



Incident Report

December 18, 2018 / KHRG #18-116-I1

Hpapun Incident Report: A village head sustained serious injuries after being tortured by BGF #1014 in Bu Tho Township, November 2018

A soldier from the Border Guard Forces #1014 seriously beat a village head in Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract because he crossed a checkpoint after 5 PM. The victim sustained serious injuries on his head and body.

Incident Report | Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (December 2018)

The following Incident Report was written by (1) a community member in Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Torture by BGF resulting in serious injuries
Date of Incident(s)	28 November 2018
Incident Location	T--- village, Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Victim Information	
Name	Saw K---
Age	31
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Married

¹ KHRG trains community members in southeastern Burma/Myanmar 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.

Position	Village head
Village	T--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Commander Hpo Dah	Platoon Commander	Border Guard Force #1014	K'Ter Tee	Battalion Commander Bo Maung Chit
Kyeh Nee	Soldier	BGF #1014	T--- Ta Law Thaw	Platoon Commander Hpo Dah

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A KHRG researcher heard about the incident and contacted a person from T--- village to collect this information.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The person who shared this information was a first-hand witness of the incident.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On 28 November 2018, Saw K---, the village head of T---, was on his way back from Hkaw Taw Poo [Myaing Gyi Ngu]. He was travelling with two local teachers and an old lady returning from the funeral of U Thuzana. They were travelling by boat on the Pweh Loh Kloh river between Myaing Gyi Ngu and T--- village.

On that day, BGF #1014 had set up an informal checkpoint at the end of the Htee Lah Beh Hta Bridge. According to local people, it was not a regular checkpoint. This particular BGF checkpoint did not allow people to cross the river after 5 PM.

On 28 November 2018, Saw K--- crossed the Pweh Loh Kloh river with a few travellers. According to local witnesses, they arrived at the checkpoint at 5:58 PM. When they approached the BGF #1014, the BGF soldier Kyeh Nee pointed the flashlight toward the village head and shouted: "Stop!".

Following that, the soldier beat Saw K--- with a bamboo stick without any explanation. Saw K--- was the only one beaten by the soldier. The people travelling with him saw him faint after his head was hit twice. The soldier proceeded to beat his body, which left him with very serious injuries. According to a witness who was on the boat, the BGF soldier punched Saw K--- twice and hit him on the head with a bamboo stick.

Saw K--- fell to the ground, but the BGF soldier continued to hit him with a bamboo

stick on his leg.

Despite his beating, Saw K--- still requested to talk with the commander [of the BGF #1014] but the soldiers refused. They said: "It would not make any difference if you talk to the commander. You are not respecting the time restriction. Do I have to shoot your boat with this gun?"

According to Saw K---'s wife, he was taken home by a local person after the incident took place. Once he arrived home, his wife said: "he was behaving like he was out of his mind. He told me that he needed to go to the monastery to see the yellow clothes of the monk. [According to Buddhist religious beliefs, the yellow clothes of a monk have special powers.] He said that without doing this, he could not survive this pain. He ran to the monastery immediately. However, he looked overwhelmed with pain and fear".

Saw K--- was taken to the local hospital in Myaing Gyi Ngu on November 29 2018. Health workers questioned the persons who brought him about the cause of his injuries. However, they were too afraid to say that he had been beaten by the BGF, because their base is close to the town. Saw K--- did not recover from his injuries despite spending a few days in the Myaing Gyi Ngu hospital. On 4 December 2018, he was sent to a hospital in Hpa-an.

On 3 December 2018, Saw K---'s wife went to the BGF #1014 office in T--- village in order to report the case. The BGF claimed that, even though Saw K--- is a village head, he deserved to be beaten because he did not respect the time restrictions of the checkpoint. Then, they gave her 300,000 kyat (US \$189.10) as compensation. However, they did not take any action to punish the perpetrators. The BGF commander Hpo Dah admitted that this incident was due to a communication problem between him and the soldier [who beat Saw K---]. As a reparation, he promised to cover the entire cost of Saw K---'s treatment until he had completely recovered. The BGF commander Hpo Dah gave 300,000 kyat (US \$189.10) to Saw K---'s family the first time he was hospitalised. Once Saw K--- had a follow-up check with the doctor, the BGF commander paid 300,000 kyat (US \$189.10) again.

Saw K--- continues to experience serious health problems due to his heavy injuries and traumatic experience. His doctor said that part of his brain is damaged. During his stay at the hospital, Saw K--- was scared whenever he heard people speaking. He also had trouble communicating. The doctor also stated that it might take a very long time to recover from such trauma. Because of the trauma and brain damage Saw K--- sustained, he was retired from the position of village head. Another community member replaced him.

Saw K---'s wife said "*My husband did not do anything wrong. He was not drunk and he came back on time. Now, some people are saying that my husband is abnormal and crazy. I am so sad to hear this. He is getting better now but is not fully himself yet. Since he got injured, he has no interest in any of the work that he enjoyed before*".

This incident had an impact on the whole community in T--- village. A community member reported that people are now afraid to travel because of what happened to their village head.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.

The victim's family allowed KHRG to use this information.



The photo on the left shows Htee Lah Beh Hta bridge. The photo on the right shows the BGF checkpoint. *[Photos: KHRG]*

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

- “Hpapun Incident Report: Tatmadaw road construction results in the indiscriminate firing of mortars and displacement in Lu Thaw Township, March 2018”, (June 2018)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township and Dwe Lo Township, September 2017 and February 2018”, (June 2018)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Lu Thaw Township, February to March 2018”, (May 2018)
- “Attacks on villagers, ongoing fighting and displacement in Hpapun and Toungoo districts from January to April 2018”, (May 2018)

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)