



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

July 3, 2014 / KHRG #14-14-D2

Hpapun Short Update: Ongoing militarisation and displacement in Lu Thaw Township, December 2013

This Short Update describes the ongoing displacement of villagers from B--- village due to Tatmadaw presence and militarisation in the area as of December 2013. Villagers report that nearby Tatmadaw soldiers continue to improve their base and send food rations. Consequently, villagers feel unsafe and are unwilling to return to B--- village. Currently, villagers face difficulty sustaining their livelihoods, as there is a lack of suitable land to grow crops at their current displacement location. In response, villagers have begun to work as daily wage labourers. Additionally, the villagers have each received three months of food assistance from the Karen Office for Relief and Development (KORD). A previously published KHRG report includes excerpts of complaint letters from villagers in Lu Thaw Township describing these problems in their own words: "[Ongoing militarisation prevents Lu Thu Townships IDPs from returning home.](#)"

Short Update | Lu Thaw Township, Hpapun District (December 2013)

The following Short Update was received by KHRG in March 2014. 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.¹ This report was received along with other information from Hpapun District, including five incident reports, four interviews, one situation update, 86 photographs and three video clips.²

On December 22nd 2013, I met with B--- village head, Saw D---, and vice village head, Saw F---, at the displacement area C---. They mentioned that B--- village is separated into two parts because of the Tatmadaw vehicle road. On the other side of the road, there are [number censored for security] households and there are about 50 people [who still live there]. Villagers [in the displacement area] do not have enough [rice] paddies, as there are not enough hill fields in the displacement area for them to grow crops. The ones [paddies] they do have are not in good production. This year, KORD [Karen Office for Relief and Development] has helped them with food for three months for each person, which is a relief for them. This aid is only to assist people because of insufficient

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

food [supplies], not as emergency aid. If we have to look at the situation, there are many people [here] who face insufficient food problems. However, villagers themselves have to find ways and hire themselves out as daily wage labourers for their daily food. They dare not to go back and stay in their own place [B--- village] yet. Tatmadaw are still based in the area and are improving their camp and sending more rations and food supplies.

The villagers who provided this information know about ongoing displacement because they have suffered it, as they were there when it happened. The villagers gave us permission to use this information so that the leaders from both the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Burma government will know of their situation, and that other places [in the country] and foreign countries will also know and find ways in order for them to be able to go back and live in their own places peacefully.

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

- “Chapter: The impact on anti-personnel and other mines in Southeast Myanmar since the January 2012 ceasefire,” (July 2014)
- “Hpapun District Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, January to February 2013,” (July 2014)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho, Lu Thaw and Dwe Lo townships, January 2013,” (June 2014)
- “Hatgyi Dam update and consultation concerns, December 2011 to May 2013,” (June 2014)
- “Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, November 2012,” (June 2014)

