



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

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**Report from the Field**  
November 17, 2010 / KHRG #2010-F9 Appendixes

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## **Appendixes to “Protection concerns expressed by villagers amidst conflict in Dooplaya and Pa’an Districts”**

*The following document contains two appendixes that provide full transcripts of 18 interviews with villagers as supporting evidence for the KHRG report “Protection concerns expressed by villagers amidst conflict in Dooplaya and Pa’an Districts.” Appendix 1 includes transcripts of 11 interviews conducted with villagers in the Waw Lay area on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2010. Appendix 2 includes transcripts of 7 interviews conducted with villagers in the Myawaddy area on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.*

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## **Appendix 1: Interviews with Villagers in Waw Lay Area**

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**Interview | Saw A--- (male, 34), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**How many people and households are in your village?**

There are over 3,000 people and over 400 households in our village.

**Can you tell us what happened to villagers before they fled here?**

At the beginning we waited to see the situation as the DKBA soldiers told us. Then, Saw Z--- called us to follow him and collect vegetables and lard from Ad--- [location censored for security]. We took a motorbike and went there. For the villagers, they were already afraid for a long time. We encountered the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw soldiers] when we went there. My friend told me not to go when we saw the Burmese Army, but I thought about going because we'd already encountered them. Then, we turned around to come back. Even though we hadn't turned around [yet], a gun was fired at us, so we fled. The gunshot almost hit us. In Waw Lay, there are two areas: the place where villagers stay and the place where the DKBA army stays. The place where the soldiers stay is called Htee Nyah Lee. The Burmese Army had come in front of Naw Ab---'s shop and for us, we had reached in front of Saw Ac---'s house. Then, they saw us there. It seemed that Burmese Army soldiers was already staying there when we saw them pointing guns at us. They shelled the village with mortars after they fired on us. They shelled us with two mortars and fired on us ten times [with guns]. Then, they continued shelling the place where the DKBA army was with mortars, and then continued shelling Thee Ma Nee Gone where the [DKBA] soldiers stay, too. After that, the villagers fled. They shot about eight or nine mortars. For the gunfire, we couldn't count it.

**How many SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers were there?**

There were 50 to 60 soldiers who came to Htee Nyah Lee, and their total number was 150 soldiers.

**When did this happen?**

It happened after 8 am.

**What is the displaced villagers' situation now?**

For the villagers, they wanted to carry their things to the Thai side [of the Moei River] before the fighting happened, but the Thai [Army] didn't allow them to. They fled when they heard the guns fired and the Thai [Army] allowed them to flee when the guns were fired.

**Why did the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw soldiers] shoot at you?**

They shot at us for two reasons, we think. The first reason is they might have thought that we went to see their situation, and the second reason is that we both have beards and they might have thought that we were sentries who went to monitor the situation.

**How did the villagers flee to here?**

Some crossed the bridge, and because the bridge is narrow some crossed [in] the river. Some villagers couldn't bring anything when they fled and some could bring only some of their belongings even though they prepare beforehand.

**Why did they prepare in advance to flee?**

They prepared to flee after fighting happened in Ra Ma Tee.

**What support did they get on the Thai side?**

When we arrived on the Thailand side, there were a lot of other people fleeing there, too. So, the Thai Army asked us to stay in a pasture the cow shit was very smelly and hot. After we'd stayed there for one or two hours, we saw that they had brought water and food. Some got them [water and food], but some hadn't got them yet.

**How many villagers came to stay there?**

There were over 3, 000 villagers who fled to stay there. Not everyone went to stay there. There were other people who fled to other places.

**How long did you flee here?**

We fled here after 9 am and stayed on the Thailand side for seven or eight hours. Because we saw the situation didn't change, we left to another area. Some remained and slept at the pasture.

**Are there any villagers who went back?**

Yes, they started going back at 3 pm because Thai [Army] said there was no gunfire, and asked them to go back.

**Did the villagers want to go back?**

Some villagers didn't understand Thai and went back when they were told to go back. Some went back because their property was left at home, such as those people who sell things. For me, I just wanted to check on my things secretly.

**Did villagers lose any of their property?**

Yes, some lost their property. We don't know whether the soldiers or people took them. Some houses had been searched and dismissed by the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw soldiers], especially houses belonging to the DKBA soldiers and even big houses that don't belong to the DKBA soldiers.

**What's your opinion on the SPDC army [Tatmadaw] doing this?**

In my opinion since they started doing the election, they wanted to win the election so they oppressed villagers.

**What did you arrange for your family before the fighting occurred?**

For me, I sent my family [to Thailand] in advance before the fighting occurred.

**What do you think will happen in the future?**

Based on the current situation, there won't likely be peace in the future because the KNU also informed us about what happened. Now, the KNU [KNLA] went to stay at the same place to wait and shoot at the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw].

**What will happen to villagers if there will be more fighting?**

The villagers will face many problems when more fighting happens because when the villagers fled to the Thailand side for even one hour, things become more expensive. For example, if the original price of something is 10 baht, it becomes 15 baht. Before, one block of ice that children use to eat was 2 baht but when we arrived here it became 4 baht.

**How about villagers' livelihoods?**

For livelihoods, we have to leave bean plantations that we haven't harvested and corns plantations that we haven't harvested, or have only partly harvested. There are many [unharvested] plantations left.

**Have you heard anything about the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw soldiers] arresting people and killing them?**

No, but I heard the Burmese Army arrested and raped two girls and shot them dead when they were coming back from their workplaces. It happened on Wednesday, the day after we fled. They were ethnic Myaw [Hmong]. They went to work inside [Burma], far away from Karen villages and didn't know what had happened and were coming back to the Thailand side. Villagers weren't allowed to talk about this case, and they told it when they reached Maw Gker village.

**Who gave you this information?**

My friend told me this because people from Maw Gker phoned [him].

**What do you think the relationship between the DKBA and SPDC?**

I think there is no relationship between the DKBA and SPDC now.

**How do villagers prepare themselves according to the current situation?**

Most villagers will flee. For those building doors, they finished their building and they save their money, pack their things and don't stay separately as before.

**Is there anything else that you want to say?**

Another thing that I want to say is that security is needed for those fleeing into Thailand because even if villagers want to go and carry water from a well on the Thailand side, the Thai [Army] doesn't allow them to go. So, they have to use water from the river and later the consequences for them will be that they'll get diseases.

**Why doesn't the Thai [Army] allow them to do that?**

The Thai [Army] doesn't allow them to do that because the Thais said that although there is no shooting in those villagers' country, they don't go back. It disturbs travelling when these villagers come to stay in their country because they have to block the path where they usually travel. Thai citizens blocked it. For Thai Army, they don't allow people who want to come and see villagers who faced problems and fled to here. Yesterday I saw an organization which brought medicines, milk, water, and other things wasn't allowed to enter by the Thai Army and had to go back.

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**Interview | Naw Af--- (female, 45), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**How many people and households are there in your village?**

There are over 300-400 households. For the population, I cannot say. When we came to stay in ---, not everyone is here but it is estimated around 3,000 people came [from Waw Lay].

**What is your village name?**

People call my village Waw Lay and it is called Win Win Myaing in Burmese.

**Can you tell us a little bit about why you came here?**

We fled because we are afraid of bullets. People were shooting mindlessly. The Burmese [Tatmadaw] were shooting. On that day, they heard that KNLA was coming to Oh Poe Htar and the Burmese shot mindlessly. They shelled five mortars into the village [Waw Lay] as other people said. So, we fled. The Thais did not allow us to flee before the guns fired. The Thais allowed us to flee when the gun fired. So, we could not bring anything. For me, I wanted to flee to Kyin Pone, but your uncle [referencing her husband] did not want me to go and told me that it would not be safe to flee there.

**Where is Kyin Pone?**

It is the place where my cousin's house is.

**Is the place inside Burma?**

Yes, it is inside Burma.

**Can you tell us a little bit about what happened, as we heard there was shelling to your village?**

For the shelling, we didn't dare not to watch. They shot at your uncle [her husband] and that teacher when they went there. They shot at them three times, but did not hit them. Then, they shelled a mortar at them one time. The distance is not very far from the place where they [the Tatmadaw] fired to the place where they [the uncle and the teacher] were going.

**Why do you think the Tatmadaw soldiers shot at them?**

They wanted to shoot them dead because they thought that they were DKBA soldiers, as that teacher has beard and your uncle has it, too. They [the Tatmadaw soldiers] thought that they were DKBA soldiers wearing ordinary clothes. It [the incident] happened near Pu Na Kah Mway's house. Naw Ab---'s shop is here [pointing at the ground] and here [pointing at the ground] is Pu Na Kah Mway's house. My son's father saw the Burmese Army from far away and that teacher saw the Burmese Army at Naw Ab---'s shop. Then, they talked to each other about how there were Burmese Army soldiers [nearby] and turned around their motorbike to come back. While they were turning around their motorbike, the Burmese Army shot at them.

**Where did it happen?**

It happened in Htee Nyah Lee.

**When did it happen?**

It happened on Tuesday, 9th November 2010 around 8 or 9 am after we woke up and ate breakfast.

**What kind of teacher is the teacher that you mentioned?**

He is --- [details censored for security].

**Where were they going?**

They were going to take things from my aunt's house. They went to collect things as my aunt could not collect their things. They also went to take pigs because we stay a little bit far from each other. They wanted to keep the pigs with us. For me, I dare not to keep other's people things.

**Can you tell us a little bit about why the Burmese Army shelled mortars into your village before they entered it?**

The reason is they shot your uncle [her husband] and the teacher at the beginning and then they came and shot us when they saw us. We do not know whether they shot us in order to threaten us or not. They fired their guns for the first time at your uncle and your teacher. When they first came, they do not fire anything.

**Can you tell us why villagers fled?**

It is not the case that villagers had not heard any gun fire but ran away. They had already heard the gunfire. For the Burmese Army, they shot at people when they saw them while they were

entering the village. For the villagers, they fled when they heard the gunfire. If this is not the case, the Thais would not allow us to flee [to Thailand]. The Thais also heard the guns firing so they allowed villagers to flee here. After we heard the guns firing, we all run away and did not have time to look after each other. We were informed in advance by those who get along with the Burmese Army closely, that the Burmese Army would shell our village. Therefore, we ran away. They came and shot at us at the same time [we were fleeing], but they did not shoot continually. They shot when they saw people. They did not shoot when they did not see the people.

**What is the Burmese Army's purpose coming there?**

Their purpose is to fight the DKBA army and they also heard that there was KNLA army there.

**Did they inform villagers that they would do shelling?**

No, they did not inform us. That's why your uncle and teacher did not know and went there. If they knew about it [that the Tatmadaw was there], they would not dare to go. When we heard the gun fire, we knew that the Burmese Army had started their work. For your uncle, he told us to run away when he came back home.

**How did villagers start to flee?**

They did not cross the river when they fled because there was a bridge. The Thai Army also told us before that they would not let us die. When the attack happened, you could flee to here. So, when the attack happened, the Thai Army called us to come, too. When we came, they kept us at the cows' place and the cows' shit is very smelly.

**How did Thai Army help the villagers?**

They wanted us to stay at the same place and quietly. Some people did not eat anything, yet in the morning so they wanted to go outside and buy something to eat. But, we are not allowed to go anywhere and just had to stay there.

**Where did they keep villagers?**

They kept villagers at the grazing ground [pasture] at the side of Waw Lay River. The grazing ground is very large.

**Could villagers bring all their belongings?**

No, they could not.

**Who gave them support and helped them with food?**

For the food, I cannot say. I saw people brought a car of water. But, I did not see any rice and food, yet. I saw one or two Thai teachers went there and brought with two iceboxes and a refrigerator. I do not know what it is in the boxes. But, I saw children drank bottles of baby milk. It is not enough for every child.

**Did the Thai soldiers block support that was coming?**

We heard they do not want the support coming. Yesterday, they took rice in Waw Lay. The Thais did not allow the rice that people brought to support us. Also, they [the Thais] asked villagers who fled to here [Thailand] to go back [to Waw Lay] and burnt the property that some villagers went back to take when the attack was quiet yesterday. They want villagers to stay in the same place. They said if you are villagers, you can come back and stay. If you are relatives of DKBA soldiers, don't come back and stay. They would probably give trouble to the relatives of the DKBA soldiers when they see these people. If they do not see, they cannot do anything.

**When did villagers start to flee?**

The villagers started to flee on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 9:30 am. Since then, we continued fleeing to stay in Thai corn plantations, sugar corn plantations and beside farms. Some do not stay in the temporary sites. We dare not to stay there because the Thais do not want us to stay there.

**Why did villagers return to their village?**

They went back to take their properties because they fled and did not have time to bring anything. When it became quiet, the Thais asked them to go back and so they had to go back. Even though they went back, they dare not stay there so they took their things and came back here again.

**Are they willing to go back or Thai ask them to go back?**

The Thai asked them to go back, but they dare not to stay there [in Waw Lay] although they went back.

**Are there any villagers lost their properties? What kind of properties that they lost?**

We cannot count things that we lost. Some lost materials such as axes, knives. Some lost rice, some lost clothes and some lost household properties. For our house, we think there is nothing left because we dare not to go back and take them. I think the Burmese Army and some villagers will take this property.

**Are there any villagers who went back to take their things left in the village?**

There are none of them left in the village. Some came back and stay in field huts.

**Why didn't some villagers return?**

They did not return because they are not allowed to go back. The DKBA army didn't want them to go back.

**What do you think will happen in the future?**

In my opinion, we have to wait for our leaders' plan. If the leaders can plan and solve it, we can go back. If they cannot solve it, we cannot go back.

**Who are the leaders?**

We will be happy if the Burmese leaders can solve. But, we hope our ethnic and other siblings will solve it.



**Do you think there will be more fighting in the future?**

We heard from BBC or other people also told us that the Burmese Army are now sending more troops from Gkay Doh and from this side to attack Na Kah Mway.

**What will the consequences be for the villagers?**

We cannot say the problems that villagers will face. They will probably face food and health problems. Some work for a day and eat for a day and have with their family including their small kids. But, the day when I went back, these women said, "That Pu [grandfather, Na Kah Mway] never shoots [back at the Tatmadaw]. For us, we do not want to stay anymore." They asked [Na Kha Mway] to fight the Burmese Army.

**Has the Burmese Army gone back to their army base?**

No, they did not go back, yet. They just wait and see the situation there. Even my cousin who is a haircutter and does not have any connection with the DKBA army is afraid. So, for us, we dare not to go back.

**Are there any villagers who had been torture by the army?**

Yes, some villagers would probably have been tortured but I do not know. I heard people say there was a villager who had been beaten by the Burmese Army and died. He was assigned to be a section leader to arrange things and talk to villagers [in Waw Lay]. According to other people, he was asked to go and see the situation of the Burmese Army. The next day, we heard that he was dead. His name is Maung Win, over 40 years old. He is a Pwo Karen. His position was to arrange things and look after people in the village.

**What problems do you think other villagers face? Can you tell us more about it?**

I think they are not different from us. Some villagers dare to go back and some dare not to go back. Some villagers dare to go back and take things but dare not to stay there. Some villagers' animals such as chickens, pigs etc are eaten. It was in Waw Lay village. Our village has many sections. More DKBA soldiers stay in Htee Nyah Lee and villagers stay in the lower part of that village.

**What do you think the relationship is between DKBA and SPDC army?**

I think they do not have any relationship now because even though the DKBA army makes relationship with them, they only have to suffer. So, they now decided not to make any relationship with the Burmese. However, if the Burmese Army makes relationship with them honestly, they will do. If not, they will not make any relationship with the Burmese Army.

**What did villagers prepare anything ahead for future?**

They went back to take their properties and came back to stay here. They wait and see the situation. If the fighting becomes quiet or stops, they would go back and stay at their village. If the fighting does not become quiet, they have to move from their place and for the future, they will have to find new places to stay. For the livelihoods, they have not harvest their farms, corn, beans yet. For the current situation, we just have to wait and see the situation. We will go back

when we dare to go back. If we dare not to go back, we have to stay like this. We worked for the whole year and now we cannot harvest any more. We would just have to wait and see the situation.

**Do you have anything else to say?**

I cannot say any other things. Even though we want to go back and pray, we dare not to go back. They [Tatmadaw] do not distinguish between anyone, even one who is Christian or Buddhist. So we dare not to go back. They [Tatmadaw] might say that we are relatives of DKBA army.

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**Interview | Saw B--- (male, 25), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Could you please tell me why did you come here and what is the current situation?**

I heard that the Burmese military [Tatmadaw] came and fought with the DKBA, and then the DKBA withdrew from the fighting, so all of the villagers were fleeing to the border and to the Thai side [of the Moei River]. The Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers fired into the village and, on the road, they stopped the villagers that were running from the fighting and told them not to flee as they were targeting the DKBA troops not the villagers. But a lot of the villagers were afraid so they ran away from the fighting and came to stay here. I don't know what has happened in village [since I fled] as I've come to stay here for five or six days already.

**So when did you escape from the fighting?**

We started to come here on Thursday,

**What has happened between Thai security [soldiers] and the village?**

They, the Thai security, opened the gate to let us enter their territory and they recorded people's names as they will hand [that information] to the foreigners [UNHCR and humanitarian agencies]. There are about 2,000 people [here] who are from --- [village name censored for security]. They record all of the people who come to stay here then they hand it to the foreigners. Then the NGO workers are trying to bring food, mosquito nets, blankets and pillows to give to us. But when NGO workers reach this place, by that time some of the villagers had gone back to their villages and only a few hundred [villagers] were left, so they told the Thai security that they [the refugees] were lying as the number of people wasn't the same as in the [Thai authorities'] record. So the Thai security got angry and started to close the bridge and stop people from coming to the Thai side, but the NGO workers apologized [and asked] them not to close the bridge, so they kept the bridge open.

**When did that happen?**

That happened on Thursday as well. We also have to be afraid of the Thai security when we come to stay here because they don't want more people to come to stay here.

**Do they give you any trouble?**

No, they don't give us any trouble because they see all of the people [here] are Karen villagers.

**We heard that some villagers are staying but some have gone back to their homes, so do you know why they had to go back?**

Some villagers heard that the situation was getting better and that there was no more fighting, so that's why they went back. But some people have been coming back again, as they feel it's unsafe for them to stay in their villages.

**Why do you think these villagers aren't going back to their villages?**

They're afraid that the DKBA troops will come back again to attack the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers, so that's why they don't want to go back yet.

**Has the fighting happened again afterward [since Thursday]?**

No, it hasn't happened yet.

**They [the villagers who fled] just worry that that the DKBA might return to attack the Burmese troops?**

Yes, they're worried that the DKBA might come back to attack the Burmese [Tatmadaw] troops that are based in their village. But some villagers have gone back as the Burmese troops asked them to go back to stay in their village. But still some villagers are afraid to go back as they expect the fighting might happen again.

[Another speaker] People who believe in what the Burmese [Tatmadaw] told them, they went back.

**What will happen in the future?**

I don't know if there will be more fighting or not. I can't guess.

**Have there been any problems for those who are returning from their village?**

Yes.

**Can you tell us what kind of problems they face?**

They're still afraid that fighting might happen in the village again. I think if the Burmese [Tatmadaw] troops become active there'll be fighting again. Now we've heard that the Karen army [DKBA] ordered the Burmese troops to withdraw their soldiers from that area within 15 days. If the Burmese troops don't withdraw their soldiers then the DKBA will return to attack them.

**[By 'Karen army'] Do you mean DKBA or KNLA troops?**

The DKBA in collaboration with the KNLA troops. Now the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] hasn't withdrawn their troops and remain in that area. So we heard that the Karen army will wait until November 13<sup>th</sup>. if the Burmese army doesn't withdraw from that area the fighting will break out again.

**What other problems have happened to the villagers who are returning from their village?**

No... I haven't heard anything right now.

**What do the villagers do to prepare themselves due to the conflict?**

The villagers prepare themselves to flee if any fighting breaks out. So now some of us have come to stay on the Thai side [of the Moei River] to escape from the fighting, but the Thai security [soldiers] also don't allow us to stay in their place, because there are a lot of people who have come here. So some of them [the villagers who fled] stay in the corn fields; however some of them didn't know where to stay or get food, so they move back to their village.

**Is the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] carrying out any activity in this area?**

No, I don't know about that.

**After the DKBA withdraw their troops, we heard that the SPDC [Tatmadaw] troops came into the village and took photos. Can you explain more about that?**

I heard from my cousin, who told me that this morning the SPDC troops came into the village and took photos of the DKBA houses.

**Did he see that?**

Yes, he saw that.

**Did he stay there when the fighting happened?**

Yes, he always stays there and he saw the SPDC troops taking photos of the DKBA houses and taking away their cars. I didn't know because I haven't gone back since I came to stay here but I just heard it from my cousin.

**Did they [Tatmadaw soldiers] take away their [DKBA] cars?**

Yes.

**How many cars did they take?**

They took only one car in Section 3 [of Waw Lay].

**What else would you like to say?**

No, nothing.

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**Interview | Saw C--- (male, 31), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Can you tell me why the villagers had to flee and come to stay here?**

Our villages' leaders went to meet with the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] to request that the villagers needed to go back to their villages to finish up their work, to harvest their rice and bean crops. The SPDC [Tatmadaw] commander told them that villagers could come back to harvest their fields, but that they couldn't provide security for the villagers. The villages' leaders needed to negotiate with the DKBA troops to not come and attack them as well. The Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] commander also told them that they don't expect that fighting will break out in between [when the villagers return and finish their harvests] but it has already happened, so they can't do anything.

The first disagreement between the SPDC [Tatmadaw] and DKBA started in Myawaddy on the Election Day. On that day, Bo Shwe Wat captured one of the Burmese [Tatmadaw] commanders, so the Burmese troops felt sad about that and asked the DKBA troops to release the commander that they had captured. We don't know if he was released or not, but we heard the Burmese side said if the DKBA didn't release the commander, they'd launch an offensive against the DKBA troops. Then they started to prepare for their troop.

**Who are 'they', the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw]?**

Yes, the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw].

**Do you mean that the DKBA and SPDC [Tatmadaw] had a meeting as you mentioned and they talked?**

No, they didn't meet. I meant the leaders from the village; they went to meet with the SPDC [Tatmadaw]. Some of the villagers couldn't do anything [any work] while they came to stay on the Thai side so they wanted to go back to work on their corn fields to be able to sell it [their corn] and buy food. After working [harvesting their crops] then if they have to move out then they'll move out again. We can't do anything if any fighting occurs in the village; we can only flee to escape.

As you know, we distrust the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] as we have a lot of experience [with the Tatmadaw] already. If any fighting breaks out in the village, they don't fire at their enemy; they will use and rely on the villagers. As you know, in last two or three days while the fighting was happening in Three Pagodas [Pass] the villagers had to suffer the most.

**Why don't you go back to your village?**

The situation isn't stable yet so I'm afraid to go back. Some people said the DKBA will come back to attack the Burmese [Tatmadaw] troops again, but some said the situation is stable now so they moved back to their villages. Some people went back as they think they feel safe, they

trusted what the Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers] told them. But I don't trust the Burmese [Tatmadaw] troops so I haven't gone back and will stay here and find daily paid work to earn my living.

**What do you do [for a living] when you stay here?**

I do all [any] work that's available to me. I work at a corn or rice field. You have to do all work, as you are staying in a difficult situation.

**What was your occupation before?**

Before, I worked as a carpenter.

**How much did you earn per day?**

I earned a percentage; for example, if one door costs about 1000 baht, then we got 200 baht and our [business] owner got 800 baht.

**How much do you earn per day in here?**

I earn by the basket: one basket is 2 baht. If you carry more, you get more.

**How many baskets can you carry in one day?**

I can carry between 100 to 200 baskets per day, then come back and stay in our place [temporary site], and stay in worry of the possible threats. We can't go out to find work in the far away places. So we have to stay like this.

**Do you want to say anything else?**

I want to, but I don't know much information so I can't tell you more.

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**Interview | Saw D--- (male, 24), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Can you tell me how long have you been coming to stay here?**

Many years, almost ten years already.

**Now [this time], when did you come to stay here?**

I came to stay here two months ago.

**Where is your village?**

I live in Waw Lay village [in Burma].

**Do you think you'll go back to Waw Lay?**

Our home is there, so when the situation is stable then we'll go back again.

**Did you come to stay here when you heard that the DKBA and the Burmese [Tatmadaw] troops would attack each other?**

When I came here, nothing was happening in Waw Lay yet. I came here to work with my boss.

**Didn't you stay in Waw Lay in Burma?**

Before, I stayed there on the Burma side, but now I've come here as more work is available. So I came here to work at my boss' plantation.

**Weren't you staying there when the fighting broke out in Waw Lay?**

No, I wasn't staying there, but my parents were staying there and when the fighting broke out, they couldn't go anywhere so they came here to stay with us.

**Do your parents [usually] stay over there [in Waw Lay in Burma]?**

Yes, my parents stay over there, and our house is located just opposite one of the teachers' house.

**Do you face any problems when your parents come to stay with you here?**

No, the Thai security [soldiers] haven't said anything because my boss understands me as I work for him; but for the other people, he said they can stay but [they have to] be quiet.

**What do you do [for work] here?**

I work in the corn or bean fields as a daily wage labourer.

**How much do you get in one day?**

If I work a full day, then I get 100 baht per day, but if I have to work only a half day then my boss gives me 50 to 60 baht per day.

**What are villagers most concerned about?**

They're afraid of the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] the most. They aren't much afraid of the KNLA or DKBA soldiers because they're all the same Karen. They're afraid of the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] the most because the Burmese Army does things mindlessly sometimes.

**What's the villagers' situation here now?**

Some villagers have hill fields or farms that they can't leave behind. So, they go back to do their [agricultural] work in the daytime and flee [back to Thailand] at night. Some raise chickens or

pigs, and go back [to Burma] to feed their chickens or pigs. Then, they go to sleep in another place.

**Have you heard anything about villagers losing their property?**

I've heard about it, but we don't know whether it's true or not. Some have lost their property and animals, but we don't know who ate the animals, whether [it was] villagers or soldiers. They were probably lost because there are no house owners [staying in the village].

**Have all villagers in --- [temporary hiding site censored for security] gone back?**

Only a few villagers have gone back to the village. Some have fled to stay in Phop Phra [Thailand]. Some have fled to stay in Al--- and some have gone to stay in Am---. They've fled to [different places to] stay separately. More villagers are staying on the border. But, they don't stay in the same place. They stay in different places.

**Have there been many people that have come to stay with you? What problems do you face when they come to stay with you?**

We feel pity on them when they come to stay here because they can't go anywhere and [just] came to stay here. So, I called them to stay here and sleep here.

**How many villagers are staying here?**

There are between 20 and 30 people that came to stay here.

**Do they have any food to eat?**

Now, they go back and take their own food to eat [from their villages]. When they first came here, they didn't bring their own food so we helped them and provided them with food.

**Can you tell us more about why these villagers don't dare to go back?**

The reason why they don't dare to go back is that some are afraid of [further] fighting and some are afraid of the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw].

**Why are they afraid of the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw]?**

They worry that the soldiers will call them when they see them. In the past, the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] sometimes called villagers to follow them at night and asked them to guide and show them the way. They're afraid of this as they've seen this happen before and since they're villagers. Even we are afraid of this. So, they don't dare to go back.

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**Interview | Saw E--- (male, 50), Waw Lay village, Kawkaik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Why did you have to flee to here?**



We fled at the same time that I heard mortar shelling. Some [villagers] fled here and went back to collect their children they'd left in the village, and encountered the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw soldiers]. I also fled here alone and left my family [in the village] so I went back and encountered them [Tatmadaw soldiers]. They told me not to run away, but I left my motorbike and ran away. They didn't shoot me when I ran away. People said they wouldn't do anything to us, but we're just afraid them.

**Did you return again after that?**

Yes, I returned back home the day before yesterday.

**Did you see them [Tatmadaw soldiers]?**

No, I went back to the lower part of the village and they're staying in the upper part.

**How is the SPDC army's operation there?**

They don't do anything to the people, as we've heard from what others said. They asked us to go back, but we don't dare to go back yet. We're afraid that they'll arrest us and that fighting will happen.

**Do the SPDC [Tatmadaw soldiers] just stay in the village [Waw Lay] now?**

Yes, they do.

**Do you know what they're doing there?**

No, I don't know, because I haven't gone back to the village in two days.

**What do you think will happen in the future?**

We aren't sure what will happen in the future. They've called us to go back and do our livelihoods as before, and farm our lands as before. They've asked those travelling here to tell us. For us, we don't dare to go back yet.

**How are your livelihoods now?**

We just had to leave them behind like that and our houses, too. We don't know whether we've lost our property or not. We closed the doors and had to leave [our property] behind like this and run away because we're afraid. We couldn't bring many things with us when we fled. We left it all behind at home. We could bring only some rice. When the rice is gone, we'll have to find more by ourselves in order to eat. We brought a sack of rice and shared it with our children, one or two bowls of rice for them and it's all gone. Now, one of my sons goes to work as a day labourer and earns 100-120 baht per day to help us.

**What is the situation of school in Waw Lay?**

For the school, we don't know when it'll open again. I have two children attending school there, in 6<sup>th</sup> Standard and 7<sup>th</sup> standard. They don't dare to go back and attend the school yet. the teachers also haven't reopened it yet. The teachers will reopen the school when the fighting

calms down. Even if they opened it now there's no one left in the village, no students. Everyone has run away. Two of the teachers also went back to their villages.

**What do you do with your plantations you leave behind when fighting happens like this?**

We can't do anything when this happens. We'll just have to pay back our boss later, because our boss on the Thai side [of the Moei River] invested the money for us to do the plantations and then sell [the harvest] back to them. Now, we don't dare to go back and work the plantations anymore, so the boss will record how much we have to pay them. Therefore, when we dare to do our plantations [again], we'll have to pay them back.

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**Interview | Saw F--- (male, 38), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**How many villagers, households and sections are there in your village?**

I don't know exactly how many villagers are in my village and I've never made notes about how many households there are. But there are five sections in Waw Lay village, section one to five.

**Tell me what happened to you and why you fled to Thailand?**

The Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] which is based in Tee Nyat Lih camp shelled [Waw Lay village] with mortars: about four or five mortars. After that, when the soldiers were about to enter the village, they fired small weapons. Villagers felt afraid when they heard the gunshots, so they fled to the other side of the river [to Thailand].

**Can you tell any information about the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] unit, battalion [number] or base [location]?**

I don't know their unit and I never asked them about their unit.

**When did the event happen and how did the villagers flee from the village?**

I don't exactly remember the time because I forgot to look at my watch. But the event happened in the morning on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2010. The villagers fled in different directions without looking to each other when this event happened. I ran in a different direction from my wife and children to the other side of the river [Thailand]. My wife was able to bring with some clothes when she ran but no other things. Villagers crossed the bridge and came to Thailand. When the villagers arrived, Thai soldiers were waiting for them on the bridge, and picked up the villagers with vehicles. The villagers didn't dare to get into the vehicles because they didn't know where the Thai army would send them. Even though they didn't dare to go, they had to go and they were sent to a cowshed in Waw Lay village [in Thailand].

**Was there any warning given before the mortars were shelled? Why did they shell the village? Did the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] soldiers arrest or torture any villagers when they entered the village?**

We didn't hear and weren't given any warning. As soon as we heard the shelling, the villagers were afraid and fled from the village. Some villagers had already started running when the guns were shooting. But one villager told me, not all villagers had fled when the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] reached the village entrance. They saw villagers fleeing when they entered the village but they didn't do anything. We don't know why they shelled the mortars. Did they shell [because they thought] there were DKBA here? But they didn't see any DKBA soldiers when they entered the village.

**Where did villagers go and stay when they came to Thailand? What support did villagers get?**

Villagers fled and stayed in several places. Some people stayed in other people's houses and some people stayed outside the village [Waw Lay village in Thailand]. The Thai soldiers gathered them at a cowshed. People gave us water when we arrived. No food was provided; because some villagers went back [before food was provided]. But one villager told me that people came and gave them Mama (instant noodles) and other food and snacks for the children.

**Why did other villagers get food but you just got water to drink, how [did this happen]? Who came and provided food to the villagers?**

After I fled to Thailand, in the afternoon around 2 or 3 pm some villagers went back so I also went back to my village. I heard that for villagers who remained; people came and provided them with food like Mama (instant noodles) and other food. I don't know about other support, but I heard that this support came from the Thais [it was not clear whether the interviewee was referring to the Thai army or Thai civilians].

**Why did the villagers go back?**

We heard that the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] was not in our village anymore so some villagers went back. Some went back around 2 or 3 pm. but some went back in the evening and at night time. Some villagers didn't dare to sleep at their homes after they went back. They went and slept on the other side of the river. My wife and children went back and slept on other side of river after they went back to our village.

**Did the villagers go back by themselves or were they forced to go by Thai soldiers?**

I heard that the Thai soldiers said [to villagers] *'If you go back, go back and stay there [in your villages]. Don't travel [back and forth]. You can stay here for one or two days. But you can go back and stay there [in your villages], and come back when the fighting happens again.'*

**Was any of your property lost?**

I didn't lose anything, but some villagers' chickens were gone. We don't know whether the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] soldiers or villagers took them.

**Why haven't other villagers come back?**

They heard that the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] will attack the DKBA and DKBA will attack the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw]. They're afraid that the fighting will happen [again] so they don't dare to go back.

**What you think the situation will be in the future?**

Villagers have heard that the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] at Tee Nyat Lih Hta will send their injured soldiers [to another location]. The DKBA soldiers will attack them if they send [their injured to another location]. So villagers are afraid that fighting will happen and they will get injured. Some villagers who remained in Thailand are working [for wages]. If they [Tatmadaw and DKBA leaders] can negotiate, maybe fighting won't happen. I don't dare to try to find out the information even though I've come back and stayed in my village. I worry that people will misunderstand me and kill me.

**What problems will villagers have to face if fighting happens?**

There are many problems that would be caused for villagers. Now, villagers are poor. It isn't easy to work when fighting happens. Villagers can't work on their [flat] farms or hill fields. Now, some of the villagers' paddy and corn fields are not [yet] ready to harvest. They'll have to leave their plantations [without harvesting them] if fighting happens.

**When you meet with DKBA, SPDC [Tatmadaw] and KNLA soldiers, do they ever cause any problems for villagers?**

Currently the situation is the same as before. It seems like they [DKBA and KNLA soldiers] trust each other. We villagers don't dare to go and make a relationship with Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers. The Burmese soldiers told a villager who was going to his farm and met with Burmese soldiers and with Burmese Army sentries on the road, that if villagers go to their farms or corn plantations, they have to go in the morning and come back before dark. The villagers might be mistakenly shot if they go and work at night time.

**Are there any problems if villagers from other villages meet with these armed groups?**

I don't know if other villagers have to face problems. But one village located close to our village, called An---, has seven or eight households. Now, no villagers are staying in that village. They're afraid and they've all fled to the other side of the river [Thailand].

**What is the relationship between the DKBA and SPDC [Tatmadaw]?**

Now, no DKBA soldiers are staying in our village [Waw Lay]. I don't know exactly about the [Tatmadaw's] relationship with the DKBA. But the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] activities are patrolling, guarding the road and staying close to the village. I haven't seen them come into the village during the daytime. But I think they've come during the night-time because we saw their space in the morning.

**When they are afraid, how do villagers prepare themselves [to flee]?**

All the villagers make preparations. All villagers pack up their things. For me, I put things in my basket so it will be easy to carry when fighting happens. Some villagers already keep packages on the other side of the river [in Thailand] and some people put packages by the riverside [in Burma] to be ready for them to carry.

**Do villagers plan and discuss about what will happen in the future?**

The village head hasn't told us anything about what we have to do if something happens. But I've told my family that we won't flee to the riverside if the situation [fighting] happens far from us. We'll stay in our village or stay in the hole that we've dug under our house [a shelter]. We'll flee to the riverside if [fighting] happens in our village.

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**Interview | Saw G--- (male), Waw Lay village, Kawkareik Township (November 14<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Can you update me on information about SPDC [Tatmadaw] activities in Waw Lay?**

Now, Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers stay in their army camp at Htee Nya Lee, and some of their soldiers stay at Pu [Grandfather] Na Kha Mway's and at DKBA soldiers' houses. Also, some of the soldiers are staying in a monastery. They aren't very active, they just come to the village and buy their food in the village every morning. We heard that [some of] their soldiers are pretending to be villagers and going around in the village, and also going to look at the situation of villagers who haven't come back to the village. They [Tatmadaw soldiers] told us that the villagers can come back and do their work, but some of the villagers haven't dared to come back yet. Even though we're staying in the village we're afraid that an attack will happen and we always have to be ready to flee to the Thai side [of the Moei River] if an attack happens. Now, we don't dare to research the activities of the SPDC [Tatmadaw] because we're afraid that they will accuse us of contacting outside people. So, we have to stay quietly in the village.

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**Interview | Naw H--- (female), I--- village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**When did you come here?**

We came here on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month [November] after voting. People said Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers were coming to attack us and we were afraid. We heard gunshots going "Tu-tu-ta-ta". We were afraid of the Burmese [Tatmadaw] and we ran away.

**Did Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers often come to attack your village?**

When the DKBA weren't present in our village [in the past], Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers came and attacked and we had to flee. Since the DKBA has been in our village no Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers have come and [there's been] no need to flee.

**What's the situation in your village?**

On the election day, on Sunday, we had to go to vote in the Burmese village. We wrote down our name on paper and chose the flag [the logo of the Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party, a political party with ethnic Karen members] or *twee pah gklee* [a Karen word usually meaning 'dog' but used by the speaker in this context to describe the lion that is one of the logos of the Union Solidarity Development Party]. Most Karen casted votes for the flag, our own flag. Ordinary Burmese also casted votes for the flag. [There were] less votes for *twee pah gklee*.

**Has someone told you about the result of the vote?**

No one has told us. We fled here and we've heard nothing about it. We know nothing. When they said we had to cast a vote, they gave us each a piece of paper. We wrote down our name [on the paper] and we signed on the flag.

**Why did you flee here?**

We're scared of Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers. People said the Burmese soldiers went to Myawaddy. We heard shelling but we didn't see them. We heard gunshots; then in the morning, we fled.

**Why did the DKBA and the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers fight?**

We don't know anything [about that]. Other people fled and we also fled. We were afraid that we'd be hit by the bullets.

**Do you think there was a reason that they shot at each other?**

I don't know. We only wanted to prevent ourselves from being arrested to become porters, and we ran away.

**Who was recruiting porters?**

We heard that in Myawaddy, the SPDC [Tatmadaw] was recruiting porters. I'm worried about if my husband [has] to be a porter. So we fled here.

**Where's your husband now?**

He's sleeping here, he's sick. That's why we fled ahead of the fighting.

**Do you plan to go back?**

Yes, if it's getting peaceful in my village, I'll go home and reap my paddy. I left my children at home to look after our things. If it's peaceful they'll call me on the phone.

**Do you have a phone?**

Yes, we can contact them. Our paddy field is getting ripe and we have to go back and reap it.

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**Interview | Saw J--- (male, 20), I--- village, Kawkaeik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Where are you from?**

I'm from Ak--- village, Bassein Township in the [Irrawaddy] Delta. Before [Cyclone] Nargis I left Pauktaw to come to I--- village to look for a Job.

**What happened to your current village?**

The Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers weren't coming into our village, but we heard that they were in the forest. We heard that there was fighting in Myawaddy.

**Why did you come here?**

I heard that in Myawaddy the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers are arresting people to be porters. I heard that there was fighting in Myawaddy. My wife asked me to flee because she worried that I'd be arrested to be a porter.

**Where's your wife?**

In my village, in I---.

**Why didn't your wife come with you?**

She has to look after the house and the animals.

**Who were involved in the fighting?**

The DKBA and the SPDC [Tatmadaw].

**Why did the fighting happen?**

I think it was because of the election. Only Burmese [representatives or parties] won in the election, and not the Karen groups.

**What is the situation in your village?**

The DKBA and the [KNU/KNLA] Peace Council aren't far from our village. I heard that 100 or 200 people will flee from I--- village. We think that fighting will happen again near our village.

**Have you had any support here?**

I came to my brother-in-law's house and he has helped and supported me. I just arrived at --- [hiding site in Thailand censored for security] this morning at 7 o'clock. My wife is worried that if the Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers come to our village, they'll arrest villagers to be porters and I'd be arrested. That's why I left I--- village.

**Do you feel safe here?**

Yes, I feel safe staying with my brother-in-law's family

**Do you plan to go back to your village?**

Yes, when the situation is better.

**How far is I--- village?**

By motorcycle it's twenty minutes, and on foot it's more than one hour.

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**Interview | Naw Ag--- (female, 46), I--- village, Kawkareik Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Can you tell us about the situation in your village?**

In my village, people had to go and vote. They asked a person from each household to go. They will make trouble for us if we do not go. For me, I was sick and did not go and vote. We do not know about voting and we did not go. Due to the Burmese Army's [Tatmadaw] attack, we did not stay and had to come here.

**Who told you to go and vote?**

The Burmese told us. They ordered the village head and the village head had to inform us. For me, I was sick and I did not go. The morning when they went there [to vote], my elder sister went.

**Who is your elder sister?**

[My elder sister is] Naw Ah---.

Two of my children went to attend school in Aj--- and some went [there] for treatment. There are only small children left with me. We are not rich. We do not own a farm and we do not have any money. We had to flee here and do not have any food.

**Is there anyone helping you when you arrived here?**

I returned home on the day when people came and recorded people's names so my name was not included [in records kept by a relief group]. When people distribute food, we do not receive anything because our names are not included [in the record].

**What were you doing when they came to record people's names?**

I went back to see my farm and children who were left in the village.

**Why did you flee?**

The SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] has a problem with the DKBA army so we fled.

**How did the problem happen?**

The problem happened the same as what happened in Ma Ner Bplaw [Ma Ner Bplaw was the former headquarters of the KNU, which fell after heavy fighting in 1995]. The SPDC Army takes villagers away so our villagers have to fear and we fled in concern for our safety and in advance.

**Can you tell us a little more details of the incident?**



In I---, nothing has happened. The incident happened in Myawaddy. They shelled mortars and we were afraid that it would reach us so we fled.

**How far is it between Myawaddy and I---?**

It takes one hour to walk [from I--- to Myawaddy]. When they shelled mortars at night, it did not reach to us. It reached to a vehicle road.

**How many mortars reached the vehicle road when they shelled?**

Three mortars [reached the road]. In the morning, we fled here. I brought money, Thai baht when I came.

**Before you came here, were you be able to pack your things?**

I didn't dare to stay because I have a small child. I didn't have time to pack things and I had to come like this. My elder brother told me to stay together, eat together, and go together. I didn't know anyone when I came to stay here. I worry that the incident will happen as before, when the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] tormented us. They abused villagers and oppressed women when we could not flee to sleep [in a hiding place]. That is why we are afraid and we fled.

**Why did the incident happen?**

We heard people say that the day after we had to go and vote, people [the Tatmadaw and DKBA] fought each other at night at 8 pm. We couldn't flee, couldn't work, and we stayed at home and didn't know what happened. We heard when others told us. We trusted them when the others told us that at night. We worried that the Burmese Army, the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] would come and attack. We cannot escape when they come so that we fled in advance.

**How did it happen?**

The incident [conflict] occurred between the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] and the group in the DKBA army which did not sign [agree to become a Border Guard Force]. The DKBA group which did not sign, is based in the upper part [on high ground] in the place where we stay and the DKBA group that signed is based at the upper part [on high ground] near the vehicle road. The group that signed told us that the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] would attack and that we wouldn't be able to flee and escape when the Burmese Army attacked, so we fled in advance.

**Are there any people who died when the attack happened in Myawaddy?**

We saw on TV. We saw people fled to cross Myawaddy River [the Moei River, east of Myawaddy Town] to Thailand. People said there were 3,000 people [who fled].

**Do you think this [kind of] incident will happen again?**

I have no idea. We have no communication with anyone when we stay here. We don't know the situation. We stay and wait to see the situation. We also don't feel well. If we stay in our village, we can't flee when the incident [attack] happens.

**Did you come along with your husband?**

My husband is living in Bangkok and working in order to find money. We have a corn plantation and didn't make a profit so we have to pay [back] a debt of 200,000 baht to our boss. We can't pay it so my husband has to go and work in Bangkok. We can't work in Burma so we have to go [to work] in Bangkok.

**How much did you lose doing the corn plantation in a year?**

200,000 baht.

**Do you want to tell us anything else?**

I can't say any more. We do our livelihoods, but [get] no profit. You only have to be afraid. In the village, older and young people all have to stay aware of the situation. We can't speak Burmese so that we have to worry that they'll torture us. We hear that the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] tortures people, including women, so we're afraid that. Even though people blocked the road, we found a way to come. Now, the price [of things] has become a little higher and the road has reopened. Even though the road has reopened, they didn't want to reopen it. [The reason] They opened it is related to the corn [trade].

**How much tax do they take from corn?**

I don't know.

We don't want fighting anymore. We face problems when we have to flee from place to place. Since we were children, until now, we [have had to] flee and it's a little bit ok if we're healthy. When we're not healthy and don't have any money, we face big problems.

## **Appendix 2: Interviews with Villagers in Myawaddy Area**

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**Interview | Saw K--- (male, 30), Myawaddy Town, T'Nay Hsa Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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### **Where do you live now?**

Now I live in Myawaddy. I live at my friend's house. [My own house] is in --- [location censored for security]. I came and rented a house from my friend [in Myawaddy]. My friend is a house renter . I came to find a job.

### **Did you flee here when the fighting happened last week?**

I didn't flee. I stayed at home and looked [at the situation].

### **What did you see when you stayed and watched what was happening?**

When they first fired [guns], there was shooting in the whole city. When the guns were shot, the villagers ran and called to each other, closed their houses and fled to Thailand. They fled to Gate 17 [an unofficial trade and migration gate on the Thailand side of the Moei River, south of the Thai-Burma Friendship Bridge between Mae Sot and Myawaddy]. We, the men, went and helped them by carrying their packages to the other side of the [Moei] river. After they went, just the men were still left. I went back and stayed at home. After a while, a shell fell beside me but didn't explode. It didn't explode, so I got up and came back. I was afraid but I'm a man and I tried to make myself brave, and I came back and stayed at home.

### **Did they [villagers] walk around during the fighting?**

Mostly they were at the monastery.

### **When did the fighting occur?**

At 8:30 am. They started [fighting] on the 7<sup>th</sup> [of November] at 8:30 am.

### **Which group started shooting first?**

[DKBA Battalion #902 commander Lieutenant Colonel] Kyaw Thet's soldiers shot first. The DKBA shot first. They shot at the Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers]. It started at the [Thailand Burma Friendship] bridge.

### **Do you think many civilians were injured or killed? How many people died?**

As I know three civilians died, two men and one pregnant woman, under the bridge. For the trishaw [driver], a mortar fell on his trishaw. It was during the day when the event happened.

### **Who shot [the mortar]?**

We don't know which group shot it because the mortars come from there [far away] and fall down here, so it could've been the DKBA. The DKBA stayed on that side, the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade side [south of Myawaddy town, in the direction of Dooplaya District]. They shot [the mortar] and it fell down in the middle of the road.

**Did the DKBA stay under the bridge also?**

At first the DKBA stayed there.

**When did those people die, was it on the first day or later?**

They died on the first day [on November 7<sup>th</sup>]. They fought and [the fighting] finished after 10 am.

**Did they [the people who died] walk around during the fighting?**

They were carrying their packages. They were fleeing.

**How many people do you think fled to Thailand?**

There were about 70 to 80, or 100 villagers who fled.

**How did they flee and how did they come to Thailand?**

In front of my house, I saw people went and picked them [villagers who were fleeing] up. We sent them with a car. The first time we sent them, people didn't block us. The second time, the Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers] surrounded our car and shot guns in front of us. They asked us to go back. We turned back and came back. We couldn't cross [the Moei River to Thailand].

**Who shot at the car?**

The Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers]. They didn't let us cross. On the way to Gate 17, before we arrived at Gate 17 they surrounded us. They shot in front of us so we turned our car back. It was on the same day [November 7<sup>th</sup>].

**When did you go?**

At 11 am.

**Whose car did you drive?**

The car was my friend's car. He's a civilian.

**Did people order them to run [flee] or did they run by themselves?**

People ordered them to run. People gave them warning.

**Who gave them warning?**

The Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers] said '*Protect yourselves.*' They gave 45 minutes [for civilians to escape].

**But they didn't let some people escape?**

45 minutes had passed. It was during the fighting, so they didn't let us go. We came back [home] but the sound became bigger [the gunfire was louder], so we went to another gate. ...[audio recording not clear]... People sent the pregnant woman to Mae Tao Clinic. The pregnant woman was dead. Her stomach fell down [was severely wounded by a mortar].

**So you saw two people die?**

Two people died in the trishaw. Their heads and eyes were blown up.

**And one [person] was injured?**

The pregnant woman died in a different place. Three people died. The one who was injured is different from them [the three civilians who were killed].

**Did you know them?**

I didn't know them, but they're villagers.

**How many hours did the fighting last?**

It was [only] *kyeh bpreh* [a skirmish] until evening. [audio recording not clear]... They just shelled with heavy arms. A few small arms were fired. Mostly they used bombs and hand grenades. Mostly I heard heavy arms.

**Did the DKBA or SPDC [Tatmadaw] take security for civilians?**

They said nothing about security. They gave us the time and [said] '*The situation isn't good. You can escape within 45 minutes.*' After a while the fighting happened. Then they told villagers if they wanted to go down [to Kawkaeik town or other cities], they could go. But they let cars come up [to Myawaddy]. [Civilians] could go to Pa'an but [people from Pa'an] weren't allowed to come up here.

**Was anything damaged in Myawaddy town, like shops, houses or other buildings?**

I haven't gone around in all areas, so I don't know, but as I know they [Tatmadaw soldiers] are walking around and checking at night. They're checking where DKBA houses are. 'They' means Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers] and Border Guard Forces. They surround [DKBA] houses and check them at night. They surround [the houses] and point their guns [at the houses].

**We heard they were going around and checking people, and arresting people.**

Yesterday, they arrested one group. They said they were arresting porters.

**How many people did you see?**

Four cars [of people]. The cars were Border Guard Force's cars, big cars like Vigos and some were military coloured. Yesterday, I saw four people in a car. They went to people's houses and ask for men. People told them there were no men and people fled into the jungle.

**Were there any problems when civilians crossed the border and fled to Thailand?**

There weren't any problems.

**Were there any groups that assisted them when they arrived to Thailand?**

Thai people helped and assisted them. They said that the Thai people took care of them carefully. They provided food.

**Have those people come back?**

They've come back. Almost all of them have come back.

**Is there anything that they have to be afraid of after they came back?**

Some people are still afraid because they aren't sure about the situation. They [have to] stay with awareness of when they'll have to flee and when people will fight. They worry about this. The situation is still dangerous. They've heard that fighting will still happen. People said there'd be fighting if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi isn't released. Different people say different words. Some people came back, closed their houses and ran away.

**What about you? Won't you run?**

I won't run. I'll stay at there.

**Why?**

There's no benefit even if I run. I don't want to flee from here. That's one reason. And staying in other people's country isn't the same as staying in your own country. I'll dig a hole and stay in there.

**Did you dig a hole?**

There's a hole under my house.

**Were any houses burned down?**

I haven't gone to the market. I did go around [there] but people didn't let us in. People are selling now [in the market].

**Has the situation become normal as before?**

Some things have become normal. I can say it's become 70% normal. Even though it isn't normal, it's become better.

**Were there any problems for donors to go and help villagers who fled to Thailand?**

I don't know about that.

**Which day did most of the civilians come back?**

Most of them came back the day before yesterday.

**Did the SPDC [Tatmadaw soldiers] help villagers when the villagers went back?**

The SPDC provided no support. They have to help themselves.

**Did SPDC [Tatmadaw soldiers] question them when they went back?**

No, they didn't check [the people returning]. There was no checking yesterday.

**How did they go across the river?**

Some people went across with *seh lay* [motorboats] and *baw* [inner tubes].

**Did they have to pay, and how much did they have to pay?**

I don't know about that.

**What about you? How did you travel?**

I travelled by boat. I had to pay because I travelled alone.

**Did they check you when you went back?**

I came today. I haven't gone back yet. I came yesterday.

**Did the Thai soldiers force villagers to go back, or did the villagers go back by themselves?**

They wanted to go back because they worried about their homes, so they went back. People didn't send them back. They wanted to go back because they worried about their property and they wanted to go back. No one forced them to go back.

**How did they keep [leave] their property when they ran?**

They just put [their property] in their homes and closed the doors and windows quickly, and run away, like a tiger trying to catch a deer. They were worried and afraid and ran away.

**Had they lost their property when they went back?**

Yes, they did.

**Who do you think took their property?**

They thought it was *wah khee* [literally 'white bones', a derogatory term used by some Karenn villagers for Burmese soldiers] because they didn't run when the people ran. They just sent their wives and children, but they stayed and found things [from people's houses]. They were Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers], not Karen.

**What [kind of] property did villagers lose?**

Most property that villagers lost was food and animals. As I know and have heard, one of my neighbours and several people in the market [lost property]. He [my neighbour] lost two of his chickens.

**Do you think the place where they stay now is secure?**

No, it's not secure. It's *gkoh gkoh ler ler* [a Karen expression literally meaning 'hot and warm'; used by the speaker to explain that the situation is unstable, changing from dangerous to less dangerous] .

**What do you mean by *gkoh gkoh ler ler*?**

You have to worry that they'll continue fighting, and that we'll have to flee again and stay [outside our village].

**Has there been any clue that the fighting will continue?**

I think [more] fighting will happen. People talk about that, so I think the fighting will continue. You can see now, they aren't looking to each other. They're trying to catch each other. The SPDC [Tatmadaw] looks at the BGF's movements, and the BGF looks at the DKBA's movements, and the SPDC [Tatmadaw] looks at the DKBA's movements. If you stay as a villager, what will you do if you don't worry?

**As you said, it seems like there are several [armed] groups. How many groups are there?**

There are several.

**Are the BGF and SPDC [Tatmadaw] working together?**

Even though they're working together, they aren't satisfied with each other. Some people [BGF soldiers] were forced to do things they weren't willing to do. Many people aren't satisfied.

**Is this [the situation] between the SPDC [Tatmadaw] and BGF?**

Yes.

**What about the DKBA and BGF?**

They're close and they know each other. [The BGF] are going around and checking [DKBA] houses. The Burmese [Tatmadaw] soldiers don't know all of the DKBA houses. The BGF knows [the houses], so they were ordered to do that.

**We heard that they [some BGF troops] deserted here and the Thai Army arrested them sent them back. Have you heard anything about that?**

No, I haven't heard.

**Can you explain to me the current situation?**



It's not normal and hasn't become normal as before. It's like you have stay and wait and with sadness. [The situation] is not peaceful and not the same as before. We could stay peacefully and happily before they caused the problems. But now if you stay you have to be afraid, step by step. Will the fighting happen again, and how will the situation be?

**Did villagers go back to their house or to other places?**

Some people went back to their homes, some people picked up their packages and went down to lower land [lowlands areas of Pa'an and Doooplaya Districts]. And some people escaped to other places. They went down to Pa'an. They went to stay in cities.

**Why did they go?**

It's isn't so sure if there'll be fighting or not. They didn't dare to stay. They fled to save their lives.

**Are there people who haven't come back?**

There are some people who haven't come back [to Burma] but most people have come back.

**Why haven't they come back?**

They have their families there [in Burma]. So they stayed there.

**I meant people who fled to Thailand and haven't gone back [to Burma].**

I don't know about that.

**For people who went back [to Burma], did they all go back or not?**

Yes, their whole families went back. [Those who went down to lowland areas], they went with their families. They closed their houses and fled down.

**Before, you said they arrested people. Were those people civilians?**

I don't know exactly. People said they were arresting people to be porters. We came back on a motorbike and we saw that they were called down [asked to climb into a car], [I saw] four people.

**Do you know where they were sent?**

I don't know.

**Are there any problems that the DKBA or SPDC [Tatmadaw] cause for villagers?**

I haven't seen [any].

**Do you stay with your family?**

No, I stay alone. My family lives in 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade [Thaton District].

**Are you married?**

No, I'm single.

**What will the situation be for villagers in the future?**

I don't know.

**Can you say what the situation will be in next month?**

As I think, it'll get hot [worse]. There'll be a problem and villagers will have to flee.

**Do villagers help each other when they flee?**

The villagers help each other. People who have cars carry [things] for other people. Some people who have no one to carry [things] for them, we went and carried [things] for them. They didn't ask for money for [using] the car. They helped each other.

**Do villagers know that the situation will become worse?**

Most villagers know about that.

**Have they made any preparations?**

They have prepared to flee. They've packed up [their belongings] in bags. Some people have sent their property to other places. Some people have closed their shops. Some people sold their goods but they haven't bought more.

**Do you think more people will move to lower land [lowland areas of Pa'an and Dooplaya Districts]?**

People are moving down little by little every day. More cars go down but less cars are coming up. Yesterday, some cars came up [here] because they were allowed to come up.

**Did they come up for business or to pick up their families?**

They came up for business.

**Do they allow DKBA and KNU-KNLA Peace Council cars to run?**

No, they don't allow those groups' cars to run. They just give a chance for BGF [cars]. No other cars were allowed to run. But cars which have licenses can travel. They didn't allow [KNU/KNLA Peace Council Commander] Pu Htein Maung's or the DKBA's cars to run.

**Has the school re-opened?**

The lower grade school [primary or elementary school] re-opened yesterday but not the high school. I don't know when the high school will open.

**Is there anything else that you want to say?**

I want them to be united and not fighting anymore. [Then] Villagers could do their work [livelihoods] as before. If there's fighting between brother and brother, it won't be good. If possible, it'll be good if they can do this until [we] get freedom. No Karen people have any rights. They were beaten up, kicked and oppressed when they stood up. I hope people organise in a correct way and become united, but I can't give a suggestion about how to organise them.

**Do villagers do anything for these two groups to be united again?**

We don't dare to organise and can't organise for these two groups. They'll say we persuaded them and we'd be killed without reason.

**Which group do you think is correct?**

I can't say about that.

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**Interview | Daw L--- (female, 52), Myawaddy Town, T'Nay Hsa Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**In which section of Myawaddy do you live?**

I live in Section 5 of Myawaddy which is a bit far from downtown and close to Gate 10.

**Why did you flee here?**

We didn't dare to stay because of the attack.

**Did an attack happen near your house?**

Yes. There's an army gate in front of my house.

**What kind of gate? An SPDC [Tatmadaw] gate or DKBA gate?**

Both DKBA and SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers stay together there.

**Did they still mix [stay together] during the attack?**

I don't know, because I fled here during the attack.

**Did you flee here before the attack or after it?**

After the attack [started].

**How did you flee here?**

There were some boats to carry people from M---, about 1000 [people], to this side. I came here by that boat and when we got to this side, the Thai soldiers asked us where we'd go and we responded that we'd go to work at N---. Then they only said 'Go'.

**So could you still hear the sound of fighting while you were fleeing?**

Yes. I fled here during the attack but my husband had to stay at home to prepare some of our household things and keep them in a safe place. Because it wasn't our own [place] and we couldn't leave our things there. If we did, we'd have to pay fees for that. Then all of us arrived here.

**So you didn't bring anything when you fled here?**

No, we didn't.

**Did the boat drivers ask for boat fees?**

No, they didn't.

**So now have you got any help from anywhere since you arrived here?**

No. We have to look for a way on our own, like collecting beans from the fields [work as daily labourers picking beans on plantations].

**Does anyone send provisions to you?**

We only got rice yesterday, but no rations for now.

**Do you know the name of the organization that provided you with rations?**

No, but they sent us rice packages by asking someone yesterday. We didn't know the name [of the organisation].

**Have you been helped with any clothes?**

No. Just rice packages only.

**Have you heard about if anyone has tried to support people like you but the Thai authorities didn't give them permission?**

No, we haven't.

**Did you see if anyone died during the attack?**

We heard that one pregnant woman and one trader's nephew were killed by a mortar. But we don't know about that side [the Burma side of the river] and haven't seen [anything] either. But, we heard there were [people who] died.

**How was the situation when you went back to Myawaddy to take your property?**

The situation there was pretty quiet and most people from my place [already] arrived to the Thai side [of the Moei River]. Only people who have their own houses and orchards are still staying there in fear of an attack.

**Did you go back yesterday?**

Yes, I had to go and take back our household things with my husband, and came back here again by boat on the same day.

**Did your husband flee during the attack?**

No. he didn't. He just came here yesterday.

**Where is he now?**

He's going to --- [location censored for security] to charge his phone battery.

**How did you go back to Myawaddy?**

We went back there by [hired] motorcycle.

**Were you checked on your way back there?**

No. we weren't checked by either side [by the Thai Army or Tatmadaw soldiers]. They said nothing but just asked '*Are you one of those people who fled yesterday?*' Nothing else.

**Did they ask for money?**

No, they didn't.

**Do you dare to go back and stay on the Myawaddy side [of the river] now?**

We have to wait and see the situation for now, and work here. We aren't sure whether to go back and stay there yet, or later as well. In our family there are only adults so maybe we'll go back. Or we'll stay here. Because [in Myawaddy] we have to rent an apartment, and as soon as you move in you have to pay 30,000 kyat per month for rent.

**What did you do when you stayed there?**

We didn't have a stable job there, but just sifted sand from the river.

**How much did you get per day?**

It depended on how much we could sift. We sometimes got 2000 or 3000 kyat per day. But in the cold season, like now, we only get 1500 kyat per day, which only is enough for our daily meals.

**Do you have any fear to stay here?**

As you know, we just stay here like this.

**Were you still afraid after you arrived here?**

No. I wasn't afraid after I arrived here.

**Are you afraid that the Thai authorities will send you back to Myawaddy?**

[Audio recording not clear]

**When you went and took back your property from Myawaddy, had some of your property been lost?**

No, because we didn't have too much property. But I'm not sure for those who have a lot of property.

**Had your house been destroyed or damaged by gunfire or fires?**

No, nothing was destroyed on that side [of town]. But we heard there was only [damage] on the outside of Myawaddy not inside Myawaddy.

**Since you fled here, have you faced any trouble from the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw]?**

No, we didn't see any soldiers since that time, the soldier are just inside Myawaddy at the market. There are no soldiers at the riverside. Most people ran to the riverside and just a few men are still inside Myawaddy.

**How many people do you think ran to the riverside?**

About 1,000. A lot of people arrived at the riverbank and fled [across] at different places.

**Did you hear some gunfire or mortar explosions when you d here?**

We heard one mortar and two or three gunshots on that day. We ran to this side as soon as we heard those sounds

**Do you dare to go back and stay?**

No.

**Why? Have you heard something?**

No. We don't dare to go back for now. This has been a sudden case, and some people are shocked about this. And there [in Burma], it's not so easy to escape suddenly from the outside of Myawaddy because there are so many gates along the riverside to go the Thai side [of the river].

**Have you heard something about if attacks will happen again?**

No, but some are going to listen to the situation at the riverside.

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**Interview | Naw O--- (female, 28), P--- village, Tak Province (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**How do you help those [villagers] who have arrived here?**

When they fled they phoned us and said they were facing problems and we went and picked them up. Then we came back and put them into Thai huts in different places. And when they arrived, we provided them with some food and if there was work to do, they could go and do a little wage labour.

**Do you take security for them all?**

For security problems, we informed the [village] section leaders that people were coming to stay. If they stay longer, they'll have to get a permit to stay; and if they don't [stay] long, if they can go back, then they'll go back and if they can't they'll stay here.

**How long have you been here?**

I've been here for ten years already.

**When you help them [villagers who fled] with food, how do you arrange to get food for them?**

We share what we have here.

**Do you contact aid groups about them?**

I have no contact with other [groups], only with Saw Q---

**Do you also look for jobs for them?**

Yes, if we know that someone needs workers, then I go and ask them to do the work.

**Do they have other problems that they have to face, for example [being] arrested by the police?**

There's no problem in the houses, but we have to be worried if they go outside.

**Do they go outside?**

When they have work to do, they go outside and if they don't have work, they stay in their places [houses].

**As you have been looking after them, do you say anything to them concerning security?**

I have to tell them to understand the situation, because we have come to stay in another country, and we have to stay wisely. If they go somewhere, they have to take care not to be arrested by the police.

**When you tell them that are there any problems and do they listen to you?**

There's no problem. They listen.

**What about if they have health problems?**

When they have health problems, we just contact Saw Q---. If Saw Q--- can help, that's good. If he can't, we have to look for another way but I hope he can help us.

**Did you have to send them [for health services] already?**

I haven't sent people but now there's one man and I think I'll send him to Mae Tao Clinic.

**When they go around for work, how do you deal with the section leaders?**

Until now, I haven't had to deal with them especially [about the villagers who fled]. But if something happens, we'll have to go and discuss it with section leaders. The section leaders said they [the villagers who fled] can stay. But if they have to stay longer, they'll have to do get a permit to stay like we do once every year.

**What about other support like clothes?**

Yes, we have support and Saw Q--- is arranging it for us. We don't know about other people, we only know Saw Q---. He tries to help us.

**Do you want to say something more?**

I didn't have other things to say but for them, to be able to stay and be able go here and there, we'll look for way for them [to stay and move around freely].

**Do you want to say something for them?**

For them and for their healthcare I would like to request that they be provided with good health services if they have health problems. For me, it's not easy to travel.

**What kind of diseases are they mostly suffering from?**

They mostly suffer from fever [malaria]. They don't suffer from other kinds of diseases.

**Where did you stay in the past?**

I stayed in R--- village, Kyauk Ta Ka Township, Bago Division.

**Since they have come to stay here, can their children go to school?**

No, they can't go to school yet. When they were in Myawaddy they went to school, but when the fighting happened, the children couldn't go to school anymore. Now they are just arriving and they can't think about what to do. They'll have some difficulties.

**There's one school here. Do the children's parents have to pay for this school?**

No, they don't need to pay school fees for this school.



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**Do you currently live in T--- village [hiding site censored for security]?**

Yes, I live in T---.

**How many family members do you have?**

Currently there are six family members in my village, seven if you include a young boy who got married.

**Why did you flee here?**

There it was *bone-die, wone-die* [an unexpected and frightening situation]. People fled and we also had to flee. We didn't dare to stay because it was *bone-die, wone-die*. First, I listened to the gunshots but [later] there was the sound of mortars here and there. That wasn't good so I fled to here.

**What were you afraid of, the attack or another thing?**

Yes, I was afraid because of the attack. I wasn't afraid anything of else. They [villagers] said they [soldiers] were calling porters [arresting people to be porters]. I was afraid of that also.

**How did you hear about that?**

When I arrived at the riverbank, a large group ran after us and shouted '*They're arresting people to be porters.*' I don't know how many people were arrested. My children and I had arrived on the other side of the [Moei] river.

**Did you see mortars falling?**

I didn't see that with my eyes, but I heard the sound. I didn't dare to go and look.

**How did you flee here?**

I packed up things at home and fled here. I thought it'd be safe here. The mortars were falling here and there and I was afraid of this. So I called my whole family and fled here.

**Could you bring all your property?**

There isn't too much [I don't own much property]. I put pots, place and other things in the bags and fled here.

**Did you leave any other property in your home?**

Just water containers and old clothes are still left.

**How did you cross the river?**

We crossed the river by boat and by tractor when we arrived on this side.

**When did you flee?**

On the day when the attack was happening. I don't remember the date...

**When did the fighting start?**

It happened in the morning around 9 or 10 am.

**Did all your family [members] accompany you?**

Yes, they all did.

**Did you go back after you arrived here?**

No. I just listen [to the situation] from here. I don't dare to go back.

**How many mortars were shelled or did you hear before you ran?**

I ran when I heard three mortars. First, we ran here and there and stayed [in Myawaddy] but later this wasn't good. I didn't dare to stay so I fled here.

**Was the place where mortars fell close to your house?**

It wasn't too far. Just *t'aw tha* [a Karen expression literally meaning 'one shout,' similar to the English expression 'within shouting distance']. It [a mortar] fell in the market where we go and buy food. It's a five-minute walk.

**Did you get any support when you arrived here?**

We don't get [regular] support, but yesterday we were called. Yesterday they gave us rice. They only gave rice yesterday.

**Who gave the rice?**

The *saya gyi* [a term meaning 'teacher' often used to describe a respected person] here. They called us and gave us [the rice]. They gave it to us here.

**What's your opinion on this attack?**

I don't know exactly about the attack. Earlier [before the fighting happened], people were saying the situation wasn't good. I was easy-going, but later it [fighting] really happened and I didn't dare to stay.

**Did you prepare anything when they first attacked?**

When the first [mortar] fell, it was ok but when two fell, [I started] to prepare and pack [my things into bags]. I didn't dare to stay [anymore] when three fell.

**Did you hear small arms firing?**

Yes I heard them.

**Will you go back when the attack is finished?**

I will go back when the situation becomes normal. I don't dare to go back now.

**How long will you stay here?**

It'll take time, maybe a month this summer season. It depends on the situation.

**Have you heard people talking about if the fighting will continue or not?**

I heard that the fighting will go on.

**How do you organize your family when you heard that?**

After I heard that, I told my family not to go back yet. Here it's safe for us. We don't need to be afraid staying here. It's fine.

**How is your family's current situation?**

Now we're harvesting groundnut [peanuts] and paddy in this period.

**Where do you stay?**

We stay with our boss.

**What has your boss told you?**

He hasn't told us anything and he can't speak [Burmese] very well. My daughter is here. She came earlier than [me]. So he hasn't told us anything.

**Have you ever had problems with armed groups?**

No.

**Can you guess what will happen in the next week?**

I can guess that the situation will not be normal, because we've heard that they're having conflict. We've heard about this, and most people have heard that they [DKBA soldiers] surrounded the police station and [the police] arrested DKBA cars. They aren't satisfied about that issue. Civilians are also shocked about this issue.

**How did you come to here?**

We just came like this. There were no people to help us. We crossed river by boat. I had to pay 2000 kyat for my family. They asked for the boat fee because we paid money when we crossed the river before. When a large group tried to get in the boat my wife told the boat driver that we wouldn't let anyone come in. [Audio translation unclear] ... Someone was drowning when he tried to catch the boat. My son-in-law had to help. He tried to catch the boat but he couldn't reach and fell in the river and [started to] drown. He [my son-in-law] had to jump down and help him. That man would have died if he didn't help.

**Did you see people die?**

No, I didn't see that. I heard that three or four died when a mortar fell, but I didn't see it with my eyes.

**Do you think you'll have to run again if you go back?**

I don't dare to go back to Myawaddy yet.

**Do you know anything?**

I don't know anything. I've just heard people saying the situation is not fine. [More] Fighting can happen, some people guess. So I don't dare to go back.

**What other things do you want to say?**

As you see now, we'll stay here until the situation becomes normal. It'll be fine if we stay here. Staying here is better.

**Who takes care of you when you stay here?**

Yesterday, they provided rice.

**Did they collect a list of names?**

Yesterday, they collected [names]. The teacher who's sitting there at the moment collected the name list.

**Didn't they give you any warning?**

They didn't say anything like '*Run*' or '*Don't run*' because it [the fighting] happened on the other side [of Myawaddy] and we live beside the river.

**Have you heard how many people were arrested to be porters?**

I haven't heard. Just a large group ran after us [when we were fleeing] and were saying '*Chaw sweh deh*' [they're grabbing people].

**How many people fled at that time?**

There were more than 100 people. Both men and women ran down [to the river].

**Do you see people who were in trouble?**

Yes, we had to call children when we saw them because even a strong man was drowning [in the river]. We had to save him. If we didn't save him, he could've and would've died. He drowned one, two and three times [he was pulled under the water three times] so my son-in-law went and asked people to hold bamboo poles and people held [bamboo poles] and saved him.

**Do you have anything else that you want to say?**

Nothing else, just that one thing, that people ran when the bombs were being shelled.

**Did you have to walk when you arrived to this side?**

Yes, we had to walk for five minutes.

**Are the place [where you crossed the river] and your house close?**

Yes, they're close.

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**Interview | Naw U--- (female, 35), Myawaddy Town, T'Nay Hsah Township (November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**How's the situation now in Myawaddy?**

Now we stay like this [in our homes]. People are going around [where they have to go].

**Can people go into the city [the centre of Myawaddy town]?**

Yes, people go but there are some sentries. They [the Tatmadaw] have soldiers at the important places. Now people are going around as normal.

**Have you gone to the town?**

I myself haven't gone, but I asked a man from V--- [location censored for security] to go to the market to buy food.

**Have people started selling things?**

Yes, people have started selling things and shops have reopened now. The school started to open again on Friday but not many students went, and I think the school will reopen better on Monday. But we still need to look at the situation.

**Can you tell me about the situation that you mentioned to me last time, that they were gathering people in front of V--- , because I couldn't hear you well at that time?**

There's one DKBA family's house in front of V---. They [Tatmadaw soldiers] came and arrested the groundskeeper. They handcuffed him and took him with them. But I've heard that it has happened at every DKBA house. They [Tatmadaw soldiers] surround the houses and search the houses. If they see documents they take them with them, and called the groundskeepers with them. They also took DKBA uniforms that were left behind and burnt them. A villager who stays close to another DKBA house said that, he saw them [Tatmadaw soldiers] put members of DKBA families into trucks and take them away; we don't know [if they took them] to the military office or not.

**Did you see [witness] that, when they came and arrested [the groundskeeper] in front of V---?**

Saw W---, who's a driver from Pa'an stayed near that place [where people were arrested] and saw that they [Tatmadaw soldiers] placed guards on the road and arrested people with handcuffs and took them away. We were afraid when that problem occurred in front of V---. They took those people [in the truck] for investigation. They also did the same thing at houses in other places.

**How many people did you see on the truck?**

There were four or five people on the truck. The soldiers were around them and we didn't clearly see if they were handcuffed or not. But the [people in the] house next door saw that they arrested the [DKBA] officer's groundskeeper. I'm not sure of the officer's name— X--- or Y---.

**At that time was the officer present in the house?**

No, they left two weeks before the attack happened. None of the officer's family members were there at that time. They left one groundskeeper. So they [Tatmadaw soldiers] took away that groundskeeper.

**Do other people also live in their houses [now]?**

Yes, others have come back and stayed; now only that [DKBA] officer's house is empty. The other households are just ordinary villagers and they've all come to stay in their homes now and, during the night-time, they lock all their doors and stay inside their houses.

**When you saw them [Tatmadaw soldiers] arresting people, were those people who were arrested wearing uniforms or just normal clothes?**

Of the four or five that we've seen, they were all in civilian clothes. At first we thought they were trying to grab people as porters in the daytime. Then one of the students' parents came and told us that they weren't grabbing people for portering, [rather] they were trying to raid all of the DKBA households.

**Were they DKBA soldiers, those people who were arrested in the truck wearing the civilian clothes?**

They weren't DKBA [soldiers] because there weren't any DKBA [soldiers in the trucks], only some of their family members. But the officer's house that I was talking about, there were no DKBA soldiers there. There was only one groundskeeper and I don't know if he's DKBA or an ordinary man, but he was wearing ordinary clothes.

**Did they arrest DKBA [soldiers] or DKBA family members or relatives?**

They arrested DKBA relatives. But we didn't see any women and children. I thought they'd only arrest people who they could investigate. I thought their families were left behind.

**In the group that they took way [in the truck], did you also see women and children?**

There were no women and children. Only men were arrested.

**Have you also heard about they [Tatmadaw soldiers] grabbing people for portering?**

Yes, we heard that during the night-time but we weren't sure, and I thought it might only be people who have a connection with the DKBA.

**Were there trucks running during the night especially military trucks?**

We heard cars running during the night but I don't know what kind of car.

**Did you hear if they used sirens?**

No, if they were [using trucks at night], they wouldn't use sirens.

**Do you still hear the guns shooting?**

We don't hear that now.

**During the fighting where did people in front of V--- go?**

The households in front of V---, I don't know where they all went and we didn't heard any sound. All of the doors were closed. I didn't see anyone going around. They came back during the night and in the day-time; all of the houses' doors were locked. I don't know if they stayed on the bottom floor [of their houses]. It was a little bit strange. On the day of the fighting, the day when people were running, I saw a lot of motorbikes and cars carrying things and [people] fleeing.

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**Interview | Naw Ap--- (female, -- [age censored at interviewee's request]), Aq--- village, T'Nay Hsah Township (November 14<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**How is the situation now in Myawaddy?**

We haven't heard anything, only less people were loitering in the town in the evening time. During night time, there are less people who go outside of their house.

**Last time when I [talked to] you, you told me something about going back to Myawaddy? Can you tell me about that again?**

Yes, when I came back, I came back at Ar--- Gate and when we crossed over to the other side of the river, the SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers demanded gate fees from us. They said, we had to give gate fees. We could go after we gave gate fees. Then we told them, '*We are refugees, do we need to give gate fees?*' and they said, '*You have to give [fees].*' And we told them, '*We are refugees and we don't have money to give.*' They said, '*No, you have to give [fees].*' And then we told them '*How can we give [fees]? We have nothing to give.*' And they continued, '*If that's the case, we'll register when you fled, all your names and addresses.*' We said '*You can register us.*' They'd like to get the gate fees. We were in trouble, how could we give gate fees?

**Then did they register your name or not?**

I don't know if they did it or not. We just came back. They were just thinking to demand money from us. How can we give them [money], when we have no money?

**How many people were included in your group when you went back?**

There weren't many people at the gate. About 10 to 15 people. Because there were less people they demanded money both at the entrance and exit of the gate.

**Did your whole family go back together with you?**

Yes, I came back with all my family members. Nothing strange happened but only during the night time it's very quiet. Not many people go outside at night.

**Did you see soldiers loitering around?**

We see there are a lot of soldiers loitering around during the night time. Yes, they're going back and forth on the main road.

**Are people still afraid?**

Yes, people are still afraid of what will happen. Even though we stay [in our homes], we're very concerned about what will be going on.

**Are you afraid?**

Yes, very afraid.

**Do you think fighting will happen again?**

We still hear that the fighting will continue and last night people said some fighting happened, but it happened far away and we couldn't hear the explosions. We're staying with fear.

**When you went back and forth from Burma to Thailand, did they check you at the gate?**

No, we had to get travel documents. I use to go at As--- Gate.

**So, the current situation is quite alright?**

Yes, people are going on the road during daytime. At night time no people are walking on the road. There are a lot of soldiers on the road.

**Have you heard of soldiers taking people for portering?**

I heard that happened but I didn't see it with my eyes that they were taking people for portering. Because of this reason, people don't dare to go outside. It hasn't happened to the people I know.

**When did you go back to Burma?**



I came back and have stayed here for three days already. So that would be Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup> 2010.

**Do they have a curfew?**

I didn't hear that but I know that they search the houses that they suspect or which they think might have contact with or be related to an organization.

**When you said 'the houses that they suspect,' what do you mean by that? Did you mean for example, DKBA [houses] or ...?**

No, any organization.

**Now, did you reopen your shop already?**

Now, I've reopened it but not many buyers have come because there aren't people going outside at night.

**Do you sell during the night time?**

Uh, yes, we sell things in the evening time.

**When you came back, did you bring all your belongings with you?**

There weren't many belongings that we brought to the Thai side [of the Moei River]. We brought everything [we took to the Thai side back] with us.

**Did you see, they [Tatmadaw soldiers] come and distribute help to the people whose things were destroyed during the attack?**

No, we didn't see that. Even though we went to the river bank, they asked us to take a motorbike taxi. They said '*Take the taxi and if you do not take a taxi, you'll be searched or checked at the checkpoint entrance.*' But we told them '*We have no money to take a motorbike taxi.*' They said '*No, you have to take one.*' I asked if they'd also check refugees, and they said yes, they'd ask '*Where are you coming back from?*' I don't [know if] they were creating a way for taxi drivers to get money. They didn't let us to walk.

**Was that on the Thai side or Burma side?**

It was on the Burma side. But when we got up [above the river bank], they did check us. They demanded money. They asked '*Where are you from? Which section [of town] are you from, we'll do registration here.*' Then we told them '*You can register us, we're from Aq--- and you can register our names.*' Then they didn't say anything.

**The refugees who had fled to Thailand, when they went back, had any of them lost their belongings?**

Oh, yes, there are thieves stealing things because they have no job to do and I heard that some houses were broken into. Some of the people I know, their houses were broken into. Some of their things were lost. Also we heard that robberies happened on the Mae Tao T'Lay side.

**What kinds of things were lost?**

The valuable things.

**Have you lost anything?**

For me, our neighbour didn't go anywhere so there was nothing lost. We're lucky. If not, it's not easy. We have to run and if we lost our things, we'd be finished.

**When you said that some robberies happened in Mae Tao T'LAY, was it civilians or soldiers?**

We don't know if it was civilians or soldiers. But there were robberies that happened. We only heard that they robbed one motorbike. We just heard that. It happened in the last two nights. We heard it step by step from people [by word of mouth].

**Now how is your family's situation?**

Now, we can't work yet. We just eat what we have. We can't work yet.

**So, is the case that most of the people can't work yet?**

Yes.

**How about school, did they already reopen it?**

We heard that it will reopen tomorrow [Monday November 15<sup>th</sup> 2010].

**We heard that the school reopened since last Friday?**

No, it hasn't reopened yet.

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**Interview | Naw At--- (female, 45), Myawaddy Town, T'Nay Hsah Township (November 14<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

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**Who was shot, as you said [earlier]?**

It was a fish paste woman seller's nephew in a market. There were that nephew and a pregnant woman who died.

**Who fired the mortar?**

The DKBA army shot it. People said it was the DKBA army.

[Another speaker] It was probably both sides [that fired the mortar]. The DKBA army and SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] were shooting each other.

**When did the incident happen?**

On November 13<sup>th</sup> 2010 they [the Tatmadaw] said they'd release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and they also said they have a responsibility to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The DKBA army was going to make noise [attack] again on that day.

**Who told you this information?**

Now, the whole city is very silent and people move very quickly. Some people have moved to the lower areas [lowland areas] and people who came from that way [people who are from lowland areas buy stayed in Myawaddy] fled.

**Are they [villagers] allowed to flee to lower areas?**

They aren't allowed to flee directly to lower areas. They have to go secretly. The Thai soldiers saw me when I came back with my bag, but they didn't do anything to me. They asked me '*Where will you go?*' I replied to them '*I'm going to take my pots, cups, and things to that side.*' When I came back this morning, I saw them, but they didn't say anything to me. We can cross the river. They allow us to cross.

[Another speaker] the day when we came back, the Thai Army told us '*Go back, go back.*'