



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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**News Bulletin**

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## **Incident Report: Forced Labour in Papun District #1, May 2012**

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*The following incident report was submitted to KHRG in May 2012 by a community member describing an incident that began on May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, when six villagers from H--- village, X--- village, and Y--- village, in Bu Tho Township, Papun District were forced to do labour for Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, such as military camp maintenance and portering materials when the soldiers travel. The report also describes the negative attitudes held by villagers towards military actors in regard to the abuses they face, particularly forced labour, which they feel will continue to occur in the future.*

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### **Incident report | Bu Tho Township, Papun District (May 2012)**

*The following incident report was written by a community member trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.<sup>1</sup> This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including four other incident reports,<sup>2</sup> one interview and two situation updates.<sup>3</sup>*

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### **Part 1 – Incident(s) detail**

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG incident reports are written or gathered by community member in Papun District who have been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. KHRG trains community member in eastern Burma to document individual incidents of abuse 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 writing incident reports, community members are encouraged to document incidents of abuse that they consider to be important, by verifying information from multiple sources, assessing for potential biases and comparing to local trends.

<sup>2</sup> Two other Incident Reports involve the same victims and Battalion # 1014, and are published as “Incident Report: Looting in Papun District #1, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013, and “Incident Report: Looting in Papun District #2, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013. See also “Border Guard #1014 demands for labour and goods in Papun District, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013.

<sup>3</sup> 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 2013. In the meantime, KHRG’s most recently-published field information from Papun District can be found in the report, “Incident Report: Looting in Papun District #2, May 2012,” KHRG, March 2013.

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Forced Labour
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	May 18 <sup>th</sup> 2012
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	H--- village, X--- village, Y--- village, Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, Papun District

Victim Information								
Name	Age	Sex	Nationality	Family	Job	Religion	Responsible	Village
Saw M---	35	Male	Karen	Married	Farmer	Buddhist	Villager	H--- village
Saw N---	40	Male	Karen	Married	Farmer	Buddhist	Village Leader	X---Village
Saw L---	33	Male	Karen	Married	Farmer	Buddhist	Second Village leader	Y--- village

Perpetrator(s)				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Saw Nyunt Thein	Commander	Border Guard <sup>4</sup> #1014	D---, Border Guard camp	Battalion Commander Maung Chit

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

### **1. Explain the specific manner how you collected this information.**

When we went to their villages [H---, X---, and Y--- villages]; we asked them [about any incidents], so when this incident happened, they sent us the information.

### **2. Explain how the source verified information accuracy.**

The information that I received, and [the information] that went to the district [KNU office], is the same information and the date is also similar, so we can represent that this is true information.

## **PART 3 – Incident Details**

**Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please, use the space prepared below and create attach if needed.**

Brigadier General Min Aung Laing and President Thein Sein stated that they will try hard to end forced labour.<sup>5</sup> Even though they said that, we can say that forced labour still happens in the ethnic areas. The information that we are going to report on is about forced labour. This incident happened on May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, and the places where the

<sup>4</sup> Border Guard battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalized ceasefire agreements with the Burmese government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw. Border Guard battalions are assigned four digit battalion numbers, whereas regular Tatmadaw infantry or light infantry battalions are identified by two or three digit battalion numbers. For more information, see “DKBA officially becomes Border Guard Force” Democratic Voice of Burma, August 2010, and, “Exploitation and recruitment under the DKBA in Pa’an District,” KHRG, June 2009.

<sup>5</sup> The Burmese government has pledged to the International Labor Organization (ILO) that it will end forced labor in Burma by 2015. These pledges were embodied in a Memorandums of Understanding between the Government and the ILO, signed on March 16, 2012. For more information on the issue of forced labor and Burma’s relationship with the ILO, see *Civilian and Military order documents: August 2009 to August 2012*, KHRG, October 2012.

incident took place are in H---, X--- and Y--- villages. These villages are in Meh Pree village tract, Bu Tho Township, Papun District. The ones who caused the forced labour in this report are Commander Nyunt Thein and his group; they are the subordinates of the Battalion Commander Saw Maung Chit<sup>6</sup> from NPD [Nay Pyi Daw] government's Border Guard military #1014.<sup>7</sup> It is very difficult for them to change the behaviour that they used to have, in order to be better. Therefore, it creates problems related with human rights violations, [especially] forced labour. Border Guard #1014 is based in W--- village and Commander Saw Nyunt Thein and his people frighten the civilians who are from H---, X--- and Y--- villages. They asked the villagers from the villages that we have mentioned, to do forced labour.

On May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, Commander Nyunt Thein asked three villagers from H--- village, two people from Y--- village and another villager from H--- village [to do forced labour]. These villagers always have to stay with the Border Guard, and they have to come and replace [other villagers] every three days. These villagers have to cook for them, cut wood for them and have to carry water for them. When they are travelling, the villagers have to porter their ammunition and their food. They asked those villagers, starting from May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, up until the time that we are writing this information.

Whatever President Thein Sein says to make himself look good, in the future, there would be more events like we have mentioned because it is not easy for them to eradicate the bad behaviour that they used to have for many years.

## **Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details**

<b>Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.</b>
<p>You can use wherever it is suitable for you to use.</p>

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

- “Incident Report: Looting in Papun District #2, May 2012,” (March 2013)

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<sup>6</sup> Commander Maung Chit's name is sometimes spelled “Maw Hsee.” Commander Maung Chit's name is sometimes spelled “Maw Hsee.” Commander Maung Chit is not to be confused with Maung Chit Thu, who is a top-tier officer in the Border Guard, while Maung Chit is the commander for Battalion #1014. Maung Chit Thu is part of the intelligence division for the Border Guard and not much is currently known about his actual role in the command structure. In December 2012, KHRG verified that these two names do not refer to the same officer. For more information on Maung Chit Thu's authority, see this KHRG report: “Pa'an Situation Update: June to August 2011,” KHRG, October 2011.

<sup>7</sup> KHRG received reports on the activities of Border Guard Force (BGF) Battalion #1014, which has been active along the border of Papun and Thaton Districts. Battalion #1014 is commanded by Major Maung Chit, which is also sometimes spelled Maw Hsee, whom is allegedly to be a part of an advisory committee that oversaw the 2010 transformation of the DKBA into the BGF, and assumed responsibility for business activities for the group. See “The Situation In Karen State After the Elections,” EBO (Euro-Burma Office) Analysis Paper No. 1/2011, April 2011. More recently, on August 5, 2012, the KNLA and BGF #1014 engaged in a firefight in Mae Seik village, Papun Township, despite the terms of the ceasefire. KNLA and Government's Militia Fight – Four Soldiers Killed Karen News, August 7, 2012. For additional articles discussing abuses perpetrated by BGF #1014, see these KHRG reports: “Torture and killing in Thaton District,” KHRG, October 2012; “Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, received April 2012,” KHRG, June 2012; “Papun Interview: Saw T---, August 2011,” January 2012; “Thaton Situation Update: June to October 2011,” KHRG November 2011; *All the Information I've Given You, I faced it myself*, KHRG December 2011, page 14.

- “Incident Report: Looting in Papun District #1, May 2012,” (March 2013)
- “Border Guard Battalion #1014 demands for labour and goods in Papun District, May 2012,” (March 2013)
- “Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, September to December 2012,” (March 2013)
- “Incident Report: Religious discrimination and restrictions in Papun District, September 2012,” (March 2013)

