



Karen Human Rights Group
Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update
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Doplaya Situation Update: Kyainseikgyi and Kawkareik Townships, January to March 2018

This Situation Update describes events that occurred in Kyainseikgyi and Kawkareik townships, Doplaya District between January and March 2018. It includes information on refugee repatriation, development, Tatmadaw military activities, health and education.

- *At the beginning of 2018, additional housing was built for repatriated refugees in Kyainseikgyi and Kawkareik Townships. However, many refugees are worried about the risk of conflict in Doplaya District.*
 - *Tatmadaw military activities have increased in Kyainseikgyi and Kawkareik Townships. Tatmadaw troops entered into territory controlled by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). They built many helicopter landing pads for their army camps in Doplaya District.*
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Situation Update | Kyainseikgyi and Kawkareik townships, Doplaya District (January to March 2018)

The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in March 2018. It was written by a community member in Doplaya 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 Doplaya District, including six interviews and 32 photographs.²

Introduction

This Situation Update describes the events that occurred in Doplaya District at the beginning of 2018. It offers an insight into refugee repatriation, development, Tatmadaw military activities, health and education.

Refugee repatriation and development

At the beginning of 2018, additional housing was built for repatriated refugees in Htee T'Blu village and Noh Maw Poo village, Noh T'Kaw [Kyainseikgyi] Township, Doplaya District. In each village, 50 additional houses were built [to accommodate returnee families]. Additional

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeast Burma/Myanmar 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 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.

housing [for returnee families] is also being built in Taw Naw Muh Htaw area, Kaw T'Ree [Kawkareik] Township.³

Once construction is completed, refugees are expected to return [to this area]. However, many refugees continue to monitor the political and security situation before making the decision to relocate to this area. If the risk of conflict is high, refugee repatriation will be delayed.



This photo was taken on February 7th 2018 in Taw Naw Mu Htaw, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. It shows the area designated for the construction of housing for refugees. The construction is ongoing. Refugees will be repatriated [to this area] once the risk of civil conflict is reduced. *[Photo: KHRG]*

At the beginning of 2018, the Burma/Myanmar government began building a road in Noh T'Kaw and Kruh Tuh townships, as requested by the local community. This road construction is ongoing.

Military activity

In 2018, Tatmadaw military activities increased in Dooplaya District. Tatmadaw soldiers have been patrolling in many areas. They have also entered into areas controlled by the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA]. However, tensions did not escalate.

The Tatmadaw units that are based on the Thai-Myanmar border have strengthened their army camps. They also built a helicopter landing pad. Local people reported that the Tatmadaw built helicopter landing pads in their army camp on the hill next to Ka Lee Hkee village and Kyaw Hta [A'zin] village in Kyainseikgyi Township. The Tatmadaw also built helicopter landing pads in other military camps, including Yay Th'Law camp, Th'waw Thaw camp, Hsoh K'Lee camp, Maw Tuh camp, Aoo Kray Hta camp, Htee Ther Leh camp, Ghaw Lay camp, Maw Hkee camp and Htee K'pler camp. These camps are located in Kawkareik Township.



This photo was taken on January 11th 2018 on the hill next to A'Zin village, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District. It shows the helicopter landing pad recently built by the Tatmadaw. The Tatmadaw has built many helicopter landing pads in its camps in Dooplaya District. *[Photo: KHRG]*

Health

³ Kaw Lah village, Wah May Hta village and Lay Ghaw village

The health care department in Noh Hpoh refugee camp has diagnosed several cases of elephantiasis caused by lymphatic filariasis. Health workers in Noh Hpoh refugee camp diagnosed this illness in refugees who live in the camp by using blood tests. [To fight this disease,] they tested the blood of the entire refugee camp, and offered vaccinations to everyone except pregnant women, young children and patients with chronic illnesses. On 26th February 2018, more than ten people were diagnosed with lymphatic filariasis.

Health workers also offered a vaccination to people in Dooplaya District, [as part of an immunisation campaign against lymphatic filariasis]. They vaccinated people without testing their blood.

Education

Access to education has improved in Taw Naw Muh Htaw, Kawkareik Township. Children in almost every village have the opportunity to attend school. In Hsoh K'Lee village, the school has qualified teachers, adequate infrastructure and the necessary [educational] supplies. The school has the capacity to educate a thousand students. At present, only 80 children are attending the school in Hsoh K'lee village. In other villages, the school buildings needed to be enlarged because they cannot accommodate all of the students in attendance.

According to the local community, the school in Hsoh K'Lee village has a limited number of students because it is under the control of the Burma/Myanmar [Ministry of Education]. [Local villagers believe that] more students would attend the school in Hsoh K'Lee village if the school committee could build trust and good relations with the community.



This photo was taken on February 7th 2018 in Hsoh K'Lee village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. It shows the village school that was built by the Burma/Myanmar government. This school has the capacity to educate a thousand students. At present, only 80 children are attending the school. [Photo: KHRG]

Conclusion

In early 2018, some notable changes occurred in Dooplaya District. The Burma/Myanmar government is building housing to accommodate the repatriation of refugee families. However, many refugees remain worried about the risk of conflict escalating. Local communities are encouraged by socio-economic development in their area. However, there is a feeling of unease because of the increase in Tatmadaw military activities.

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

- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyainseikgyi Township, July to August 2017,” (December 2017)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik Township, November 2016 to January 2017” (October 2017)
- “Dooplaya Interview: Saw A---, September 2016,” (May 2017)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik Township and Noh T’Kaw Township, April to May 2016,” (March 2017)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: Win Yay Township, June to July 2015,” (March 2017)

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