



Incident Report

July 31st 2020 / KHRG # 20-69-I1

Mu Traw District Incident Report: Child rape by a BGF soldier in Dwe Lo Township, June 2020

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in A--- village, A--- village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District on June 10th 2020. A Border Guard Force [BGF]¹ soldier raped an underage thilashin² in the local monastery. The survivor was admitted to the hospital, where she had to spend seven days to treat her injuries. Although the perpetrator was arrested on June 11th and was handed over to the Myanmar Police Force, the investigation is moving slowly.³

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Sexual violence against a child
Date of Incident(s)	June 10 th 2020
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A--- village, A--- village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information	
Name	Naw ⁴ B--- [Ma B---]
Age	13
Sex	Female
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Single
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Thilashin
Village	C--- village, Htee Th'Bluh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

¹ Border Guard Force (BGF) 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 formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw.

² Thilashins are female lay renunciants in Burmese Buddhism. They observe the Ten Precepts of Buddhism and can be recognised by their pink robes.

³ The present document is based on information received in June 2020. It was provided by a community member in Mu Traw 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. The parts in square brackets are explanations added by KHRG.

⁴ Naw is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Meh Gyi	Soldier	BGF Battalion #1013	K'Ter Tee village	Battalion Commander Saw ⁵ La Kyaing

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A police officer informed me about this case on June 12th 2020 when I went to Wah Tho Khoh village, Dwe Lo Township to document another incident. I contacted the A--- village tract administrator in the evening and he told me that this incident happened on June 10th 2020 at 6 pm.

On June 13th 2020, I met with a Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA]⁶ Commander from Battalion #102, Company #3. He showed me a telegram that confirmed what the village tract administrator had told me. However, some elements were still missing so I contacted a Thu Hkoh Yaw [Company Sergeant Major] from Company #3. I also went to the monastery and met with the abbot.

[KHRG also interviewed the mother of the survivor]

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The abbot was at the monastery at the time of the incident.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

This child rape case happened at 6 pm on June 10th 2020 at the E--- Monastery in A--- village, A--- village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District. The survivor is a 13-year-old thilashin named Naw B--- from C--- village, Htee Th'Bluh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township.

The perpetrator is Meh Gyi, a 23-year-old BGF soldier from A--- village. He is based in a camp beside the Baw Kyoh Hta bridge, and his commanding officer is Platoon Commander Bo Meh See. Meh Gyi is part of BGF Battalion #1013, Company #1. BGF Battalion #1013 is based in K'Ter Tee village and commanded by Battalion Commander La Kyaing and his deputy, Kyaw Win. The Company #1 Commander is Bo Bah Yoh.

U⁷ Pa Nya⁸ D---, the monastery's abbot, said that, on the day of the incident, Naw B--- and an older thilashin had gone to the house of one of their Da Ka [followers] to drink tea, after which they came back to the monastery. At 6 pm, while they were both at the Ma Da [a place to collect donations, usually located beside a road], the abbot asked the two thilashins to go to the temple and play [an audio-cassette or a CD containing] Ta Ya [Buddhist preachings]. The older thilashin stayed at the Ma Da and Naw B--- went to the temple.

⁵ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

⁶ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

⁷ U is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

⁸ Pa Nya is a Burmese title used for senior monks.

Meh Gyi called Naw B--- while she was in the temple. She replied to him that it was dark, and that the abbot did not allow them to go out [after dark]. Then, Meh Gyi entered the temple, covered her mouth with his hand and took her behind the temple [to rape her]. The older thilashin saw Meh Gyi take Naw B---, but she did not know why.

She reported it to the abbot [who initially thought she was being kidnapped]. He asked two local villagers who live near the Ma Da to find Naw B---. They started searching the monastery and calling out her name, prompting Meh Gyi to run away. By the time they found her, Meh Gyi had already raped Naw B---, leaving her injured. Meh Gyi was reportedly on drugs at the time of the incident. Some of the local villagers noticed that drugs [both their use and sale] were common among BGF soldiers.

Before finding the victim, the abbot had initially sent a third villager, Saw H---, to the BGF post near the Baw Kyoh Hta bridge to ask the soldiers about the whereabouts of Meh Gyi. They could not find him. [When he heard about the rape case,] Platoon Commander Bo Meh See gave 50,000 kyats [USD 36.80]⁹ to Saw H--- to send Naw B--- to the one hundred beds hospital in Hpapun town.

No compensation was provided to cover the victim's medical fees and food costs, [however these costs] were paid for by the perpetrator's mother. The survivor was admitted to the Hpapun hospital on June 10th. She was discharged on June 16th 2020, after which she came back to the monastery. She now has to go back to the hospital once a week to undergo a medical check-up.

Naw B---'s mother said: *"I am afraid to talk about [what happened to] my daughter. Her genitalia was brutally hurt. If she hadn't been badly injured, there would have been no reason to admit her to the hospital."* She will take her daughter back to her village after this case is fully resolved.

On the morning of June 11th, Meh Gyi was arrested by other [BGF] soldiers along the Noh Kheh Hta road and subsequently handed over to the Myanmar Police Force [MPF]. He is now being held in custody at the Hpapun central police station.

Update from the KHRG field researcher [July 31st 2020]: The MPF came to the village two times to investigate the crime scene and hear witnesses. But U F---, a senior monk from the monastery involved in the proceedings, said that the investigation is moving slowly. He had to go to the police station five times with the victim's mother already, but they were told to bring more witnesses.

However, the monk cannot afford to cover all the transportation costs for himself, the victim's mother and the other witnesses anymore. Since the MPF is not taking any further action or referring this case to a court, both the monk and the victim's mother decided to stop going to the police station. The monk would like this case to be referred to the BGF or the Karen National Union,¹⁰ as he believes that they would take swifter action against the perpetrator.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

⁹ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the July 29th 2020 official market rate of 1,358.92 kyats to USD 1.

¹⁰ The Karen National Union (KNU) is the main Karen political organisation. It was established in 1947 and has been in conflict with the Burma/Myanmar government since 1949. The KNU wields power across large areas of Southeast Myanmar and has been calling for the creation of a democratic federal system since 1976. Although it signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in 2015, relations with the government remain tense.

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

The mother of the victim allowed KHRG to use this information.

Further background reading on sexual violence against children in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["He only let me go after he finished raping me": Sexual Violence in Southeast Myanmar, 2019](#), (March 2020)
- ["Taw Oo District Incident Report: Multiple instances of child rape, 2016 to October 2019"](#), (March 2020)
- ["Southeast Myanmar Field Report: Militarisation, environmental pollution and sexual violence against children, July to December 2019"](#), (February 2020)

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.

Mutraw (Hpapun) District

