



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Appendix to Field Report

November 30, 2010 / KHRG #2010-F10 Appendix 1

Appendix 1: “Threats to human rights, obstacles to protection: Conflict continues to impact civilians in Dooplaya District”

The following document contains transcripts of six brief interviews with residents of Waw Lay and Palu villages, Dooplaya District. All of these villagers had sought protection in Thailand due to conflict and fears of conflict-related abuse in their communities, and were subsequently ordered to return by Thai authorities; in the interviews they describe the circumstances of their return, including their safety concerns. This Appendix is provided as supporting evidence for the KHRG report “Threats to human rights, obstacles to protection: Conflict continues to impact civilians in Dooplaya District.” Five of these interviews were conducted on November 17th 2010 with villagers from Waw Lay village and one was conducted on November 29th 2010 with a villager from Palu village.

Interview | Saw ---, (male), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (Interviewed in Thailand 7 am November 17th 2010)

Have you heard that you will be sent back today and are you willing to go back?

It depends on most people's decision. If most people go back, I will have to go back too. But for now I'm not certain about the safety. If there is shooting again, I don't know where I will go again.

Where do you think you will go if the Thais do not allow you to stay here anymore?

I will have to find place that will have more safety and hide because I dare not go back to my village yet. I felt I really would like to die because of this fighting and many difficulties. If the soldiers see us, they shoot without asking anything. When we were running, we had to leave all of our belongings.

Interview | Naw ---, (female), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (Interviewed in Thailand 7 am November 17th 2010)

Is it safe for you to go back now at your village?

There is no stability yet in our village. There are many troops and many soldiers are still at the monastery.

If it is safe, we will go back. But now it's not safe, we have to be afraid of bullets and soldiers. After we come here, we heard that the SPDC soldiers raped two girls and killed them.

Interview | Naw ---, (female), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (Interviewed in Thailand 7 am November 17th 2010)

Where do you live and how is the situation there?

I live in Waw Lay village on the Burma side. I fled here to the Thai side because of the fighting. The troops shelled mortars into our village and one villager was wounded. He has been sent to the hospital.

Why did you flee to Thai side?

Many people fled to Waw Lay, on the Thai side, because we are afraid of the mortar's shelling and the fighting. We heard that the Thai army allows us to come and flee. So I came here.

The last time we fled here, we were allowed to stay only one night and we were asked to go back. Then, we stayed in our village one night and had to flee back here again.

Have you heard that you would be sent back today?

Now, I heard that we will be sent back or move to another place.

Do you want to go back? Is it safe for you to go back now?

I dare not go back because the SPDC troops are still taking position in our village. I don't know how many the SPDC soldiers, but they are many. I can't count.

I really dare not go back but the last time we were told by the Thai soldiers "Pai, Pai, Pai" and we had to go back because we are afraid of them and they had guns in their hands. We went back and now you see we have to come back again. So, there is no safety at all if we go back again.

Interview | Saw ---, (male), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (Interviewed in Thailand 7 am November 17th 2010)

Where do you live and how is the situation there?

We live in Waw Lay village. We are farmers.

Why did you flee to Thai side?

The reason we fled here is because of the fighting. There was fighting before and we fled here too. I think there will be more fighting because the SPDC troops are increasing and I think they are taking position to attack. There are around 2 or 3 thousand SPDC troops coming and operated in different places.

Have you heard that you would be sent back today?

I haven't heard anything about if we will be sent back today.

Do you want to go back? Is it safe for you to go back now?

If we are asked to go back, we have to think about it. I want to wait and see the situation for 2 or 3 days and then go back. I dare not go back now because if we go back now, the situation is not stable and we will have to flee again.

But we are forced to go out from here, we have to move around. I don't know where we should go, but we have to find a place to hide."

Interview | Saw ---, (male), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (Interviewed in Thailand 7 am November 17th 2010)

Where do you live and how is the situation there?

I live in Waw Lay village. I was a carpenter. I was recruited forcefully by the SPDC troops as a porter at Wa Li Khi and stepped on a land mine at Law Kaw.

Why did you flee to Thai side?

The reason we fled here is because of the fighting between the SPDC and DKBA. The shells dropped near our house.

Do you want to go back? Is it safe for you to go back now?

We dare not go back now because we do not feel safe in Burma. The last time, the Thai authorities forced us to go back. They didn't let us stay here. After the fighting happened again, we came back a second time. We have many difficulties."

Interview | Saw ---, (male, 29), Palu village, Kawkareik Township (Interviewed in Thailand 5 pm November 29th 2010)

Why did villagers go back to Palu today?

Regard to the information on the border, the people who asked us to return are the Army and higher officers step by step. However, as I know, the order comes from the government. So, the army has to take the responsibility to ask villagers to go back to another side of the river because the government asked them to go. The situation on the other side of river is people [SPDC army and DKBA army] are not fighting each other, but they shell mortars at each other. The villagers are afraid to get injured by mortars so that they wanted to flee back here [to Thailand]. But, the Thai Army asked some villagers to wait and stay beside the river. They said, people do not really fight yet so the villagers do not need to come [to Thailand]. They want villagers to flee [to Thailand side] only when the fighting really happens.

How do you know this information?

People who said villagers can go back [to Burma] are people who work for the government. For the Thai Army, they have to take responsibility to send these people back. I saw the Thai Army told the villagers that the situation now became okay and now you can go back. The villagers just have to go back. They said the situation became fine. They communicated with the Burmese Army on the other side [of the border] and told each other, nothing will happen and [the refugees can] come back. After that, they announced, "You can go back." After all people returned, the fighting happened later and we wanted to take these people to stay in the monastery, but they did not allow us. I do not understand why they do not allow the people to stay in the monastery.

Who announced that villagers can go back?

People who announced this are authorities who work for the government and come from Mae Sot. Their jobs are part of governing,