



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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Villager executed in Papun District

The following information was submitted to KHRG in September 2011 by a villager trained to document human rights abuses. It concerns an incident that occurred on September 7th 2011 in which the village head of L--- village in Dweh Loh Township was summarily executed by an unidentified Sergeant from Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #218, under Light Infantry Division (LID) #11. According to three L--- villagers who witnessed the execution, LIB #218 Deputy Battalion Commander Moe Zaw Oo was also present when the Sergeant under his command executed the L--- village head.

**This bulletin was modified on November 18th 2011 to include a photograph and information regarding Saw K---'s family that was submitted by a villager to KHRG on November 8th. All additional information is included in the photos and caption below; the body of text of the bulletin has not been modified from the original version published by KHRG on October 25th 2011. Readers should be advised that the images below are graphic.*

On September 7th 2011 at approximately 9:00am soldiers from Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #218, under Light Infantry Division (LID) #11, based in Taung Thon Lone camp in Dweh Loh Township, were transporting rations to K'Ter Tee village when a skirmish occurred with soldiers from the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The KNLA soldiers were accompanied by 58-year-old Saw K---, the L--- village head, who was serving as a guide for the KNLA soldiers on a path that travels between Taung Thon Lone and K'Ter Tee.



This photo was taken by a villager in L--- village, Saw Y---, after Saw K---'s body was transported back to his home for burial following his summary execution by an officer in LIB #218 near G--- Pagoda. In the enlarged section of the same photo at right, the entry and exit wounds from the bullet fired at point-blank range are visible on the right side of Saw K---'s forehead and head. Saw Y--- explained that the coins were placed over Saw K---'s eyes and mouth by his wife as part of funeral proceedings; according to the same villager, Saw K--- is the father of seven children ranging in age from six to twenty-six years old. [Photos: KHRG]

During this skirmish, the Tatmadaw and KNLA soldiers exchanged small arms fire and Saw K--- was grazed by a bullet and sustained a superficial injury. Three L--- villagers named Saw D---, 50, Saw E---, 20, and Saw N---, 35, who were visiting G--- Pagoda, a local monastery in the L--- area, on September 7th told the villager who collected this information that they met Saw K--- when he ran to hide in the G--- Pagoda during the skirmish.

According to information provided by Saw D---, Saw E--- and Saw N---, the Tatmadaw LIB #218 soldiers saw them with Saw K--- when they reached G--- Pagoda following the skirmish, and called the four men to come down to the vehicle road. Saw D---, Saw E--- and Saw N--- reported that the Tatmadaw soldiers then questioned Saw K--- briefly, and that Saw K--- informed them that he was a village head and not a KNLA soldier, and that the soldiers could confirm his identity by asking other L--- villagers or by bringing him to the local Tatmadaw Operations Commander, whom he said would recognise him. According to the three villagers, without asking any further questions an unidentified Sergeant bearing a three-chevrons badge then shot and killed Saw K--- at point blank range, in front of the LIB #218 Deputy Battalion Commander Moe Zaw Oo.

Saw D---, Saw E--- and Saw N--- told the villager who submitted this information to KHRG that LIB #218 soldiers then beat them on the road with the butts of their rifles for a prolonged period, after which the soldiers continued on the road to the Tatmadaw camp in K'Ter Tee village. Saw N--- was seriously injured in his arm as a result of the beating and, as of September 26th 2011, remained unable to move around easily due to the pain in his arm. The three men also told the villager who collected this information that they believed the LIB #218 soldiers would inform their Operations Command that Saw K--- had been carrying a weapon at the time he was shot, in order to explain his execution.

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

- *Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August 2011* (October 2011)
- *Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, May 2011* (September 2011)
- *Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, April 2011* (September 2011)
- *Papun Interview: Maung Y---, February 2011* (September 2011)
- *Papun Incident Reports: November 2010 to January 2011* (August 2011)
- *Acute food shortages threatening 8,885 villagers in 118 villages across northern Papun District* (May 2011)
- *Tatmadaw attacks destroy civilian property and displace villages in northern Papun District* (April 2011)
- *Self-protection under strain: Targeting of civilians and local responses in northern Karen State* (August 2010)

Recent photos from the area are presented in *KHRG Photo Gallery 2010* and *KHRG Photo Gallery 2010-B*. These and other KHRG reports and maps of the region can be found on the KHRG web site at <http://www.khrg.org>.

