation Update 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.](#)*

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### **Situation Update | Bu Tho, Lu Thaw and Dwe Lo townships, Hpapun District (January 2013)**

*The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in January 2013. It was written by a community member in Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It 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 152 photographs.<sup>2</sup>*

January 18<sup>th</sup> 2013

To:  
The Director  
Karen Human Rights Group  
Headquarters

Subject: The Tatmadaw's activities in Mu Traw [Hpapun] District and the situation of the civilians

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG trains community members in eastern Burma to document individual human rights abuses 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 situation updates, community members are encouraged to summarise recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area.

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

As mentioned above, now I want to report on the situation in Mu Traw District and the activities of the [Tatmadaw] after the 2012 ceasefire<sup>3</sup> and [provide] a situation update on the civilians, as mentioned below.

Saw W---  
Karen Human Rights Group  
Mu Traw District

## Introduction

If we look back to our Mu Traw District, there are three townships in our district. They are Bu Tho, Lu Thaw and Dwe Lo [townships]. The Tatmadaw set up their camps in the three townships of Mu Traw District. After the ceasefire, they took the opportunity and rebuilt their camps and sent more food and more bullets to their camps. Moreover, they sent food and soldiers to the camps by boats on the Salween River. So, [we villagers feel that] the Tatmadaw is taking the opportunity during the ceasefire and preparing themselves for the future in order to eliminate the Karen.

## Situation of civilians

There are two types of civilians in Mu Traw District. The first type of civilians do not show themselves [hide] from the Tatmadaw and the second type show themselves to the Tatmadaw. When we look back, they [both types] have the same life and suffer [the same abuses from Tatmadaw]. The civilians can work and travel a bit more freely after the ceasefire. But, they believe that the ceasefire is not a stable process for them because the Tatmadaw are rebuilding their camps and sending more food to their camps during the ceasefire, so it does not satisfy them [the villagers]. They always have to worry. They also are faced with land confiscation and extortion by the Tatmadaw after the ceasefire. Instead of removing their camps, the Tatmadaw came back and rebuilt their camps in the mountains and they are close to the working areas of the villagers, who do not show themselves to the Tatmadaw. As such, Ler Mu Plaw, Hsaw Muh Pleh army camp, Taw Thoo Plaw Plah Hkoh army camp, Plah Gaw Plaw Paw Lay Hkoh army camp and Khoh Daw Hkoh army camp are very close to the fields of the villagers and the villagers do not dare to go to the fields. More than that, the Tatmadaw use some of the villagers from Nyaunglebin [District] to come and buy marijuana [for them]. They ask the villagers from Mu Traw District to grow marijuana. So, the villagers grow marijuana and they were paid 50,000 kyat (US \$51.37)<sup>4</sup> for one viss (1.6 kg. / 3.52 lb.). They sell the marijuana in two places. One place is in Ta Kaw Hta and the other place is in Nyaunglebin District, Mone Township. The Tatmadaw are also trying to find ways to make Mu Traw District become a place of drugs. Moreover, they also import drugs, such as *yaba*<sup>5</sup> to Ta Kaw Hta.

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<sup>3</sup> On January 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, a preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and Burma government in Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin State. The exact terms for a long-term peace plan are still under negotiation. 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.

<sup>4</sup> As of January 18<sup>th</sup> 2014, all conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 973 kyat to the US \$1.

<sup>5</sup> *Yaba*, which means "crazy medicine" in Thai, is a tablet form of methamphetamine. First developed in East Asia during World War II to enhance soldiers' performance, methamphetamine has become increasingly popular in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia Vietnam, and in Burma where it is typically manufactured. See, "[Yaba, the 'crazy medicine of East Asia'](#)," UNODC, May 2008; "[Woman raped and killed in Pa'an District, October 2012](#)," KHRG, December 2012; and "Drug Production, use and social

## The situation and activities of the Tatmadaw

The Tatmadaw started to rebuild the roads, improve their camps and send more food to the camps after the ceasefire. On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, they dug and extended the road to reach to Hplah Hkoh army camp. Moreover, a helicopter landed in the Teh Baw Plaw area, Toe Thoo Mweh Plaw at 9:40 am and another helicopter with food landed on Say Day Mountain at 11:50 am. Also, if we look at Lu Thaw Township, the activities of the Tatmadaw are not decreasing yet. On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, a Tatmadaw helicopter landed on Hplah Ghaw at 9:30 am and left materials and then went to Saw Hta army camp and then came back at 1:30 pm and sent material to camps such as Maw Htoo army camp, Kyuh Lu army camp, Ler Klay Kyoh army camp and then landed on Hplah Hkoh army camp. Furthermore, on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, at 9:40 am, a Tatmadaw helicopter landed at Kaw Daw Hko army camp for 30 minutes. The building of the road also reached to Khaw Daw Hkoh army camp. On December 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, the Tatmadaw sent food to Kay Kaw army camp in Dwe Lo Township area. The list of foods are: 407 sacks of rice, two sacks of yellow beans, 12 sacks of salt, 23 tins of cooking oil, two sacks of shrimp paste, three sacks of sugar, one sack of tea, 12 packs of milk, two packs of beef cans, one pack of dry bamboo shoots, one pack of vegetables and six packs of alcohol.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, some of the Tatmadaw leaders came to Hpapun, two of who were Nay Pyi Taw's Prime Minister and a Kayin State Chief Minister.<sup>6</sup> The headquarters commander of the South East Regional Military Command Headquarters departed together from Hpapun with his comrades.

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

- "Hpapun Incident Report: Restriction of movement in Dwe Lo Township, December 2013," (June 2014)
- "Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, November 2012," (June 2014)
- "Hpapun Photo Set: BGF Battalion #1013 land confiscation for army base in Dwe Lo Township, June 2012 to November 2013," (June 2014)
- "Hpapun Incident Report: Home guard killed by Tatmadaw landmine in Lu Thaw Township, January 2014," (June 2014)
- "Chapter: Drug production, use and the social impacts in Southeast Myanmar since the January 2012 ceasefire," (June 2014)

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impacts," in [\*Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire, KHRG, May 2014.\*](#)

<sup>6</sup> Though the researcher states that the Prime Minister of Myanmar and the Kayin State Chief Minister are leaders of the Tatmadaw, they are not.

