



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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Doplaya Interview: Saw Ca---, September 2011

This report contains the full transcript of an interview conducted by a KHRG researcher in September 2011. The villager interviewed Saw Ca---, a 45-year-old rubber, betelnut and durian plantation owner from Kawkareik Township, Doplaya District, who described the survey of at least 167 acres of productive and established agricultural land belonging to 26 villagers for the expansion of a Tatmadaw camp, transport infrastructure, and the construction of houses for Tatmadaw soldiers' families. This incident was detailed in the previously-published report, "Land confiscation threatens villagers' livelihoods in Doplaya District;" as of the beginning of February 2012, a KHRG researcher familiar with the local situation confirmed that the land had not yet been confiscated and that surveys of that land were no longer ongoing. In this interview, Saw Ca--- described the planting of landmines in civilian areas by government and non-state armed groups, and described one incident in which a villager was injured by a landmine during the month before this interview, resulting in the subsequent amputation of part of his leg; Saw Ca--- said that KNLA soldiers had previously informed villagers they had planted landmines in the place where the villager was injured. Saw Ca--- also described an incident in which villagers were forced to wear Tatmadaw uniforms while accompanying troops on active duty, as well as the forced recruitment of villagers by non-state armed groups. Saw Ca--- noted that villagers respond to such abuses and threats to their livelihoods in a variety of ways, including deliberately avoiding attending meetings with Tatmadaw commanders at which they suspect they will be forced to sign over their land.

Interview | Saw Ca--- (male, 45), Je--- village, Kawkareik Township, Doplaya District (September 2011)

The following interview was conducted by a KHRG researcher. It is presented below translated exactly as it was received, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This interview was received along with other information from Doplaya District, including three other interviews and 91 photographs.²

Ethnicity: Karen

Religion: Christian

Marital Status: Married

¹ KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma to document individual human rights abuses using a standardised reporting format; conduct interviews with other villagers; and write general updates on the situation in areas with which they are familiar. When conducting interviews, villagers are trained to use loose question guidelines, but also to encourage interviewees to speak freely about recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important and share their opinions or perspectives on abuse and other local dynamics.

² In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in eastern Burma, KHRG aims to make all field information received available on the KHRG website once it has been processed and translated, subject only to security considerations. As companion to this, a redesigned website will be released in 2012. In the meantime, KHRG's most recently-published field information from Doplaya District can be found in the Report, "Doplaya Situation Update: August to September 2011," KHRG, December 2011.

Occupation: Betelnut, durian and rubber plantation owner

What is your occupation?

I'm a farmer. I have plantations.

What do you plant in your fields?

I plant betelnut [trees], durian [trees] and rubber [trees].

How do the other villagers make a living?

Most of them are farmers.

Which armed groups come to your village?

All three armed [groups] have come.

Who are they?

The Border Guard, the SPDC [Tatmadaw]³ and the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army].

Are any army troops based in your village? Or are they based outside the village and just come [to the village] sometimes?

[Soldiers from] the government's army [have] always lived in the village.

Is their army camp based in your village?

They have their army camp somewhere else. Only one column [of soldiers] lives in the village. Their army camp is north of the village, but they [have] always based the army camp there.

What is the *hee sheh koh* [literally 'distance above house']?

It's near Battalion #355.

Is it far away from your village?

No, it's not that far from my village.

Do they force villagers to porter?

Now, they don't, but when they first came here, *ta loh teh ler bah* [literally 'no need to say' meaning that they did it all the time].

³ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this conducted this interview and interviewee and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this interview.

They don't ask [villagers] to build things at their army camp?

They haven't done any construction yet, but when they build the new army camp they'll ask for sure.

Is the SPDC government planning to take your land?

Yes, it is.

How many acres [of land] do you have?

I only have 20 acres of rubber fields.

How many acres is your land [in total]?

There's a little space between each field.

How many acres?

I have 400 betelnut trees covering only about one acre.

How many villagers' land they will take?

They will take many [villagers' land].

How many?

The first time they came to measure, it was nine [paddy] farms. They didn't want to collect [survey] the betelnut plantations because there were too many. The betelnut fields and durian fields were about 20 or 30 fields

How about the rubber [plantations]?

There is one more rubber field but, as I told you, she [the owner] didn't come [to the interview location]. The man who came with me, his rubber plantation is very big, but when the SPDC government goes to take it, they will take it all.

How many rubber trees have you planted?

I plant once every three years. From three years ago I planted 2,000 plants, and this year I planted more 1,000 plants, so in all there are 3,000 rubber plants.

How do you know that the SPDC government will take your plantations?

The operation commander [SPDC Army] came to see the village head and the village head ordered us to go to see him [the operations commander]. We haven't gone. If we go, I know we'll have to sign, and we've made a decision that we won't go. If they want to take [our land], they can.

The operations commander came to let the village head know?

Yes.

Is he Burman or Karen?

He's Burman. I tried to ask his name before I came here [to the interview], but I didn't dare to ask around so much, so I didn't get his name. If you asked the village head, he would know, but I didn't dare to ask him.

Do you know the battalion number [of the camp near the village]?

The battalion [number] is LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #355.

Do you know the company?

The company and column are based in K'Luh Tu.

They didn't just write a letter [about land confiscation], but came themselves?

Yes.

Did the operations commander come [to see you]?

No, he didn't come. He ordered us to go and see him.

Would you have had to sign if you had gone?

Yes, so that's why we don't go. If you don't go, you have to give them [the land]; if you go, you also have to give them [the land].

Will they pay [compensation] money if they take the land?

I heard the one time the village head told us they'll give [compensation]. For one rubber plant they'll pay 10,000 kyat [US \$12.99].⁴

They said that they'll pay you [compensation] money, right?

Yes.

Did they say they'll pay for the value of the land too?

If they pay for the plants, that also includes the land [cost] too.

Will you get the money?

No, they'll pay by the *gk'lee* [literally, 'air' meaning that the villagers will never see the money promised, similar to the English expression about something being 'in the wind'].

How many acres will they take?

As far as I know, there are 500 acres that they'll take.

When will they come [to take the land]?

⁴ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this interview are based on the fluctuating informal exchange rate rather than the government's official fixed rate of 6.5 kyat to US \$1. As of January 24th 2012, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

They'll come when the rainy season is over. Because the *Ber* are still in this area they wouldn't dare to enter this area [until then]. They have to be careful.

What does *Ber* mean?

Ber means the *Kaw Thoo Lei*⁵ Army [KNLA]. Because the *Kaw Thoo Lei* Army is here, they wouldn't dare to come here. Last year they [SPDC Army] came and set up an army camp, but because of this, the *Kaw Thoo Lei* said they would shoot them and so they moved the next morning. They built houses, each one bigger than this house [referring to the house in which Saw Ca--- was being interviewed].

Did they come only to set up the army camp, or also to live here with their [the soldiers'] families?

No, they didn't only come to set up the army camp, as they planned to come and live [here] with their families. They'll build up both an army camp and their houses, and the battalion. When they come to base here, their families and children will follow and come to stay with them. The place where they set up the army camp is beside the road, and they built one clinic and a rice storage [building].

Are they [the SPDC soldiers] on your land?

No, but the *Pa Tee* [Uncle]⁶ who owns a farm, they built on his farm.

How big is his farm?

He got 100 baskets [2,900 kg. / 4,608 lb] of paddy.

If they took his farm, is that the only thing they'll take [from him], or will they also take his rubber plantation?

They'll take everything.

How many rubber trees does he have in his plantation?

He has 1,000 trees.

How many years has [it been since] he planted [the trees]?

It's been about two years. The rubber trees are growing fast.

Does the SPDC Army live in your village?

They live in my village 24 hours a day.

Do they force villagers to work [for them]?

⁵ Both the researcher conducting the interview and the interviewee used the term '*Kaw Thoo Lei*', which refers to Karen State as demarcated by the Karen National Union (KNU). The exact meaning and origin of the term '*Kaw Thoo Lei*' is disputed; see: Jonathan Falla. *True Love and Bartolomew: Rebels on the Burmese border*, Cambridge University Press: 1991.

⁶ '*Pa Tee*' or 'Uncle' is a Karen prefix used to refer to an older man; it need not necessarily signify any familial relationship between the speaker and the person to whom it refers.

No, they don't.

They just come and stay [in the village]?

Yes, they're always in my village. Their [army] column lives in the village, but LIB #355 is based north of the village.

North of the village?

Yes, on the road to Myawaddy.

Is your village close to Myawaddy?

It's not that close to it. It's about one or two miles from my village to Myawaddy.

How long would it take to walk?

It would take less than an hour. From Noh Poto Thin Kyan Nyee Naw [Dooplaya District], it's three miles.

Will they expand the army camp or build their houses on the land that they'll take?

They'll expand their army camp and build their houses.

What battalion [will the soldiers come from]?

When they come to the army base, their families and kids will follow them and come to stay with them.

I thought, as other villagers have said, that they were setting up the army camp for the Border Guard, right?

The Border Guard battalion commander came to see me one time. He sent a message to me [telling me to] go to see him in Thay Kay, and I went to see him. He told me that the SPDC [were] trying to [get] them to fight [with the KNLA]. [He said that he] didn't do these things- all the activities are the SPDC's plan, not [his] plan. He also told me that when the new place [the army camp in Je---] is finished, he has to move and he can't live in Thay Kay anymore.

Will the SPDC Army come to stay with them at the new location?

The SPDC will replace the Border Guard in Thay Kay because Thay Kay is a good [place for generating] income

Is it along a road where people sell things?

Yes, it's located along a trading road. They don't trade on jungle paths. They trade along this road.

Do you know his name?

He name's Saw Pah Mow. His full name's Saw Pah Mow Thro.

Is he a battalion commander?

Yes, he's the highest ranking officer in this area.

Do they demand things from the villagers?

No, they don't.

What do you do to protect your land and prevent the SPDC government from taking it?

We're civilians, so we don't know how we can protect [our land from the SPDC government].

According to your knowledge of villagers' *tha thay da ba* [literally 'ability to do something' or agency], what do you plan to do?

If we don't dare refuse [the SPDC government what they want] we have to let them [take our land]. They said that if they [the SPDC] come and fighting happens we have to let them [fight]. If the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] shoots them they'll say that the owner of the field [must] go and tell them and support them [the SPDC Army]. So they'll say [it's] the villagers fault. We have to run if they do that.

How many households are there in your village?

There are over 300 households.

Do you know how many villagers there are?

No, I don't know the number of villagers.

So you don't know of anything you can do?

No, if they come to take our land, we'll have to let them take it as we're stupid.

Will they come when the rainy season is over?

They'll come [after the 2011 rainy season] but only if the *Kaw Thoo Lei* [KNLA soldiers] aren't in this area. Now, they still listen carefully if it's good to come or not, because if they come they know the *Kaw Thoo Lei* will shoot them.

Are there *Kaw Thoo Lei* [soldiers] living in your village?

No, they don't live in village, but they live outside the village [nearby]. The SPDC [soldiers] know this and they're afraid of the KNLA. If the SPDC [soldiers] go in our rubber fields the KNLA will shoot them for sure.

Do the SPDC soldiers not dare to come?

If the KNLA hadn't been there, they already planned to do this [take villagers' land] once last year.

Did they destroy the rubber trees the last time they came?

No, they didn't, but they came and dug a road from another village to *Pa Tee* [Uncle]'s farm and they stopped there.

What are the consequences if they take the villagers' land?

We're civilians [and think that] if the KLNA wins the fighting then that's good, but if they don't win the fighting, the SPDC will take get it [the land] freely [without consequence]. So we don't know what to do.

What do you want to happen?

I want the KLNA to win the fighting so that we can keep our farms.

If they [Tatmadaw soldiers] get the land and come to live here, are you afraid that they will force you to work [for them]?

If they get the land and come to stay here, they'll force us for sure.

The last time they came, did they order villagers to do work [for them]?

No, they didn't. They only asked their civilians [Burmese people] who came with them.

How long [ago] did the operations commander let you know that they will take the land [from you]?

Not that long [ago].

Do you remember the day?

I wasn't at home when they came so I don't remember the date. If they take the land and our livelihood the places for the KNLA [to operate] will also become smaller. If they can set up the army camp here they will spread out the soldiers to other nearby places. If they think that this is a stable place to live, they will move to other places. They will make the [area for the] KLNA to live in smaller.

Is it a company's plan or the SPDC government's?

The group that came to measure the area is called '*Ha Sha*.' The ones who came to measure the road were Thai.

What is the Thai peoples' relationship to the government?

The Thai people came and hired us to clear the road. They paid 4,000 kyat [US \$5.19] per day. Now they're gone, and later the SPDC government came.

Did the Thai people come to build the road?

They came to look for the place where they should build the road.

How about the last time they [Tatmadaw] came? Did the Thai people come with them?

No, they came on their own.

Does the SPDC Army demand the money from villagers?

No, they don't, but we have to pay 2,000 kyat [US \$2.60] per month for the funding money.

What's the funding money for?

Both of them [the village head and the Burma government]. If the army needs to use, it they take it from the funding money, and also if the village head has to go somewhere, they take the money and use [it].

Where did you have to pay the money to?

We had to give the money to the *hsan ain moo* [the leader of 10 households]. In my village we have ten *hsan ain moo*, one secretary, and one village head. If we have [to give] anything [to the SPDC Army], we have to pay money to the *hsan ain moo*. The *hsan ain moo* have to give money to the person who looks after the money, and if the village head has to go somewhere they have to take the money.

What is the *hsan ain moo* responsible for?

They're responsible for collecting the money.

Who takes on the responsibility [of the *hsan ain moo*]?

The villagers take the responsibility, not members of the SPDC [government]. If the SPDC Army goes and takes something from the store, then the villager who has the funding responsibility has to pay for it.

Do they recruit [villagers for] the army?

No, they don't, but last year the DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] recruited for the army but that DKBA is not related to the SPDC Army anymore because they [wanted the DKBA to] change into the Border Guard.⁷

How long [ago] did the DKBA recruit the soldiers?

It was three years ago. A few Je--- villagers' had their legs blown off.

How many soldiers did they recruit from one village?

They recruited ten villagers. If the KNLA ordered ten villagers to join the KNLA, they [the DKBA] also ordered ten villagers [to join them].

Does the Border Guard force them [villagers] to be soldiers?

No, most of them [the villagers] are too lazy to work and they want to be soldiers. Some of them *kwa meh say* [literally, 'face look for money'].

Do villagers get paid if they become Border Guard soldiers?

Yes, also look at my brother, he said that if you join the Border Guard, you become a rich man.

⁷ It is probable that the interviewee is here referring to soldiers from DKBA #999, also known as Brigade 5, under the command of Saw Lah Pwe, who refused to transform to Border Guard Battalions, despite longstanding cooperation with Tatmadaw troops, and conducted operations against government troops following the November 2010 election, before agreeing to a renewed ceasefire on November 4th 2011. See "DKBA Brigade 5 Reaches Ceasefire with Naypyidaw," The Irrawaddy, November 4th 2011; "Protection concerns expressed by civilians amidst conflict in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts," KHRG, November 2010; "Border Guard Force formed at Atwinkwinkalay region, Myawady Township, Kayin State," *New Light of Myanmar*, August 25th 2010.

How much do the Border Guard soldiers get paid per month?

I think 40,000 kyat [US \$51.95] for each soldier. They get paid [the same] as the SPDC Army, these Border Guard soldiers. They get paid the same as the SPDC Army.

Do the Border Guard recruit soldiers when they changed their badge [when the DKBA changed to the Border Guard]?

No, they don't.

Were the Border Guard soldiers based in your village before?

Yes, as I told [you] before, they came to set up the army camp. The village heads had not planned for the fighting to happen but the KNLA [would] not wait. The village head told the SPDC and Border Guard that they must move back [away from the village] and they must not be based here anymore. I went to inform [KNLA Battalion Commander] *Pu Pwa Doh* [literally 'big old grandfather']. If I had not informed the commander, the KNLA would have shot for sure.

Did the SPDC Army have an army camp [in the village] before?

No, they just built a small hut to sleep in. They only built two big buildings: one food store and one clinic.

Did they finish the buildings?

Yes, because they only built them with bamboo [poles]. When they rotated away, the villagers destroyed them and then burnt them.

Did they ever come back?

No, they didn't come back. I said: "*Why don't you bring our thatch shingles back?*" The SPDC said: "*Oh, these are ours.*"

Will the SPDC Army come when the rainy season is over?

After the rainy season they'll come to my village for sure, but I don't know when. Maybe they're planning to come at the harvest time, or the time when the paddy becomes red. If they come at that time, they'll think the KNLA can't shoot them because the villagers will be working on their farms.⁸

If they do [come], what will the villagers do?

We will not stop the KNLA anymore. We will let them shoot if they come.

⁸ The interviewee is most likely referring to the Tatmadaw practice of conducting 'dry season offensives' aiming to consolidate and expand military presence in areas where the lack of all-season roads, illness and damage to military supplies and equipment hinders military operations during the monsoon season. The dry season typically runs from October to April and coincides with the time when many villagers are harvesting or preparing to harvest paddy crops. For detailed analysis of previous 'dry season offensives' in eastern Burma, see "Forced labour to support annual dry season reparation and stocking of SPDC Army infrastructure in Papun District", KHRG, December 2007; *Less than Human: Convict Porters in the 2005 - 2006 Northern Karen State Offensive*, KHRG, August 2006; "Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts: The SPDC's Dry Season Offensive Operations," KHRG, April 2002. Note that disruption to the harvest process or forced abandonment of crops during 'dry season offensives' can have devastating consequences on villagers' food security. See "Starving them out: Food shortages and exploitative abuse in Papun District," KHRG, October 2009.

If the KNLA don't shoot them will they destroy the paddy fields?

They won't because we don't plant the paddy here [in the village itself]. We only have rubber plants.

What else do you [plant] in that area [the village]?

Along the lake we have durian plantations, betelnut plantations and dog fruit plantations. The villagers plant many things in that area. They plant a little bit of each so I'm not sure what they have.

Are any of your villagers Border Guard soldiers?

Yes, one villager joined the Border Guard. His name is Pah Toe Maung. This guy was very bad when he was a DKBA soldier.

So he's with the Border Guard right?

No, he became a *kyan bay nyan bay* [advisor] leader. But he is in the Border Guard.

Has he come back to destroy the village now?

No, he hasn't.

Do you have anything [else] you'd like to mention?

That's everything I'd like to mention.

Do they [the SPDC Army] force the villagers to porter?

I'll give you an example. As the people [have] said, when they went to fight, they forced the villagers to wear army uniforms and go and fight [too].

[Was this] when they went to fight the KNLA?

After they fought and the KNLA came and shot them, they forced villagers to wear [SPDC] Army uniforms to trick the KNLA.

Where did these villagers come from?

These villagers were from the village on the other side of the road. The other side of this road is the 7th Brigade [Pa'an District], and this side is the 6th Brigade [Dooplaya District]. I live in the 6th Brigade.

When did it happen?

It was not too long ago, the other day they [the SPDC Army] brought five villagers to my village. Two Border Guard soldiers were killed when they fought with the DKBA. The DKBA and the KNLA joined together.

Where is the SPDC Army camp based?

The SPDC Army camp is based in Th--- village.

After they fought they went back to Th--- village?

Yes, they went back.

Were the villagers who were forced to wear the army uniforms Th--- villagers?

Yes, they were.

Do you know how many villagers?

No, they didn't tell me how many.

Did the villagers have to shoot the KNLA?

No, they didn't give them guns. They only forced them to wear the uniforms.

Did the KNLA shoot [at] the villagers?

Yes, because [at first] they didn't know [who they were]. They only saw the soldiers' uniforms.

Did they shoot [hit] the villagers?

No, they didn't [hit them] because the KNLA knew that they were villagers. When the villagers come to the front line, the KNLA just have to let them go and the KNLA have to move back. If they shoot, the civilians will die. The villagers have to cover [shield] them [the SPDC soldiers]. So the KNLA have to surrender [stop firing].

Did they [the SPDC soldiers and the villagers] get into the KNLA area?

Yes, they did. It wasn't just the KNLA [area] as the KNLA soldiers were cooperating together with the DKBA.⁹

They [the villagers] don't join with the SPDC and Border Guard, right?

No, they don't. They come and join the KNLA. Because of this we worry that if the KNLA shoots at [Tatmadaw soldiers] they will do the same [to us] as they did in other villages. We know [about] their plan to force villagers to wear the [SPDC] Army uniform.

How many soldiers do you think will come?

I think that many will come. Both the Border Guard and the SPDC [Army] will come.

Will they both come and live here?

Yes, they will [do] the same.

⁹ It is most likely that the interviewee is here referring to the period after the November 2010 election when soldiers from DKBA #999, also known as Brigade 5, under the command of Saw Lah Pwe refused to transform to Border Guard Battalions, and conducted operations against government troops, sometimes in cooperation with KNLA forces. See *Displacement Monitoring Update #87*: "Tatmadaw movement restrictions, arrests and use of human shields in Ta Uh Htar village," KHRG, October 2011, in which KNLA and DKBA forces were reported to be occupying the same camp near Ta Uh Htar village in Kawkaeik Township, Dooplaya District. Note that, on November 4th 2011, DKBA soldiers agreed to a ceasefire with government troops. See "DKBA Brigade 5 Reaches Ceasefire with Naypyidaw," *The Irrawaddy*, November 4th 2011.

Don't they let the Border Guard live by themselves?

No, they won't let them.

Will you have to be afraid?

Yes, we have to be afraid.

Have you experienced the SPDC Army killing villagers and forcing villagers to porter?

No, I haven't experienced that recently. We only worry that if the SPDC Army comes and builds an army base, they will abuse the villagers. If they get that place [they will force] the civilians to help them, because if they don't, [they must] do it by themselves and then they can't [win the war].

What do the civilians plan to do?

If we can't resist the [Tatmadaw's] force, we'll have to wear the army uniforms because we have no choice. When we can live we will live, but if we can't live there and we can't refuse, then we'll have to do it.

Will the villagers run [away] to escape?

They don't have a place to run and escape to, but if we run we will come to the Thai side [of the border]. If we run in Burma, it is not safe for us.

Do you have a school in your village?

Yes, we have a school.

How many schools do you have?

We have three schools. One is a high school and [one is] a kindergarten. We had to build two grade seven schools because one school was not big enough.

Are the teachers sent by the SPDC government?

Yes, they're sent by the SPDC government. The school principle is a Je--- villager.

Does the SPDC government pay her a salary?

Yes, she receives payment.

How many teachers do they have?

I never go to school but I think they have seven teachers.

How many students do they have?

There are 400 students.

Do you have a clinic in your village?

No, we don't have a clinic, but the village head set up one clinic. I haven't seen anyone go. He also set up a kindergarten two years ago but no one goes. Now the villagers have set up a kindergarten school by themselves. The schools are built by the villagers but some teachers are sent by the SPDC government.

What do the villagers do when they get sick?

We have to call the doctor to come to our house to give [them] an injection. If they don't get better, we have to go to S--- [in Thailand].

Have the doctors received training?

Yes, they have.

Where did they do the training?

They attended training in Burma. If you graduate from the tenth standard here in Burma you can't get a job, and also if you graduate [from any school or college] in Burma you won't get a job in Thailand either.

How many nurses and doctors do you have in the village?

There are four nurses and a doctor, including my sister-in-law.

Do you have anything [else] to say about how you feel?

I have many things [to say about] the [DKBA] #999 era.

[During] which year?

It was ten years ago. My buffalo was killed by a landmine.

Do any army troops plant landmines beside your village?

No, they don't.

Do they [soldiers] let the villagers know when they plant landmines?

Yes, the KNLA always lets us know.

How about the SPDC? Do they let you know?

Yes, the last time the SPDC Army let the villagers know that they had planted two landmines.

Have any villagers stepped on landmines?

Yes, my brother-in-law stepped on a landmine and he's not getting better yet.

How long ago?

Last month.

Whose landmine?

The KNLA's landmine, and he knows because the KNLA let everyone know. It was just bad luck.

Your brother-in-law?

Yes, my sisters' husband.

Is he living in your village?

Yes, he lives in my village. He just came back from the clinic.

Do you remember the date [when he stepped on the landmine]?

No, I don't remember the date.

Do you know his name?

His name is Maung Ng---.

How old is he?

He's my older brother [in-law] so he's about 50 years old.

Was his leg blown off?

Yes, he had to [have it] cut it off from his knee.

Was it both legs or only one leg?

Only one leg. Everyone knew that there were two landmines left. It was just bad luck.

What was he doing [at the time he stepped on the landmine]?

He was cutting bamboo.

How many children does he have?

He has five children. One has gone to a third country, one has joined the KNLA, and the other three live with him.

How many sons and daughters does he have?

He has three sons and two daughters.

Where did he go to the clinic?

He went to the Tr--- hospital and he slept in Oh--- one night. I heard that he has to go back again because his wound is a *htee law* [literally 'watering', meaning infected and oozing pus].

What did he need the bamboo for?

To catch fish. He travelled on that path two or three days [before] and didn't step on a mine.

Can we publish the information that you've given me?

You can publish [this information] but don't mention my name. If you mention my name, we'll face problems.

Do you have anything [else] to mention before we finish the interview?

No, but in *Bo Moe Kyo's*¹⁰ time, he planted a landmine beside my house, and people who went to collect dogfruit stepped on it. They [the soldiers] didn't plant it for the KNLA, they planted it for the villagers to step on.

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

- “Dooplaya Situation Update: August 2011 to September 2011,” (December 2011)
- “Dooplaya Situation Update: August 2011,” (October 2011)
- “Displacement Monitoring: Regular updates on protection concerns for villagers in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts and adjacent areas in Thailand,” (October 2011)
- “Village heads negotiate with Tatmadaw, armed groups to forestall human rights threats amid continued conflict in Dooplaya District,” (August 2011)
- “Dooplaya Interview: U Sa---, July 2011,” (July 2011)
- “Tatmadaw shelling kills one child, injures another in Mae T'Ler village,” (June 2011)
- “Three villagers killed, eight injured during fighting in Kyaikdon area,” (May 2011)

¹⁰ ‘Bo’ is a Burmese prefix generally used to denote an ‘officer’ without necessarily specifying rank. The term ‘moe kyo’ means ‘lightning’ in Burmese. KHRG has on several occasions reported deliberate attacks on civilian targets across Thaton, Papun and Pa'an districts carried out by the ‘Moe Kyo’ battalion or by soldiers under the command of Bo Moe Kyo, a former commanding officer within DKBA Brigade #333 and *Gk'Sah Wah* [‘White Elephant’ in Karen] Special Battalion #777. See: *Surviving in Shadow: Widespread Militarization and the Systematic Use of Forced Labour in the Campaign for Control of Thaton District*, KHRG, January 2006; “Central Papun District: Abuse and the maintenance of military control”, KHRG, August 2010.

