



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

March 7, 2016 / KHRG #15-68-I5

Hpapun Incident Report: Landmine kills one buffalo and injures two in Bu Tho Township, April 2015

This Incident Report describes a landmine incident in A--- village in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District on April 13th 2015, that left one buffalo dead and two injured as one of the animals stepped on a landmine. The mine had been planted by soldiers from Company #2 of Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1013. Saw B---, the owner of the buffaloes, had not received any compensation at the time of writing this report.

Incident Report | Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (April 2015)

The following Incident Report was written by a community member in Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local 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 in July 2015 along with other information from Hpapun District, including five other incident reports, 41 interviews, one situation update, and 82 photographs.²

Part 1 – Incident Details

| | |
|---|---|
| Type of Incident | Villager's buffaloes hit by BGF landmine. |
| Date of Incident(s) | April 13 th 2015. |
| Incident Location (Village, Township and District) | A--- village, Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District. |

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeast Burma/Myanmar to document individual incidents of abuse 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 incident reports, community members are encouraged to document incidents of abuse that they consider to be important, by verifying information from multiple sources, assessing for potential biases and comparing to local trends.

² In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in southeastern 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 website.

| Victim Information | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Name | Saw B--- |
| Age | Unknown |
| Sex | Male |
| Nationality | Karen |
| Family | Yes |
| Occupation | Farmer |
| Religion | Buddhist |
| Position | Villager |
| Village | C---, also known as A---. |

| Perpetrator Information | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--|------------|--|
| Name(s) | Rank | Unit | Base | Commander's Name |
| Hpah K'Doh | Company Commander | [Tatmadaw Border Guard Force] ³ Battalion #1013 ⁴ | K'Ter Htee | Battalion Commander La Kyel, Battalion Deputy Commander Kyaw Win |

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

The incident happened like this: the BGF Company Commander Hpah K'Doh, [and his superiors] Htee Theh Htoo, and Kyaw Beh built a [temporary] camp beside a monk's rubber plantation (known as the D--- plantation). They planted landmines outside their camp so that the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] would not be able to attack them.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

³ Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw. BGF battalions are assigned four digit battalion numbers, whereas regular Tatmadaw infantry battalions are assigned two digit battalion numbers and light infantry battalions are identified by two or three-digit battalion numbers. For more information, see "[DKBA officially becomes Border Guard Force](#)" *Democratic Voice of Burma*, August 2010, and "[Exploitation and recruitment under the DKBA in Pa'an District](#)," KHRG, June 2009.

⁴ KHRG continues to receive reports discussing abuses involving BGF Battalion #1013 and #1014, including: "[Human rights violations by Border Guard Force \(BGF\) Battalion #1014 in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, May 2012 to March 2014](#)," KHRG, July 2015; "[BGF Battalion #1014 forced labour and forced recruitment, April to May 2012](#)," KHRG, June 2013; "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, November 2011 to July 2012](#)," KHRG, April 2013; "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August to September 2012](#)," KHRG, April 2013 and "[Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, July to October 2012](#)," KHRG, April 2013. Further reports detailing abuses involving these battalions are also available on the KHRG website.

The people who gave me the information are the E--- village head and some villagers who live close to Saw B---. The incident occurred on April 13th 2015, in the evening. We [the villagers] got to know about the event on April 14th 2015. We heard that a landmine explosion had hit three of Saw B---'s buffaloes, leaving one dead and two injured. On the same day, they [the BGF soldiers] also launched one or two M79 [grenades].

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please use the space prepared below, and create an attachment if needed.

The landmine exploded on April 13th 2015, at 09:00 pm in A---[village] beside the rubber plantation of the monk F--- (also known as Maung G---), in Htee Tha Daw Hta village tract. One of Saw B---'s buffaloes stepped on a landmine; the buffalo died immediately and two other buffaloes were injured. This information was provided by the villagers. The people who had planted the landmine are soldiers from BGF Battalion #1013. The soldiers who are based in this area are led by Kyaw Beh, Htee Theh and Hpah K'Doh. These three people are in charge of the soldiers in that area. Their battalion commander is Maung La Kyel and the battalion deputy commander is Kyaw Win.

Company #2 of BGF Battalion #1013 is based beside the monk Maung G---'s rubber plantation. The company expressed that [they were worried that] the KNLA would attack them at night. Therefore, they planted landmines [outside their base] in order to protect them from an attack if the KNLA would be present in the area. The KNLA does not have any reason to attack them. [The place where they are based is] a place where cows, buffaloes and other animals go to graze. The BGF soldiers who are based there did not inform the villagers when they planted the landmines. If the landmine had not exploded, none of villagers would have known [that they had planted landmines outside their base].

The villager, whose buffalo stepped on the landmine, has four or five buffaloes and three of his buffaloes were involved in the incident. It has caused problems for him because he uses them when he ploughs the field. Moreover, he had to treat the wounds on the buffaloes but no one knows whether they will survive or not. If the buffalo had not been killed by the landmine, he could have sold it and he would have been able to get some income and buy food, clothes, and medicine for his family. Because of this incident, he had to give the buffalo to the BGF [battalion] for free. We do not know whether the BGF [battalion] will arrange some compensation for him or not. As of April 30th 2015, they had not paid him [any compensation]. After the incident occurred, the villager [Saw B---] did not dare to report it to the battalion [commanders].

Since the incident happened, the villager has been in trouble [struggled with his livelihood]. If the BGF gives him compensation he will take it, but if they do not, he has to work on hill farms and plantations [as a day labourer to earn his living]. This incident has pushed the villager [Saw B---] towards a state of poverty and made him worry about his future.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

| |
|--|
| Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided. |
|--|

| |
|--|
| The victim permitted us to use the information freely. |
|--|

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

- *The 2015 Elections and Beyond: Perspectives from villagers in rural southeast Burma/Myanmar*, (February 2016)
- "Hpapun Interview: Naw A---, April 2015," (February 2016)
- "Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, June to October 2015," (February 2016)
- "Hpapun Short Update: Bu Tho Township, May and June 2015," (January 2015)
- "BGF Battalion #1014 demands forced labour, asserts heavily militarised presence in villages in Hpapun District, June 2015," (December 2015)

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)