



# Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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## Photo Set

June 05, 2015 / KHRG #15-2-PS1

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### **Doolaya Photo Set: Tatmadaw conduct heavy weapons target practice in Win Yay Township, January 2015**

*This Photo Set shows Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #310 conducting heavy weapons target training and its consequences, including the destruction of villagers' crops and rubber plantations in Win Yay Township, Doolaya District in January 2015. Villagers report that the Tatmadaw have carried out heavy weapons target training in the area before, but this time is different as there are more soldiers and this is the first time they have conducted night time target practice.*

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### **Photo Set | Win Yay Township, Doolaya District (January 2015)**

*The following photos were taken by a community member in Doolaya District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. They are presented below, censored where necessary for security purposes.<sup>1</sup> The eight photos below were received along with other information from Doolaya District, including 374 other photos, six video clips, one situation update, and one incident report.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma/Myanmar to document individual human rights abuses using a standardised reporting format; conduct interviews with other villagers; and write general updates on the

<sup>2</sup> This Photo Set was compiled by KHRG office staff and is based on information from a community member from Doolaya District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in eastern Burma/Myanmar, 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 redesigned Website.

## Militarisation



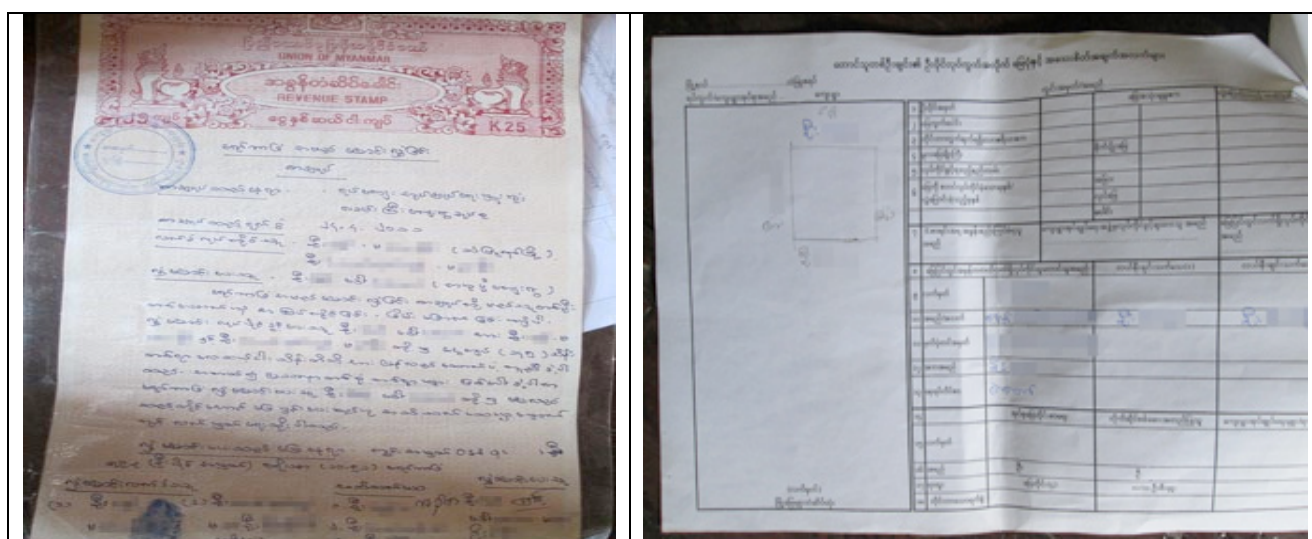
The above photos were taken on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 in Z--- Kyay Ywa Gon<sup>3</sup> village, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. The top-left photo shows Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)<sup>4</sup> #310 engaging in heavy weapons target training. The photo on the top-right shows night time target training conducted by the same battalion. The photo shows the light emitted from the rocket after it was fired. They fired the heavy artillery behind a monastery in a farm and did not inform the villagers that they would conduct target training during the night. One villager stated, “*They have never done night time target training before.*” The bottom-right photo shows a fired rocket buried deep in the ground in the centre of the photo. The bottom-left photo shows an unexploded rocket that was carelessly left after the exercise. The community member saw in total seven rockets some of which were fired, some of which were not. [Photos: KHRG]

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Kyay Ywa Gon’ means ‘village hill’ in Karen.

<sup>4</sup> Light Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprised of 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Primarily for offensive operations but sometimes used for garrison duties.

## Environmental destruction



The above photos were taken on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. The photo on the left shows the deed to land bought by U S---, U A--- and Naw D---. U S--- is an ethnic Mon villager and he lives in Z--- village in Than Phuy Z'Yet Town. His friends have stated that he is the one whose lands and crops are burnt most frequently during military target practice. The photo on the right shows Z--- villager Saw K---'s land use grant.<sup>5</sup> He applied to the Burma/Myanmar government's new farmland utilisation system for a new land document which would be legal under the 2012 Farm Land Law<sup>6</sup> and sent in his current land document. His application was denied<sup>7</sup> and his original land document was returned to him. [Photos: KHRG]

## Right to livelihood and movement restriction



<sup>5</sup> A land use grant is a legal form which gives the holder permission to use and work on the land, however the land is ultimately owned by the Burma/Myanmar government.

<sup>6</sup> The 2012 Farmland Law, Chapter 2(3), states that anyone over the age of 18 years, in order to work on their land, must acquire 'Form Number One' from the village administration office. They must fill this out and send it to Farmland Village Tract Administration Department. The form will then go to the township administration and a decision will be made. In this case, Saw K--- was unsuccessful and his current land use grant was not legalised under the new system.

<sup>7</sup> Usually the township administrator does not give a reason for accepting the application or not. At the time of publication KHRG did not have any information regarding why his application was denied.





The first three photos were taken on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 in Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District. The top-left photo shows the area where the Burma/Myanmar government military, the Tatmadaw, set up their weapons. The photo is taken from the top of the mountain on the outskirts of Y--- village and it shows U T---'s rubber plantation. The photo on the top-right shows U T---'s durian and betel nut trees which were hit by shrapnel from previous heavy weapons target practice in 2014 by LIB #310. The bottom-left shows the shells in their packaging which were left by LIB #310 near U M---'s farm. A villager said that it is not the first time that they have left shells in their packaging. They have conducted heavy weapons target practice in the past, but this time it is more serious due to an increase in the number of soldiers and damage caused. The last photo on the bottom-right was taken on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2015. It shows the area where the heavy weapon target training was conducted. This area is fenced with bamboo. The sign in the photograph states that the area is prohibited as is the planting of any kind of tree. [Photos: KHRG]

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

- “Two separate clashes between armed actors in Kawkaeik Township, Dooplaya District February 2015,” (May 2015)
- “Dooplaya interview: Naw A--- March 2015,” (April 2015)
- “The Asia Highway: Planed Eindu to Kawkaeik Town road construction threatened villagers’ livelihoods,” (March 2015)
- Dooplaya interview: Maung A---, August 2014, (February 2015)
- “Ongoing militarisation of southeastern Burma/Myanmar, since the January 2012 ceasefire between the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Burma/Myanmar government,” (February 2015)

## Dooplaya District



## Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)