



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

July 26, 2018 / KHRG #18-55-I3

**Thaton Incident Report: Sexual Assault in Bilin
Township, December 2017**

This Incident Report describes a sexual assault on a child that occurred in Q--- village, Bilin Township, Thaton District. A young girl with a mental illness, Naw P---, was kissed and groped by her school principal U Thet Naing Oo. Although the perpetrator was arrested, he was released soon afterwards and reassigned to another school. The local community is worried that U Thet Naing Oo will continue to assault children with impunity.

Incident Report | Bilin Township, Thaton District (December 2017)

The following Incident Report was written by (1) a community member in Thaton 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 May 2018 along with other information from Thaton District, including two other incident reports.²

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Sexual assault
Date of Incident	December 5, 2017

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeastern 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.

Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	Q--- village, Bilin Township, Thaton District
---	---

Victim Information	
Name	Naw P---
Age	15
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	None
Occupation	Child
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Child
Village	Q---

Perpetrator Information			
Name(s)	Occupation	Village of Residence	Place of Origin
U Thet Naing Oo	School principal employed by the Burma/Myanmar government	Q---	Kyaik Hto

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.
I [KHRG researcher] conducted an interview with the victim's aunt on January 8 th 2018.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.
This information is true because I heard about it first-hand from the community where the incident took place. The victim's aunt provided further information in this interview.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.
<p>On December 5th 2017, the primary school principal U Thet Naing Oo sexually assaulted a 15-year-old girl suffering from mental illness, Naw P---.</p> <p>On that day, the principal was under the influence of alcohol. He came to Naw P---'s house to charge his phone. When the principal entered the house, the girl's parents asked her to clean the living room because the principal was there as a guest. When the girl was alone, U Thet Naing Oo forced himself on the girl and tried to kiss her. At the time of the assault, the girl's parents were in the back of the house, and some people were distracted watching a movie.</p> <p>When U Thet Naing Oo forced himself on Naw P---, her uncle Saw R--- saw the incident and reported it to the local authorities. The principal was arrested and handcuffed. Due</p>

to the carelessness of the authorities, U Thet Naing Oo broke free from his handcuffs. However, he was arrested again soon afterwards.

In order to resolve this incident, local authorities called for a meeting with the village tract leaders and all of the school principals from villages in the area, including S---, T---, U---, Q---, V--- and W--- villages.

A local villager from Q--- said that U Thet Naing Oo apologised to the girl's parents, and begged them not to take the case further. The girl's family responded that the case is in the hands of the local authorities. They did not want U Thet Naing Oo to continue teaching in their village.

Even though U Thet Naing Oo was found guilty, [local community members believe that] he was not punished for this sexual assault. The Vice Education Officer of Bilin Township, U Lwin Maung Soe, took U Thet Naing Oo back to the nearby town. Because U Thet Naing Oo is employed by the Burma/Myanmar government, U Lwin Maung Soe said that the principal is their man, so they have a responsibility to take care of him.

Because of a lack of transparency, local villagers believe that U Thet Naing Oo was not held accountable for this case of sexual assault. The local community believes that he should no longer hold the position of school principal. They believe that he should be punished according to the law. However, instead of being punished, U Thet Naing Oo was re-assigned to another village school. He will continue to work as a school principal, replacing a school principal who had transferred to another area.

When I [the KHRG researcher] conducted an interview with a member of the Karen Women Organisation (KWO), she said that the inaction [on the part of the local authorities] is a form of discrimination against women. She stated, *"We are women so this case is ignored and appropriate actions have not been taken against the perpetrator."*

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The victim's aunt gave permission to KHRG to use this information.

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

- "Thaton Incident Report: Killing in Bilin Township, December 2017", (July 2018)
- "Thaton Incident Report: Rape Case in Bilin Township, April 2017", (July 2018)
- "Thaton Field Report: A transition to peace? Villagers' concerns about ongoing militarisation from January 2016 to December 2017", (May 2018)
- "Thaton Situation Update: Bilin Township, March to May 2017", (December 2017)

Doo Tha Htoo (Karen)

