



Situation Update

February 27, 2013 / KHRG Log #13-91-S1

Dooplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik Township, May to August 2013

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District during the period between May and August 2013, including theft of villagers' livestock, negative consequences of a development project and the impacts of a natural disaster.

- *Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division (LID) #231 soldiers killed and ate three villagers' buffalos between May and August 2013. One villager responded by reporting the incident to his village head, but was unable to identify the responsible soldiers when asked.*
- *A domestic company hired by the Burma government repaired a road in Kawkareik Township, which led to the destruction of villagers' canals used for irrigating their plantations.*
- *A natural disaster damaged villagers' lands and caused the loss of homes and livelihood problems.*

Situation Update | Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (May to August 2013)

The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in October 2013. It was written by a community member in Dooplaya 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.¹ This report was received along with other information from Dooplaya District, including 178 photographs and 161 video clips.²

This situation update is about the situation in Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District. This situation update documents the abuses that happened from May to August 2013. The abuses included in this update are: the Light Infantry Division [LID] #231, which is currently based in the army camp close to the village, abused the villagers' rights. Also, the flooding created livelihood problems for the villagers and the development project of the Burma government has caused damage to the villagers' land.

¹ 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.

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

Military activity

The Burmese military battalion that is currently based in Kaw T'Ree Township is LID #231. They have started to move here since the beginning of 2013 and base their army camp on the top of L---'s mountain, on the western part of Meh K'Lah River. Some of their battalion rotates every three months and some rotate every six months. Each battalion that rotates has a different kind of behavior. The army camps that they rotate [soldiers from] are: Th'Waw Thaw army camp, Choo K'Lay army camp, Maw Too army camp, Oo Kree Hta army camp, Waw Lay army camp, Maw Hkee army camp and Htee K'Pler army camp. They rotate [soldiers] every three months between these army camps. If they want to rotate to other battalions, they would rotate every six months. LID #231 is an armed group based there [L--- camp] and the patrolling battalion is Infantry Battalion [IB] #32.

The Tatmadaw, who came and are based in Th'Waw Thaw, started to transport their equipment such as barbed wire and cement to repair their army camp in May 2013. While they were sending their equipment, they used L--- villagers' trucks. They only paid for the petrol. Now, they have already repaired their army camp.

On May 10th 2013, the LID #231, which is based in L--- village, shot and ate Saw P---'s buffalo. Saw P--- is a L--- villager and he is 27 years old. While P--- was searching for his buffalo, he only saw the footprints of the Tatmadaw and the place where they killed and ate his buffalo. He saw the pieces of the Tatmadaw's clothes that were left over and their boot prints. He did not see the soldiers. Saw P--- grazes his buffalo on the mountain of western L--- village. On May 10th 2013, he was searching for his buffalo and found the place where the Tatmadaw killed and ate his buffalo.

Again on July 20th 2013, the same battalion of the Tatmadaw killed the buffalo of 44 year-old L--- villager, Saw M---. Saw M--- also only found the place where they killed the buffalo. Saw M--- grazes his buffalo at western L--- village, the old road that leads to Show Hta village and the Tatmadaw killed his buffalo on the mountain between L--- village and Show Hta village.

On August 5th 2013, they again killed the buffalo of 40 year-old L--- villager, Saw K---. While Saw K--- was searching for his buffalo, LID# 231 soldiers were already grilling its meat. Saw K--- told the village head about it and the village head informed Battalion #231's Battalion Commander Zaw Min Aung about it. However, the commander replied to the village head that it was not his soldier and he also said that if the villager alleged that it was his soldier, the villager would have to point out which one of the soldiers specifically. The villager did not dare go closer once he saw the Tatmadaw [soldiers] had killed and were eating his buffalo, so he did not know which soldiers did it.

L--- villagers graze their buffalo at the western part of the village because in the eastern part, there are landmines. Another reason is that they worry that the buffalo will eat their paddy, since it is presently the time to plant paddy. Therefore, they graze their buffalo in the forest and they go and check it often. The Tatmadaw [soldiers] were not searching for wild animals, [they] just killed the villagers' animals. Some of the Tatmadaw will buy pig, chicken and canned fish when they want to eat it. We also do not have [any] other kinds of meat.

The Burmese government repairs the road, which impacts the villagers' livelihood.

In 2012, after the ceasefire talk, the Burma government started to repair the vehicle road between Choo K'Lay village and Rah Ma Tee village in Kawkareik Township. In 2013,

the Burma government made a plan to develop or repair the vehicle roads and bridge between Choo K' Lay and Rah Ma Tee and they gave the responsibility to the companies. But the companies do not know anything. Starting in 2013, between Choo K' Lay and Rah Ma Tee village, they have completely built five bridges already now. The first bridge was built in the middle of Choo K' Lay village to cross over the Choo K' Lay Stream. The second bridge was built in the corner of the Choo K' Lay village. The third bridge was built in Maw K' Noo Hkee village and it crosses over Maw K' Noo Hkee Stream. The forth bridge was built in Kwee Tah Auh village and it crosses over Meh K' Lah Stream. However, this bridge is not completely built yet. They still have to construct the end part of the bridge to make the cars run easier. The fifth bridge is built in Kwee Ta Hoh village and it cross over Maw Ler Stream. These five bridges are located between Choo K' Lee and Oo Kree Hta village. There is also bridge construction happening in the lower part of Oo Kree Hta but we are not sure about how many bridges have been completely built in the area.

Moreover, there are also small bridges that cross over the gullies. However, in August 2013, there were also many vehicle roads and small bridges that were destroyed by the flooding between L--- village and Maw K' Noo Hkee village. After the canals were destroyed, the company builders repaired the roads and blocked the water so L--- villager, Saw W--- and his brother Saw N---, do not get water anymore so they cannot work on their flat fields. Saw W--- gets 200 big tins³ (2,090 kg. / 4,608 lb.) of rice from his flat field every year. For Saw N---'s flat field, he gets 400 baskets⁴ (8,360 kg / 18,432 lb.) every year. These two villagers went and told the village head and the village head went and told the builders about it. The builders agreed to repair their canal. However, they still have not repaired the canal yet. These two villagers have already ploughed and planted the paddy but until now their canals have not been repaired so they cannot work on their flat fields anymore. Both of them have big families so if they do not get to work on their flat fields, they will be faced with a food problem in the coming year.

The villagers facing natural disaster

In 2013, the citizens living in Dooplaya District faced a natural disaster so it has become the biggest problem for them. Starting from the middle of July, there was heavy rain and there was flooding and it damaged the villagers' livelihood, such as flat fields, plantation fields, hill fields, houses, shops and vehicle roads.

After the flooding, the Ranger organization [Free Burma Rangers (FBR)] came and provided support such as pots, plates, spoons, blankets, clothes and mats. After that, the main food such as rice was provided to the villagers who lost their food and farms.

During the raining season in 2013, there was a big flood so the villagers lost many of their properties. There are some supports from the organization but it is not enough for many months. The Government staff in the area did not help the villagers with anything. The villagers who lost their homes have not built their new homes yet. They just built the small tents with bamboo to live in temporarily because they have problems finding thatch to roof their houses. During 2013, there will be some of the villagers who are facing food problems and some will have to face shelter problems.

³ A big tin is a unit of volume used to measure paddy, milled rice and seeds. One big tin is equivalent to 10.45 kg. or 23.04 lb. of paddy, and 16 kg. or 35.2 lb. of milled rice.

⁴ A basket is a unit of volume used to measure paddy, milled rice and seeds. One basket is equivalent to 20.9 kg. or 46.08 lb. of paddy, and 32 kg. or 70.4 lb. of milled rice. A basket is twice the volume of a big tin.

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

- “Tatmadaw soldiers pilfer villagers’ livestock in Dooplaya District, May to August 2013,” (November 2013)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyone Doh Township, July to November 2012,” (June 2013)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kya In Seik Kyi Township, September 2012,” (June 2013)
- *Losing Ground: Land conflicts and collective action in eastern Myanmar*, (March 2013)
- “Shooting in Dooplaya District,” (November 2012)

