



# Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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## **Situation Update**

July 8, 2014 / KHRG #14-19-S1

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## **Doooplaya Situation Update: Win Yaw Township, November to December 2013**

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*This Situation Update covers November to December 2013, and describes broad concerns held by villagers in Win Yaw Township regarding education, obstacles in access to healthcare, inequality and social division among local communities. The report also describes the destruction of plantations as a result of infrastructure development projects, and uncertainties over the process of the current ceasefire negotiations. According to the KHRG community member, the provision of adequate healthcare, education and a stable economy will lead to improved social harmony, and the authority with the ability to provide such conditions will gain the allegiance of the people.*

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## **Situation Update | Win Yaw Township, Doooplaya District (November to December 2013)**

*The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in March 2014. It was written by a community member in Doooplaya 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>*

### **Karen Human Right Group**

Win Yaw Township, Doooplaya District  
From November to December 2013

### **Introduction**

The situation which I have seen in Win Yaw Township, Doooplaya District [relates to] education, healthcare, social issues, the civilian situation, the Tatmadaw and the Karen National Union (KNU).

#### **1) Education**

I have seen the education situation of the civilians. I have also heard the feelings of the civilians. They want the Karen national literature to be learned. They also need teachers because only 30% of villages have a good level of development and the rest are faced with difficult circumstances. The number of villages that have to face difficult conditions

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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.

is greater than the number of developed villages; there are a lot of students and there is only one teacher in some villages. In conversations with school committees, they said that they want the basic Karen literature to be learned even if we [the students] do not have a chance to learn all of it.

## **2) Health**

Regarding the difficulties with the health situation, the civilians report that they want healthcare workers from the Karen Nation Union (KNU) to travel [to their villages] and provide medical treatment during the ceasefire,<sup>2</sup> because despite the fact that many [construction] companies enter [into the area to build clinics], they do not visit the poorer [more remote] villages. They only support the big villages that are close to the road to build clinics. I saw that there is a clinic in Thit Ka Tel village, Win Yaw Township. The villagers said that it is very far to go to that clinic for the villagers who live in the mountains. Therefore, as we do not want to depend on the Tatmadaw, we want the KNU to come and open a clinic near our village to provide healthcare. As for the older people, they cannot climb up the mountain [to reach the clinic] and therefore cannot buy medicine. As a result, the poorer villagers [from remote areas] said that they do not want to be like the blind and deaf, and they want the KNU to come every two months or three times a year [to deliver healthcare].

## **3) Social issues**

I have also seen and heard about the social situation of the civilians. I have seen that there are some different points of view and a lack of unity [regarding the social conditions] in some villages. The villagers who have the different points of view said that they experience divisive inequality and low living standards, and that, *"They [the KNU] do not look around [come and visit] us and they have abandoned us since the ceasefire agreement. Therefore, no one wants to be the village head."* I [the KHRG community member] also do not know whether they [the KNU] care about our [KHRG] reporting. Thus, they [the villagers] said that it is the right time to look round [come and visit] the villages and persuade people not to be divided. In my opinion, if the regional responsible persons in charge [village heads and the village tract administrator] take action, there will be an improvement of unity and the social situation in the villages. I see that there is conflict and disorganisation among them [the villagers].

## **4) Situation of the civilians**

The situation of the civilians is getting better compared to the past. However, one bad thing is that they said that they are concerned about the construction of roads and bridges right now. The road is not good in the city<sup>3</sup> and [villagers ask] why they [the Tatmadaw] have not repaired them. Since they [the Tatmadaw] constructed a road here [a different area outside the city], they [the villagers] have been worried that they will not receive compensation for the destruction of their plantations. They [many different villagers] have raised concerns that they are not sure if they can trust the military government. I also see that although there are not huge abuses of human rights, we [the villagers] do not know whether we will feel the benefits in reality of changes we are seeing practically or whether we will be the victims of the transition process. They [the

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<sup>2</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 in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire](#), KHRG, May 2014.

<sup>3</sup> It is unclear which city this refers to.

villagers] have many concerns in their minds, and the Government is offering them incentives [to move from their land]. There are some people whose lands have been destroyed [due to the construction of a road]. According to a regional responsible person in charge, [village head or the village tract administrator], when the first stage of road construction has been completed, compensation will be given to villagers whose plantations have been destroyed.

## **5) Situation between the military government and KNU**

Regarding the situation between the military [Tatmadaw] and the KNU, there is a dialogue between the military government and the KNU and it is going smoothly. One of the residents who lives near a Tatmadaw army camp said that there is no difficulty, but the military government [soldiers] are focusing on attending [military] training and the civilians have become confused and [concerned that the Tatmadaw appears to be preparing for conflict]. There is no DKBA [Democratic Karen Benevolent Army]<sup>4</sup> military activity right now in Win Yaw Township, Dooplaya District. However, one [patriotic] local civilian who loves Karen people said that, *"[We need to be careful that] we do not suffer from the persuasion by the enemy who lives near to us. There have been many ceasefires. I see that there are a lot of developments at this time. I am also concerned about what, when and how it [ceasefire negotiations / peace process] will happen."* He said that, *"If the [ceasefire negotiations / peace process] situation gets better, freedom of movement, living standards, healthcare, the economy and social living standards will also improve."*

## **6) Perspectives of the researcher [KHRG community member]**

With regard to education, the Tatmadaw do not [visit] to look around the villages which are under-developed and far away from the cities or towns. The Tatmadaw only care about the villages that are close to the main road, [because they want] to do business [development projects there]. That does not include all of the villages. They look at the situation of the villages and survey how many educated persons there are in the villages. Similarly, the healthcare sector is also like this. Everyone should get their rights. The villages are very small [under developed], and there are no educated people as they have suffered from the violence in the past. It is not good to ignore the villages by not looking at these facts. The education and healthcare sectors should be the first priorities. If the villagers are better educated, there will be an improvement in healthcare, and their economy will also improve, and there will be improved social conditions. If all of these things happen, the people responsible will receive the approval and love from the civilians. If these facts are not acknowledged [in the society] and people do business thinking only of themselves, people will not have these four things [education, healthcare, a good economy and improved social conditions in the villages]. This is the opinion of the writer.

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<sup>4</sup> The Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), formerly the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, was formed in December 1994 and was originally a breakaway group from the KNU/KNLA that signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burma government and directly cooperated at times with Tatmadaw forces. The formation of the DKBA was led by monk U Thuzana with the help and support of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the name of the military government in Burma at that time. For more information on the formation of the DKBA, see "[Inside the DKBA](#)," KHRG, 1996. The DKBA now refers to a splinter group from those DKBA forces reformed as Tatmadaw Border Guard Forces, also remaining independent of the KNLA. As of April 2012, the DKBA changed its name from "Buddhist" to "Benevolent" to reflect its secularity.

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

- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyainseikgyi, Kawkareik and Kyonedoe townships, October 2013 to January 2014,” (July 2014)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyonedoe Township, January to August 2013,” (July 2014)
- “Chapter: The impact of anti-personnel and other mines in Southeast Myanmar since the January 2012 ceasefire,” (July 2014)
- “Villagers report negative impacts of stone mining on their livelihoods in Kyaik Ma Yaw Township, 2011 to 2014,” (June 2014)
- *Truce or Transition? Trends in human rights abuse and local response in Southeast Myanmar since the 2012 ceasefire*, (May 2014)

## Dooطلا District



## Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)