



Appendix to Field Report

November 30, 2010 / KHRG #2010-F10 Appendix 2

Appendix 2: “Threats to human rights, obstacles to protection: Conflict continues to impact civilians in Dooplaya District”

The following document contains transcripts of four interviews with six residents of Palu village, 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 encouraged 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.” All the interviews were conducted with villagers from Palu after they had returned to Thailand on November 30th, after fleeing to Thailand days prior and then being made to return to Burma on November 29th.

Interview | Naw---, (30, female) and Naw---, (45, female), Palu village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (Interviewed in Thailand, November 29th 2010)

[Naw---, (30, female) Speaking]

Did you flee to here [Thailand] yesterday?

We fled here this morning.

How about yesterday?

Yesterday, we were asked to go back. So, we went back to stay at --- on the other side of the river [in Burma]. It was on the other side of the river. It was on the shore of the river. We dare not to stay in our village.

Why don't you dare to go back?

We dare not to go back because we are afraid of the Burmese Army. Till last night, there was mortar shelling and the mortar fell down once or twice.

Why did you go back [to Burma]?

We were asked to go back.

Who asked you to go back?

I do not know. Thai or people who gave a speech in a monastery yesterday said we could go back. People already discussed and agreed. They said they already discussed and agreed, but when we returned, there was still mortar shelling so we dared not to go back to our home. We did not reach to our home. People said the Burmese Army stayed in front of my house and set up their artillery there. We dare not to go back. We are afraid when they shell.

For you, what do you think? Do you want to stay here temporarily and then go back?

It should be [that we return] when there is really peace. Even though we were asked to go back when we stayed in the monastery, we dared not to go back [to our homes]. We will continue fleeing. As we flee again and again and carry our things longer and longer, we become very tired. We are with our children and have to sleep in the fields. The mosquitoes bite us and the frost comes. Many people get sick and cough.

What if you are asked to go back [to Burma] again?

We dare not to go back anymore. If the situation is not really fine, we dare not to go back.

What about your son?

He gets a little cough. There are two people sick in the group that we were sleeping together with yesterday. They do not feel better, yet.

So, for the current situation, you dare not to go back?

We dare not to go back. Even though they ask us go back, we dare not to go back. We will go further.

Do you want to stay here for temporarily?

We want to stay here temporarily. Although we are asked to go back, we dare not to go back. We will continue fleeing. However, even though we dare not to go back yesterday, we had to go back because we were asked to go back.

How many times did you flee back here?

We fled back twice including this time. Even though we did not dare to go back yesterday, they told us to go back. It was likely Thai citizen because [he] could not speak Karen fluently when [he] gave a speech [in the monastery]. [He] said people already went to discuss and agreed. You could go back and stay. Even though we could go back and stay, we cannot trust the Burmese Army.

Why did you flee back here now?

Because people are still fighting each other recently. Till this morning, they fought each other. The fighting happened [again] when we crossed to the other side of the river [into Burma] and just reached [to the other side of the river].

Did you dare to go back when you were asked to go back [Burma] yesterday?

Even though we dared not to go back, we had to go back because we were asked to go back. Although we went back, we did not reach to our home. We stayed near the river and slept near the river.

Could you hear the guns firing when you stayed near the river?

The guns firing happened last night and the shelling hit our village. It was two mortars. This morning, we heard small arms and mortars. People fought each other and whether the monastery or a house has been burned, we do not know. We watched it burn from a distance.

What about if you are asked to go back now?

I told you I dare not to go back. We are asked to return again and again, we dare not to go back because we are afraid of bullets.

Are you happy to flee like this?

I am not happy to flee like this. No one is happy to flee.

[Naw---, (45, female) interjects and responds to remaining interview questions]

We face many problems as we have to flee. We are blessed that you take care of us and find a place for us.

Did you also flee [to here] yesterday?

Yes, we came here and returned.

Why did you return?

It was because people said we could go back. Then, we went back. I reached to my home.

Did you dare to go back?

Even though I dared not to go back, I went to my home. I cooked rice. It almost finished...

Are you happy to flee like this?

I am not happy. It will take many days for this time. We cannot stay in our place.

Will you go back if you are asked to go back today?

I will not go back. I will not go back anymore. I will not go back.

How about if you are asked to go back [Burma]?

Although I am asked to go back, I will move to my younger sibling. I will not do that anymore.

Why do not you dare to go back?

If the fighting always happens like this, we dare not to go back. If Thai searches for us and arrests us and do not want us, we will just have to suffer there [in Burma]. I will tell you Thai love Karen. We wish for them and there will be blessing for them.

Interview | Naw---, (50, female), P'Lu village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (Interviewed in Thailand on November 29th 2010)

Pe [Grandmother], where is grandfather?

Grandfather went back to the village along with auntie.

Can he come back?

No, he can't come back regarding this situation.

Who looks after him?

Only two of them went back to stay.

Are they in the area where there is fighting?

They are staying in the area where there is fighting. They are staying in the village near the river.

Are there any children included?

No

They stay only two?

Yes

Were you included when people fled here yesterday?

Yes

Why did you return?

I did not know. People returned, so I also returned.

Did you dare to go back?

No, I dare not to go back.

If you dare not to go back, why did you go back?

It was because I dare not to sleep alone here.

Interview | Naw---, (40, female) and Naw ---, (55, female), P'Lu village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (Interviewed in Thailand on November 29th 2010)

[Naw --- (40, female) speaking]

I did not see that grandfather and my elder sister. They went back to stay at their home.

Was it that grandfather yesterday?

Yes. He said he could not run anymore. If he has to die, he will die.

Are there any other people whom he can stay with?

Yes, my elder sister stays there.

You fled here yesterday, right?

Yes

Why did you return?

We returned because we were asked to go back. People told us that we could go back.

Do you dare to go back?

We dare to go back if there is no fighting. Now, due to the fighting, we dare not to go back.

Why did you flee now?

There is a lot of shelling so we dare not to stay. If it injures you...

What about if you are asked to go back again now?

[We] will not go back anymore. [We] will move and stay temporarily like this. We will wait and see the situation until there is peace, then we will go back. If there is not peace, we will not go back anymore. I am fed up with fleeing.

Do you have to leave your hill field and field hut like that?

We dare not to go back and harvest.

[Naw---, (55, female) interjects and responds to remaining interview questions]

What can we go and do? It [the crops] get too old. Our beans fell down, all of them. We only have to go and be slaves for others. The other beans owned by others are still young [to harvest]. For our beans, we should have harvested them a long time ago already. If we did not have to flee, we would have already finished harvesting. As we have to flee, we cannot do it.

What will you do if you are asked to go back now?

If we are asked to go back again, fine. Give us a kind of medicine that causes death five minutes after you drink it. It ends. Give a tablet for each person. We are exhausted. There is no meaning even though we are alive.

Are there any people left in a village?

There are one or two people left in the village. But, they have to wait and see the situation. You dare not to stay when the army enters to the village because they are the army. You cannot stay with them.

Do you think they [the grandmother and the elder sister] will flee?

We cannot say whether they will come or not. We contacted with their younger and elder siblings, but we cannot call them. They do not turn on their phones. People living where my nephew stays dare not to turn on their phones because they stay very close [to the army]. We cannot contact them because they stay close the army. Now, we called them many times, but we cannot call them.

Which army are you referring to?

The Burmese Army

What do you want when you come and stay here?

For this one, we do not understand. We have to stay like this.

Do you want to stay here and go back when there is peace?

Yes. If there is no fighting happening, we can go back. If the fighting still happens like this, we cannot go back. Even though we go back, if the fighting still happens and more troops continue coming, we cannot stay there. As we are villagers, we want to stay peacefully.

Was there any happened when you stayed in Burma?

Yes, people fought each other. When we stayed there, we could hear people fighting. Probably, we will have to flee until we die. We had to flee since we were children and until now, we still have to flee. We had to flee and carry our children. We cannot carry any food. We had to flee with only the clothes that we are wearing.

Interview | Naw---, (47, female), P'Lu village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (Interviewed in Thailand on November 29th 2010)

Did you flee here yesterday?

Yes, we fled. We fled here along with our children together.

Then, did you go back?

Yes. It was because people told us to go back. So, we went back. They also told us that they would keep us in the army camp. Then, I said we were told that we could go back. We went back to stay and slept on the shore of the river.

Who asked you to go back?

It was people told us that we could go back and we had to go back. Then, other people [villagers] went back and we followed, too. At first, we thought whether it is safe to return or not. But, when other people went back [Burma], we just followed them.

So, why did you come back [to Thailand] now?

It was because the fighting happened. We are afraid. Our hands and legs shook and I am with my grandson. We cannot do it anymore.

What about if you are asked to go back again?

I will not go back anymore. I dare not to go back. The Burmese Army is staying in the village. We came here yesterday and returned. We came here again in this morning.

What do you feel when you have to flee again and again like this?

I cannot think of anything as I am afraid.

Are they twins?

No, they are not twins. My youngest daughter is very *huh duh* [a Karen expression meaning 'has a child, one after another'].

What will you do if you have to go back now?

If I have to go back now, whether I have to die or live, I will not go back anymore.

Previously, why did you go back when you were told to go back?

As many people went back, we thought that we could also go back. Then, we talked to each other and called each other to go back. After that, we went back together. But, we dare not to go back to our home. We stayed on another side of the river. It was not the Thai side. It was on the Burma side. We stayed and slept on the other side of the river. Last night, we stayed under bamboo when we heard the fighting happen. We cannot even know whether the mosquitoes bite us or insects bite us. When we are asked to return [to Burma], your uncle [referring to her husband] – he [is still in Palu and] looks after cows for Pah --- and Pah ---'s daughter-in-law – did not want us to return. But we were asked to return. So, we had to return [to Burma]. We came back [to Thailand] again and people told us that they would send us. If they send us, they can send us. It is fine. They sent us to stay in the monastery and we stayed there. I was happy that I did not have to be afraid of anything. But, the next morning we were asked to go back. We thought about whether to go back or stay here. Some people told us to go back and some told us to stay. We did not know whether we dare to stay or dare to go back. We cannot control our minds. Then, we went back again. After we returned, we couldn't do anything. When we fled and arrived here for this time, we feel safe. Our mind is unclear.