



Short Update

November 20th, 2019 / KHRG # 19-65-D1

Dooplaya Short Update: Extortion by a Tatmadaw officer and poorly-built houses for refugees and IDPs in Kawkareik Township, May 20th to June 30th 2019

This Short Update describes how a Tatmadaw¹ Lieutenant extorted money from a female villager and provides information on poorly-built houses in a housing project for repatriated refugees and returned IDPs in L--- village, Su K'Lee village tract, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. It covers the period between May 20th and June 30th 2019.²

1. Extortion by a Tatmadaw Lieutenant

On June 17th 2019 at 10:00 AM, Lieutenant Saw Tun Naing from Infantry Battalion #57, Th'Waw Thaw military camp, went to L--- village, Su K'Lee village tract, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District where he rode around on his motorbike while shouting at villagers. While drunk, Saw Tun Naing went into the house of Naw O---, one of the villagers, woke her up, and asked her to give him 3,000 baht (USD 99.40 as of November 20th 2019).³ She handed the money over to him as she was afraid. He promised to return the money after one or two days but has not done so to date. Naw O--- would have been able to sustain her family for three months with the amount of money that he extorted.

Naw H---, a village elder from L--- village went to the Tatmadaw camp to inform the Company Commander of the incident when she heard about it. He told her that he will take action on the Lieutenant as he made a mistake. The Commander promised to return the money to Naw O--- early the following month. However, the Battalion has moved away from that camp since then and the victim remains uncompensated to date.

2. Shortcomings of a housing project for refugees and IDPs

A housing project for repatriated refugees and returned IDPs, which is supported by the Nippon Foundation, commenced in 2017 in the same village as above. The project was implemented by

¹ Tatmadaw refers to the Myanmar military.

² The present document is based on information received in August 2019. It was provided by a community member in Hpa-an District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions on the ground. The names of the victims, their photos and the exact locations are censored for security reasons.

³ L--- village is located in the Thailand-Myanmar border area, in which the Thai baht is also used.

Kabar Shwe Nann Company Limited⁴ and Min Zar Ni Company Limited,⁵ and led by the companies' managers Maung Shwe Lin and Ye Tun Lin, who are retired Tatmadaw Battalion Commander and Tactical Operations Commander, respectively. Out of 300 houses constructed, 100 houses are reported to be of bad quality. Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Company #2 Commander Bo W---, the person in charge of monitoring the project, raised this issue with those responsible for the housing project, who promised to conduct an assessment on the houses' quality and make improvements as necessary. The promise was not kept; they handed the keys of the houses to the village head after completion of the project and subsequently left.

The Nippon Foundation paid the companies 14,500,000 kyats (USD 9,567.11 as of November 20th 2019) for each house built, which were provided without charge to repatriated refugees and returned IDPs. No water supply has been provided at the houses yet. According to Bo Y---, a local KNLA military intelligence commander from Battalion #103, only 60 households of IDPs from the nearby villages of E---, A---, P--- and N--- had moved into the houses in the project at the time of reporting.

Further background reading on the issues of repatriation and extortion in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“If I had known, I wouldn't have returned to Myanmar’: Shortcomings in Refugee Repatriation and Reintegration”](#), (June 2019)
- [“Hpapun Incident Report: Forced portering and extortion in Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, October 2017”](#), (September 2018)
- [“Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Extortion and Land Confiscations in Tanintharyi Township, November 2017 to January 2018”](#), (December 2018)

About KHRG

Founded in 1992, the Karen Human Rights Group is an independent local organisation committed to improving the human rights situation in Southeast Myanmar. KHRG trains local people to document and gather evidence of human rights abuses, and publishes this information to project the voices, experiences and perspectives of local communities. More examples of our work can be seen online at www.khrq.org.

⁴ Kabar Shwe Nann Company Limited (ကမ်ဘာရှင်နေရှားကုမ္ပဏီလီမိတက်), Registration Number: 100487292 – See more information about this company here: <https://www.myco.dica.gov.mm/Corp/EntityProfile.aspx?id=16e6bd08-41fd-4a37-8faa-2fc5ec58763d>.

⁵ Min Zar Ni Company Limited (မင်းဇာနည်ကုမ္ပဏီလီမိတက်), Registration Number, 146821847 – See more information about this company here: <https://www.myco.dica.gov.mm/Corp/EntityProfile.aspx?id=97b88af8-6691-4d18-b882-25d08f67f9d0>.