

Beyond the Horizon: Local Perspectives on Peace, Justice and Accountability Southeast Myanmar

Appendix: Raw Data Testimony (November 2018 to April 2019)

This appendix includes the full texts of 81 pieces of KHRG field documentation (raw data), which serve as the dataset for **Beyond the Horizon: Local Perspectives on Peace, Justice and Accountability Southeast Myanmar**. KHRG received this information during the reporting period for this report from November 2018 to April 2019.

KHRG trains villagers in Southeast Myanmar 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. KHRG translates all documents for publication and undertakes minor edits only for security and clarity.

Between November 2018 and April 2019, KHRG researchers conducted interviews with 150 persons across Southeast Myanmar for the purpose of this report. These interviews were held with a diverse group of people to ensure that their perspectives were representative of different segments of the population. KHRG then analysed 95 interviews (59 men and 36 women) that contained particularly relevant and strong information. **'Beyond the Horizon'** directly references 81 of these unpublished interviews. They are all included in full in this appendix.

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Source #1

Source doc #	Source # 1
Log #	18-132-A6-I1
Type of report	Interview
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Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Od--- (female, 48), Oe--- village, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

What is your marital status?

I am married.

What is your ethnicity and religion?

I am Karen and Christian.

Before the ceasefire [NCA], did you ever see the Myanmar government [military] commit [human rights] violations against civilians?

I saw plenty of these [human rights abuses]. I even experienced them myself so I fled to the refugee camp. Once, the Tatmadaw [knew] that [KNLA] soldiers had entered the village and were at my house, so they fired their guns [at my house]. I almost couldn't leave my house [to get to a safe place]. I had to drag my children out of the house. The bullets hit my house's stilts and got stuck there. I almost couldn't save my children. I could not suffer it [human rights violations] anymore so I ran to the refugee camp. If not, I might not have run there. We could not freely work [on our farm] for livelihoods. When I worked on a farm at the river source, I could not stay at our farm, so I had to go early in the morning and return in the evening and then we faced a food shortage. When we returned home [after work], the Tatmadaw soldiers had looted everything from our house and broke [unlocked] our lock. Therefore, we could not stay at our house [temporarily stayed at farm] and we had to travel from Oe--- village [house] to the river source [hill farm] every day. Moreover, we a faced food shortage and it was the hardest thing that I had ever faced so I fled to the refugee camp.

You said you could not stay in your farm. What would have happened to you if you had stayed on your farm?

If they [Tatmadaw] saw us on our farms, they would shoot and kill us.

Have you ever seen or heard Tatmadaw killing villagers?

I saw the Tatmadaw shoot and kill one villager on the road just beside my farm. He was a villager from Of---. While the Tatmadaw were approaching our area, they saw him on the way and shot him dead [without any reason]. After that, we [villagers] went to him [his body].

What did they do [for the victim family], after they killed that man, as reparation?

They did not do anything [for the victim family]. They did not even inform Of--- village head about they had killed his/her villager, so the Og--- village head had to information them [Of--- village leaders].

What action was taken by people [villagers or Tatmadaw] after the murder case?

That villager was dead and the village leaders did not do any investigation [for the victims].

At that time, do you think people [villagers or village leaders] dared to do investigation [about Tatmadaw shoot on sight issues]?

No, they did not dare conduct investigation.

So that villager died in vain [without committing any mistake and receiving compensation], correct?

Yes, he did.

How about other abuses against women?

I heard about them but I did not see them myself. They [the Tatmadaw] arrested women like Naw Oh--- to go with them.

Did they do anything against her?

No, but if the fighting had happened, they might have killed her for sure.

What was the worst human rights violation you experienced?

It was when the Tatmadaw shot weapons [mortar] at my house and I ran away [to hide in a safe place]. When I returned home, they returned to my house and questioned me, "Where did you go during the fighting?" I replied them, "We ran away". They pointed the guns at my head near my ear and continued, "You are Karen Nga Pway ["ringworm"; derogatory SLORC/SPDC name for Karen soldiers]!!! You are prostituted ethnic people!!!" For this reason, I fled to refugee camp. I did not do anything against them and they did it to me so I felt too much hateful on them.

So this was horrible suffering, correct?

Yes, it was too horrible suffering for me. I had to run for life and carry my children with me.

Did they village leaders do any strategy to protect their fellow villagers?

Villager leaders did not feel secure to stop the Tatmadaw [from committing human rights abuses against villagers], and they could not even speak for the villagers.

Were the Tatmadaw military perpetrators taken to court?

No, [they were power holders so nobody] dared to do it.

Did you return into your village just after the ceasefire process?

I returned [to my village] many years after the ceasefire process was signed.

After the ceasefire process, when the Tatmadaw are patrolling in your community, do you feel secure?

I am less afraid of them [worry for my security] compared to the past [conflict period].

Do you mean you are still afraid of them?

Yes, we are, especially at night time, because sometimes the Tatmadaw soldiers walk alone at night time.

Have you [even] heard about their committing looting or entering into villagers' houses?

No, I do not hear about it anymore.

After the ceasefire, do you hear about the Tatmadaw committing human rights abuses against villagers in your community?

I do not hear about these happening in my Township, but these [human rights abuses] happen in other townships.

Which townships?

In District #5 and District #3.

What kinds of [human rights] abuses?

I heard they [Tatmadaw] burnt down the villages so groups of villagers were displaced. These are the problems [that villagers face]. These happened recently.

Do you think the ceasefire process [peace] is sustainable?

I do not believe in the Burmese [Tatmadaw and Government] [to build sustainable peace]. It is not sustainable yet. They [Tatmadaw] do it in order to be able to transport rations and approach freely. When they say there is peace, why do they still patrol and guard their other soldiers when they send more rations [to their army camps]?

Did you see them patrolling?

Yes, I do.

Do you personally believe that they [Tatmadaw and government] will provide genuine peace for our [KNU] leaders?

No, I do not believe that they will offer it [genuine peace for KNU].

What should the Myanmar government do for the victims of the past [human rights] violations they committed, as reparation and to change their behaviour? For example, apology, compensation, go to prison.

They violated [the rights of] civilians a lot, so some should go the villagers and apologise and help [support] them.

Does 'support villagers' mean build trust among civilians and have friendship with villagers?

Yes, they should build trust by having relationships with civilians. Their actions should be like their words. They should not do opposite from their words [promise villagers]. [Anyway], I could not do anything if they think [intend] different from their words.

Between sending the Myanmar government military to prison and pressuring them to build genuine trust with civilians as a punishment through the power of foreign countries, which penalty do you think is suitable [for the Tatmadaw]?

I do not believe them that they will build trust, so the prison penalty is better.

Before, you fled to a refugee camp and then returned [to your village] after the ceasefire agreement, so I would like to interview you [about the repatriation situation]. What are the biggest livelihood challenge that newly repatriated refugees will face, do you think?

Pwa. From my own experiences, there are plenty of livelihood problems I have experienced, so it is very hard for the returned refugees. I think some people face worse problems than mine.

Can you explain in more detail please?

I had to repair my abandoned plantation and plant new fruit trees in order to have crops to sell for my family's income. We had to work very hard with all our strength and energy in the bush [forest], and I still almost did not have enough food for my family. Therefore, it was very hard. If they [Tatmadaw] did not commit forced displacement against us, our plantations might not be damaged like they are now.

After you fled and then returned [to your village], did your whole farm become forest?

Yes, all of my plantation became forest. Vines covered the whole betel nut trees so we could not see the fruit anymore. We have to repair our plantation as the beginning [start all over again].

Do all of the other people [refugees] have farms like you?

Some of them may have their farms, but some of them do not.

Even though you have your plantations, you have so many problems. So can you imagine the problems for the people [refugees] who do not have plantations?

From my experiences, I have had many difficulties working; sweating a lot and we have to hold the handle of the machete every day so it was harder [than] for the people who do not have plantations.

For the people [refugees] who do not have anything to be able to overcome their family livelihood barriers, what is the most important support that should be provided for them?

They may need land to build their houses. If they do not have any land to build their house, the other people [neighbours] may have different thoughts on them. They will have to overcome their family livelihood and food problems so they will have to work as daily workers to earn their family income. It will be really hard for them.

If the refugees who do not have land are supported with a house and some land [to farm], do you think they can take care of their livelihoods?

Yes, if they are not lazy, when they have a house and land, it will be easier for them [to overcome take care of their family].

Do you think they should receive the support like these?

Yes.

How wide is the land [how much land] should be provided for them, do you think?

At least they should be supported with one acre of land in order to help them in their future livelihoods.

What size house do you think should be given as support to them? For example, what about the low price houses [constructed by Nippon foundation for refugees' repatriation]?

Yes, it is ok for them, but it should be strong and a farm house. With that, they can live.

Do the refugees that you know have their own land to return?

Some of them may have a small plot of land, one Rai [Thai measurement, equal to 0.395 acres], but not very wide land. Some of their lands are very far from the water so it is very hard to access water during hot season.

How do the returned refugees work for their livelihoods? Do they have enough food for

their family?

They just have to work as daily labourers on other resident villagers' rubber plantations; they harvest latex and clear vegetation like that.

What problems will they face if they are sick?

They do not have money to access healthcare services.

Do you know if any government hospital provides free healthcare services?

One person told me that, when he/she went to the Seikgyi Hospital [in Kyainseikgyi Township], they did not have to pay for the medicine, but they did have to pay for food.

To improve the situation in the future, what is your dream and perspective?

I do not know how long I will have to work for my livelihood. Even when I will am not able to work anymore, there will be nobody to serve us food. We will be in a very hard condition.

Do you think the Myanmar government should improve the country? And how? For example, health and education.

I heard that our children who graduated from the camp, they cannot apply for jobs [no job opportunities for them] or further their study in Myanmar. The government does not accept [recognise] it [the camp education system]. Therefore, if our children return, they will just have to work on farms like this. Despite this, education is very important in nowadays. I forgot what did you ask me?

Do you think the Myanmar government should improve this situation?

Yes, they should.

As you mentioned some refugees have small plots of land, do they have [land titles for] ownership or it is just land for farming?

No, the [Myanmar] government does not recognise [that they are land owners yet].

If any problems happen [regarding land issues], what should you do?

We just have to rely on the village head.

And then, which governments will the village head approach [for solution]? KNU or Myanmar government?

I don't know. Maybe, they might go to [approach] both.

Which justice system do villagers in your community use? KNU or Myanmar government?

We mostly rely [approach] to the KNU [justice systems].

When big issues happen in the village and village level justice system cannot solve the problem, where do you report the case to?

The KNU.

The information that you provided for us [KHRG] is very good, so can we use your information for publication?

Yes, you can.

Do you have any questions for me?

No, I do not know.

Can I take your picture for documentation [evidence]?

Yes,

Thank you.

Source #2

Source doc #	Source # 2
Log #	18-133-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
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Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Ka--- (male, 51), Kb--- village, Ta Ka Klo village tract, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (December 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

Can I record your voice in our conversation now?

Yes.

Have you experienced conflict and human rights violations in the past? How do you think about those?

I have experienced a lot of conflict in the past. If you were a villager, you were able to hide and ran away from the conflict. But if you were a village head, you were not able to hide yourself and run away. The Tatmadaw would torture you when they came into the village or when the fighting occurred. At that time, the village head would have to suffer more from the torture.

Did they torture the village head or the villagers?

They tortured me when I was a village head. We were afraid to be a village head for a year so we rotated to be a village head once a month. Even in a month many tortures or abuses happened.

How did they torture you? Did they punch you, kick you or use a stick or something else?

Yes, they punched me with their fists and beat me with a stick.

Were they Tatmadaw?

Yes, they were Tatmadaw.

Do you remember the incident date? How many years ago?

I don't remember the exact date. It would be in the past 10 years. It happened when one of the Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] soldiers asked permission and came back to the village. At the same time, the Tatmadaw came into the village. So everyone ran and that soldier [Kaw Thoo Lei soldier] also tried to run away. Unfortunately, the Tatmadaw military shot him so he could not run anymore. There was always one group of Kaw Thoo Lei soldiers staying close to the village. That soldier had gotten married a few months before [not a long time yet] and he asked for permission to come back and visit his wife in the village. I did not know who the Tatmadaw shot at. At that time, I was with another group of Kaw Thoo Lei soldiers. When I heard the gun fired, I asked the Kaw Thoo Lei commander, "Why was a gun fired?" Then he told me, "No, we just took off the satellite signal now." He said it might just be something else. Then I told him, "No, it is not normal". "Run", I told them. Then we saw people were running around and he said the Tatmadaw military was shooting us. So I sent that group of soldiers to the corner of somewhere [to hide them] and then I told them, "I have to go back. The Tatmadaw will look for me as I am a village head". Then they let me go back home. However, I was afraid to come directly back home so I went back an indirect way. As I thought, they were already waiting for me at my house. The Tatmadaw came with their commander and they tortured me [beat me with their gun] even though I was a village head. Then their commander asked me, "Didn't you hear the gun firing?" I answered, "Yes, I did". Then he continued, "Then why did you not come back?" I told him, "How could I dare to come back?" He told me "you should come back to see what was happening in your village when you heard the gun firing." So I answered him "I am even afraid to go to pick up my children at the school." He punched me hard with his fist in my back so that I fell down. I was not unconscious but I was a bit dizzy. It was because I replied to him when he scolded me about not coming back. I stood up and talked with him. Then he asked me, "Who is this guy? Tell me honestly". Then I told him, "he is not my villager [because I could not tell him honestly he is a Kaw Thoo Lei soldier]". However, the KNU soldier was not dead yet [he just got shot and injured]. He [the Tatmadaw commander] asked me many questions again and again. Then finally he told me, "Okay, if he is not your villager then you have to sign here". Then I just signed finally [I was confused and he was not my villagers as well]. After I signed, the commander ordered the Tatmadaw soldier to shoot [kill] him. Then he told me, "Do you know that you made a mistake?" I answered, "I don't know. When did I make a mistake? I did not do anything wrong". Then he said, "You did not tell me that the Kaw Thoo Lei soldiers are in your village". I told him "I did not know that they came into the village. I did not know you would come as well." Then he said, "Shut up. Don't say anything. Just buy me one pig [pork] to eat". He continued, "what will you do with this dead body?" I told him, "As we are Christians, we have to call the pastor for the funeral [to bury him]". Then he said, "Do it. Then get one pig for me". So I had to get one pig for him. We had to send it to Ta Ka Klo village because they came back to eat there.

Who shot [killed] the Kaw Thoo Lei soldier? Was he a Tatmadaw soldier or a commander?

The soldier shot the Kaw Thoo Lei soldier because the commander gave him an order to shoot.

What is the name of the victim who was killed?

His name is Saw Day Wah.

Did he have a family?

He got married a few months ago [not a long time yet] and he did get any children yet.

How about his wife? What was going on with her? What did she do?

The Tatmadaw asked for her [whereabouts]. I went to Kc---village and when I was going to come back to Kb--- village the Tatmadaw followed me. They said their friends were going to visit. Then his parents in law and his wife ran away.

When the Tatmadaw military beat you with the gun and punched you and you fell down, Did they pull you up [help you to stand up]?

No, they did not. They just stayed like that [did not care for it]. I had to try to stand up by myself.

When was it?

It was ten years ago.

Do you remember the month?

I think it was in December, but I am not sure [forgot].

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The worst experience was also ten years ago. We had to be a village head frequently. However, I was not a village head anymore. I left two or three months ago. But Battalion #284 ordered me to go to them, so I went. They asked me to buy alcohol so I bought it and I drank with them. However, when I was about to come back in the evening, they arrested me even though I had done nothing wrong.

How many days did you have to stay?

I had to stay in their custody for ten days.

Did they feed you?

They fed us but it was in the afternoon. The rice was just like pig food, with everything in it. There were no other foods. They also gave us bamboo shoot salad to eat with rice that we measured out. They fed us dinner at nine or ten o'clock. However, I could not eat much and well.

Did they allow you to contact your family?

Our family tried to get access to us and they tried many times but they could not. In the same way, when we were in custody, they told us not to contact our family. They monitored us because they said we contacted the KNU. He asked me, "Do you have a pistol and a satellite phone". I told them, "I don't have a pistol and a satellite phone. I just have [a hunting musket]." They said, "You can't. Your family won't come to see you as well because you are Kaw Thoo Lei soldier".

Were you or your family displaced?

No, we were not displaced. However, Once, the Tatmadaw indiscriminately fired mortar shells at our village. My wife and children could not stay at home anymore so they just packed some things and ran away. They had to flee to river source. The mortar shells fell on the roof, in the house and around the house. We could not stay there any longer. We had to flee.

Was it in Kb--- village?

Yes, it was in Kb---village.

How about other people?

They also ran away and ran to different places. We finally met with some people in river source and some did not flee. Some people who could not handle the noise such as women and children fled.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I don't know.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

When the Tatmadaw tortured you and beat you hard and did not feed you well, I could not bear that and nearly died.

Could you go to work on your farm freely?

No, I could not go to work on my farm freely that time. If they saw you, they would take you.

Did they destroy your plantation?

No, they did not destroy it but they sometimes asked you to feed them your chickens and pigs. You did not dare to tell them anything. If you talked back to them, you would get beaten more. Sometimes we would prepare chickens or pigs for the commander and their soldiers would ask you to feed them as well. Our ethnic armed group would say, "you fed the Tatmadaw military but how about us? Why you don't feed us too?"

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

In the past, you had to be afraid of every group. If the KNU came into the village, you had to be afraid that the Tatmadaw would come and fire mortar shells. For the KNU if we apologized to them and fed them food then they would not make trouble and they would leave. But some commanders or soldiers who were drunk, even if they were your ethnic group you wouldn't dare to tell them to go or anything.

What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

We don't need to be afraid of anything now because there is no fighting anymore. So now we can work freely. In the past, we had to work with concerns that fighting would happen. When the dogs barked, we were ready. Then if the fighting started, we had to run. We could not work freely.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

We cannot say that our village is totally peaceful now. However, we can travel and work freely after the ceasefire. For example, we could not go to Kyainseikgyi town in the past. But now we can go without any concerns. In the same way, we can see many organizations and groups, and that we get a lot of pressure from them. We don't understand every process that is going on well because there are many processes that are going on. We don't get to take a rest well. We don't need to be afraid of anything now but we have to give the time to them [development projects or organizations] so we don't have time to work for ourselves [work on farms or plantation] much. Even the village head and the villagers, if this organization is calling a meeting, they have to attend the meeting. If that organization is organizing the meeting, then they have to attend the meeting as well. The meetings are going on again and again so we get busier with the meetings in the ceasefire time.

What are the pressures that you mentioned?

The pressures are from the organizations because you don't have enough time to work [on your own business]. They constructed a road and widened the road to help us and one thing is our plantation farms or gardens are beside the road. That was on Sunday when they constructed the road and widened the road. I just built the fence for my garden and if that was not on Sunday I would have taken off every split-rail [pole] of the fence. However, I did not get to do it because they constructed the road on Sunday. Then my entire fence was destroyed and covered with earth. It was not and it is not easy to find the split-rails for the fence as well. It is good that they helped us construct and widen the road. I just bought new wire chain link fence and I had to use almost 10 rolls of it. However, I could not take them back after constructing the road and I just got pieces of them when I tried to take them out.

Did they give any compensation for that?

No, they did not give anything.

Didn't they say anything?

No, they did not. But in the beginning they said we will see how many get destroyed and we will give them back. However, until now they haven't said anything and don't even show up anymore since they constructed the road.

Do you feel safer now?

I think I don't feel safer. In the past we had places to hide, so we felt safer. But now in the ceasefire time, we don't know who is who and everyone can go around. So we think we cannot hide in the secret places anymore. We don't feel safe, and moreover there is more transparency so you cannot hide.

How has your livelihood situation changed now from in the past? How do you think?

I worked on hill farm plantations in the past but now I cannot work hard like before. I cannot clean the bushes and cut the grass like before.

What does peace mean to you? What do you think about it?

In politics, it is just a ceasefire agreement but I think it is not a sustainable and certain ceasefire yet. If it were a sustainable and certain ceasefire agreement, it would be better for us. I think that it is not easy to get our rights [Karen people rights] after the ceasefire agreement.

Why do you see that it is not easy yet? Do you see anything abnormal?

Even though they said they signed the agreement and there is no fighting, and nothing happens in the places we can see, we can hear with our ears that the fighting is going on in some other areas. The areas where our Karen people are living now, they can fire the guns and the mortars without obeying and following the rules. Even the leaders say that despite the ceasefire they can still fight. Therefore, I see that this ceasefire agreement is not a certain and sustainable agreement yet.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve peace process?

What I want to say is that if the soldiers and followers obey and do as their leaders tell them and those leaders order them as in the rules, it will be best. But now even when the KNU and the Myanmar government orders their soldiers and followers, they [the soldiers and followers] can just do whatever they want on the ground or in the front line areas. However, as we are local

people, we cannot tell them whatever we want. As they are the armed groups and armed actors, we [the villagers] don't dare to tell them anything. It will be the best if they follow the rules they have, and it will be safer and more peaceful for the local people as well.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice? [She explained the meaning of justice as truth].

We can say that it is peaceful now but there are so many crimes that have happened. We the village head and the village committee have to solve crimes more than in the past when the ceasefire agreement was not signed yet. Therefore, we do the best for the truth on the crimes when we solve them.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

After the ceasefire, the situation is more peaceful so many organizations come into the village for providing the electricity and constructing roads. Therefore, we have to cut our plants. So those I think are kind of human rights violations as well.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

Our plants were destroyed in the road construction and there is no punishment for that. It affects our plantation so it is a loss for us.

What is the organization that constructed the road?

I don't remember what organization came to construct the road but the rich man Khin Zaw was the one who constructed the road. I don't know the company name but I just know it as Khin Zaw road construction.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

There is no discrimination against women. It is not a usual problem that happens in our village. In the past, it was difficult for the women who had heart disease. The noises were loud for them. Some of them got knocked unconsciousness and were so scared that they went toilet in their pants. However, the situations get better now because we don't need to hear the guns firing anymore. There are just other diseases that they have to suffer now not related to the fighting.

What are the challenges and problems that the ethnic groups are facing after the ceasefire agreement? What about religious problems?

In our village, we have religious rights and we don't need to ask for the religious rights. We can travel freely in our village and we nobody stops us. However, if we go to Seikgyi [town], I think we will get stopped and checked sometimes. It is stricter for travel than in our village.

What does justice mean to you? [Truth]

In the past, we did not dare to tell the truth. For example, if the Tatmadaw asked us where the KNU was, we could not tell them the truth that the KNU was here or there. But now we can tell them the truth because they are not fighting with each other.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

If it is just a small crime that happens in the village, we just solve and finish it in the village. However, if it is a big and heavy crime that cannot be finished at the village level, we just refer it to the KNU. Then the KNU handles it and solves it.

What do you know about this justice system? How do you think about it?

Our village is under the KNU control so we follow what they tell and direct us to do. For example, they tell us which crimes we have the power to handle and which kinds of crimes we don't have the power to handle. If it is a heavy crime, we refer it to the village tract and then to the township and district under KNU control.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want? Would you want to take a case to court? Would you want to receive compensation or reparation? Would you want an official apology?

In my own opinion, past is past and we were patient with them. Patience will give a victory. However, if they follow the country rules and traditions directed from the government, there won't be harm for the local people.

Is there any discrimination from the KNU or the Myanmar government?

We cannot say with certainty that there is no discrimination. However, we have to be afraid of the armed groups in some ways.

Do you have anything more to add apart from the questions that I asked you?

It will be a very long time if we talk about the conflicts from the past. So I don't talk about it anymore. Some local people were killed from the armed groups and the Tatmadaw. It was because of the military influences. We are not saying it was because of the KNU or the Tatmadaw. It was just because of the military influences.

Why were the villagers killed or killed themselves? Did any armed group force them?

They knew that we were going or working with KNU. When we were arrested, the KNU escaped. However, the local people could not do anything when they were arrested, so they were killed.

Do you have anything else?

No, I don't have anything else to say.

Can we use your recorded information and take photos to use?

How about they see it? They will make us in trouble.

No, we won't publish your face and we will make blurry.

Yes, then you can use it.

Thank you so much.

Source #3

Source doc #	Source # 3
Log #	19-10-A3-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	
Nyaunglebin Interview Saw Ko--- (male, 65), Kp--- village, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (January 2019)	

Religion: Christian
Ethnicity: Karen
Family Status: Married
Occupation: Farmer

How many children do you have?

I have six children.

How old is your youngest child?

The youngest child is 14 years old.

Have you ever experienced conflict?

In 1974, I experienced conflict and displacement. The Tatmadaw forced us to flee from the village during the armed conflict. We had to abandon our lands, domestic animals and properties as we could not take them with us. Then, the four cuts [strategy] put us in a hard situation. We could not hesitate or ask for more time to pack our belongings before fleeing to the forest. The Tatmadaw forced all the villagers to leave within one day. All our belongings were left behind. Our lives were very challenging while we were displaced. When we displaced to other villages, some people were lucky when the host village allowed them to stay in their garden for a limited time. When we displaced to the other side of the Salween River, there were murders and torture by armed groups as well. We had to work as casual workers, carry things and do other works for many years. The Tatmadaw camps, including the Shwe Bo camp and other camps near our village gathered the paddy from our abandoned farms and stored it in their army camp. Then, they asked us to come and take rice every three days. We could not take more than that. We displaced from place to place as we were forced to leave. For instance, we relocated to H--- village for a year, and then the Tatmadaw forced us to move to I--- village. I cannot recall everything about displacement. We experienced many other tough things. When we rented someone's land to cultivate it, we were asked to pay a large amount of taxes or [give] paddy. When we could not afford to pay the tax, we would be arrested by the Tatmadaw. This is how our lives were restricted.

Which Tatmadaw battalion was operating in your community at that time?

I can remember the Tatmadaw Infantry Battalion (IB) #59. The Tatmadaw battalion that forced us to displace was the LIB #85 led by Bo [officer] Aye Ko and Column Commander Bo Min Thay. When they forced us to displace, they told us: "Take all your belongings with you, you will no longer be allowed to come back and take them after you leave the village." It was not easy for us because we had not prepared our belongings, including household materials and domestic animals. The Tatmadaw prohibited us from traveling outside of the delimited area, and ordered us to obtain permission letters [to travel]. We could be arbitrarily arrested or killed if we did not respect their rules. We were innocently blamed and accused by the Tatmadaw. It became our fault when we did not give them what they asked for. They abused us; the relatives of the rebels... they disliked seeing our faces. Many villagers were killed while they went to fish or to find vegetables in the forest outside of the delimited area. Our lives were dangerous whether we had permission letters from the Tatmadaw or not. It was a terrible experience for us. Fortunately, we felt so blessed when the KNU and the Myanmar government agreed on the ceasefire. The situation became more peaceful during the ceasefire period. The problem after the ceasefire is that some community members are misbehaving. They steal people's domestic

animals and cultivate large areas of land in the forest. These are the negative impacts on our community. Some community members take advantage of the ceasefire and misbehave. We expect our leaders to solve this problem.

What was the worst experience you've faced?

The experiences [we faced] before the ceasefire were the worst thing ever. We were physically abused by the Tatmadaw whenever they wrongly blamed us. Whenever the Tatmadaw and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) fought each other, the Tatmadaw accused and abused innocent villagers. Especially, when they [Tatmadaw] heard the KNLA opening fire, they came to the village and physically abused villagers as they accused them of being KNLA spies. They abused villagers by forcing them to carry lots of water in more than ten boats. There were many painful experiences that we will never forget. We were forced to do sit-ups, somersaults and other punishments. They often ordered us to find alcohol and chicken for them as well. They did not consider our livelihoods and safety when they forced us to take them somewhere [with boats or carts] and to be navigators. They did not care if two villagers died because of them [because of injuries or sickness while they were with the Tatmadaw]. They only cared for their own security and their lives. Therefore, we have always been running from being forced porters. We would be immediately punished when we were arrested while fleeing away. The Tatmadaw did not take care of us when we were sick, did not give us enough food. We would be hit one time for each mouthful of food. We had to be separated from our family as we fled from the Tatmadaw's oppression.

Have you ever been displaced with your family?

First, our family moved to the Beh Klaw [Meh La Camp] refugee camp because we could not suffer the oppression of the Tatmadaw anymore.

Would you like to share what you witnessed during the conflict?

The situation is getting better now because our leaders are trying to negotiate peace. We hope that both the KNU and the Myanmar government are trying their best in the political negotiation.

How has your experience during the conflict impacted your livelihoods?

They forbid us to farm our own fields. We had to wait for their permission to start farming. They did not grant permission easily. We were not allowed to build shelters near our farms, or to keep our domestic animals in our house and use them for field work. Those experiences were terrible and we are still facing their consequences.

How did that experience impact your current livelihood?

We faced tough experiences even after the 2015 ceasefire. The Tatmadaw fired bullets and mortars at the village from the hill when they attacked the KNLA. Some villagers died by the Tatmadaw's arms. If the KNLA attacked their [Tatmadaw] camp, they [Tatmadaw] would come to the village and kill or hit villagers. Most villagers who went to fish in the forest stream were killed by the Tatmadaw. The Tatmadaw killed all types of people including adults, children and old people.

Who were the perpetrators of the human rights abuses that you faced?

It was the Myanmar government and the military [Tatmadaw].

Was there any problem solving mechanism during that time?

We had village heads but they did not have authority to solve problems or take action. The

Tatmadaw controlled everything. No one could handle them when they committed abuses. They acted even worse when local people complained about their oppression.

Was there justice in your experience?

Absolutely not!

Have any actions been taken against the perpetrators?

No actions were taken. The Tatmadaw had a group called Pyauk Kya Group [Tatmadaw guerrilla forces] that killed a lot of people. Local people were afraid of them because they were very violent. We had to bow down when we went in front of them and dared not look at their faces. People had to run to them immediately when they waved someone over. If they disliked someone who was walking in front of them, they would do bad things to them such as punching or hitting them. When someone argued or responded to them, they punched him and accused him of being a spy. We were supposed to be silent and obey all of their orders.

How do you think the perpetrators should be punished?

The survivors and victims should receive justice. Civilians should obtain human rights. Local people have to analyse their own history and learn what human rights are in order to protect [themselves] and solve the problems that they face.

How should the perpetrators be punished? Do you prefer compensation, reparation or apologies?

I prefer reparation, which I think is the most appropriate thing to do. Authorities should take action against perpetrators and bring them to justice. Authorities should also compensate survivors for their lost property, lands and home in order to support their livelihoods. Authorities should also support communities by road construction, school and healthcare infrastructure construction. This will not only benefit our current generation but also future generations. We are very glad that the peace process is made between our people and the Myanmar government. We also hope that it will last long.

What is the root cause of the human rights abuses happening in your community?

Armed conflict is the root cause of the human rights abuses in our community.

Do you know about the ceasefire?

Yes, I know it. Because of longstanding fighting, our leaders negotiated with the Myanmar military [Tatmadaw] and suspended the fighting. The situation has improved a lot since the ceasefire. We can see the improved situation after two years of the ceasefire. The ceasefire is a positive change for us. However, we still hope that our leaders will make progress for further improvement to promote more peace. We hope that peace will bring a better livelihood situation in different ways for local people who secure their livelihoods on lands and in water (at sea).

How do you see the ceasefire?

I see the ceasefire as positive. We and many people see and feel the benefit of the ceasefire. I would like to encourage every community members to cooperate in promoting peace. Our leaders have tried their best but we also should support them and be united.

How do you think the ceasefire is related to you?

The ceasefire is related to us because it reduces the killing and armed conflicts in our community. I can travel easily to my work, plantation and the places I want to go. We do not

hear the sound of weapons anymore. So, we are less afraid than we used to. It is a positive change for us. We are one third of the way to freedom and peace.

Do you think it is the ultimate peace?

No, it is not the ultimate peace yet. We do not have independence yet. The peace process brings both negative and positive changes. There are decreasing tax collection, forced labor and Tatmadaw attacks.

What are the benefits and disadvantages of the ceasefire?

The disadvantages are the land confiscation, damaged water sources [river, water pollution] because of gold mining, and human rights abuses on women in our community. Deforestation because of logging is another issue that we cannot resolve and monitor.

Do you think there is security in your community?

We are lacking leaders to give suggestions to our community. I see that our relationship and communication between the community and government is still weak. Our leaders rarely visit us to build up the relationship. The local security guard cannot guarantee our community's security yet.

How is your livelihood situation?

Our livelihood situation is not that good. We do not have adequate resources and supports such as farming machines and crop seeds to cultivate lands and implement agriculture. Restarting our livelihood is challenging for us [recently returned IDPs]. We do not have cows to farm and adequate seeds [paddies and other cash crops].

How do you understand genuine peace?

Genuine peace means freedom from fear and complete trust in peace. Our leaders [KNU] already made the ceasefire but community members are still in fear and doubt. We still have trauma from the conflicts. It cannot go away. Our leaders should have open conversation with civilians and ensure our trust in peace.

What are the barriers to building sustainable peace?

The armed conflict is the barrier to build sustainable peace. The Myanmar military government said they will become even stronger rather than suspending the fighting. They are finding out ways to attack us. So, I believe that the Tatmadaw are the barrier to building sustainable peace. Citizens are speaking out for democracy but they hold power and attack citizens back. The allowance of drug trafficking in the country negatively impacts citizens' lives. Our leaders [KNU] approach them [Tatmadaw] for peace and ceasefire negotiations but they do not accept the demands of our leaders. They do not allow self-determination for our people as they are strictly holding power.

What would you suggest to promote sustainable peace?

The Myanmar military government should loosen their strict control and consider the ethnic situation. If the Myanmar government loosens its control, our ethnic people should be united in promoting peace and human rights. The situation will not be improved without our struggle.

If you had authority, what would you do to make positive change?

Citizens are the most important to be united and speak out. This will be very effective to promote positive changes.

How would you like to suggest the KNU government to promote sustainable peace?

Individual citizens have a responsibility to promote peace. Community members should be united and strive forward to obtain self-determination. They should understand the political situation and their right to possess lands. They should also share their knowledge with each other. Individually, we want to have sources of income in order to pursue our own house and lands. Likewise, we also have to speak out to obtain peace and self-determination. Our leaders try their best in promote peace and we should also do the same. We should not only expect our leaders to do everything.

Which government is more responsible for promoting peace?

Both governments are responsible for promoting peace.

As a citizen, what could you do to promote peace?

We can cooperate with our leaders together. Neither civilians nor only leaders can promote peace alone.

What are the human rights trends in your community after the National Ceasefire Agreement?

Of course, there are human rights abuses in our community such as damaged river and water pollution because of mining, natural resource [extraction] and land confiscation. The influence of Bamar authority is human rights abuses in our community.

Could you tell me more about the natural resource extraction in your area?

I do not know the name of the company that runs the business.

Are there any human rights abuses related to livelihoods?

We secure our livelihoods by making bamboo strips [for thatch and weaving] and firewood. We have to get permission from the police. Sometimes, the police get us into trouble by prohibiting our work. Civilians' voices are not considered.]. The rights of civilians were stated in writing [reports and newspapers] but we do not obtain them in our real lives. We are not sure if it is because of us or our leaders, or the armed groups, or the Myanmar government.

Is there any human rights abuse on women in your community?

Not very often. It happens sometimes.

Is there any discrimination based on ethnicity in your community?

We are treated the same regardless of our ethnicity.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice means equality. There will be no problem if there is equality between the KNU, the Myanmar government and citizens. However, there is no justice in our community yet.

Which government's justice system are you applying in your community, the KNU or the Myanmar government?

We apply both the KNU and the Myanmar government. However, it is not just. For instance, we have knife but they have gun. So it is not fair [not sure what is he referring to].

Is the justice system fair and just?

According to my idea, if we can divide the justice system into three parts, I would say that only one part out of three is just and fair. It seems the injustice is more than justice.

Could you rely and trust the justice system completely?

No, I cannot trust it.

Have you ever heard of corruption and bribes?

Yes, I heard of it on both sides of the governments [KNU and Myanmar government].

What is the barrier to implementing justice in your community?

The lies, bribes and corruptions are the barriers to implement justice.

How would you suggest reforming the justice system?

There should be transparent negotiations between the government, military authorities and the citizens. We have to compromise in discussion.

What would be the best way to eliminate human rights abuses and injustice?

Both armed groups and the government should be united and be at peace.

Source #4

Source doc #	Source # 4
Log #	19-2-A2-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Kd--- (male, 48), Ke--- village, Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

I would like to ask you about human rights abuses. Have you experienced and seen any human rights abuses in the past?

I have not seen serious human rights abuses committed by our local people. However, I have seen the Tatmadaw committing human rights abuses against our local people.

Could you share those experiences, including the place and date, as much as you can remember?

In 1995 the Tatmadaw attacked a nearby village and burnt down houses. All the villagers fled from the village. They sought shelter [...] in the forest. We did not have extra shelter for them. It was during harvest time. In 1997, the Tatmadaw came to our village and burnt down all the houses. They shot local people on sight. It was a terrible experience. The conflict in our area went on until the ceasefire.

What are the unforgettable experiences that you faced in the past?

When the Tatmadaw came to our village, they killed people. When the Tatmadaw left, we had to collect the dead bodies of our neighbours and bury them. It could take a couple of days [2 to 3

days] before they leave, so the dead bodies would smell bad by the time we could collect and bury them. Imagine our situation: we had to be afraid of Tatmadaw, to bury the rotten bodies of our neighbours, and to face food shortages and lack of shelters. This is what happened to the whole community, not only individuals.

What else did you witness during the conflict?

Local people were displaced to different places. Some people were arrested by the Tatmadaw and they never returned. They were killed in the forest.

How did these experiences impact your livelihoods?

We cultivated our lands and planted them with hopes of long-term benefits. Unexpectedly, the Tatmadaw attacked and burnt everything. All our efforts had been in vain.

What were the consequences for your family and yourself?

During the conflict and displacement, we faced security threats, food shortages, lack of clothes and lack of access to healthcare.

Who were the perpetrators of the human rights abuses you faced?

It was the Tatmadaw under Nay Win and Tha Shwe [Myanmar military government].

How did the authorities help you solve the challenges you faced during the conflict?

We received supports from some NGOs. Karen Office of Relief and Development (KORD) distributed rice for two, three months. I do not know if they also reached to the Myanmar government [to advocate the case].

Where were the providers [of humanitarian aid] from?

They cooperated with the KNU.

Did the victims of human rights abuses receive justice?

I think some of them received humanitarian support.

How do you think human rights perpetrators should be punished?

We are all brothers and sisters in the world, we do not want to hurt and punish. However, in order to prevent future human rights abuses, the military should withdraw their camps. This would reduce tensions and improve the local security situation.

What would be the best reparation and compensation for the victims of human rights abuses?

Victims of human rights abuses [who were displaced] should have been given humanitarian support such as clothes, food and encouragement.

How do you think authorities should punish the perpetrators? Reparation, compensation or punishment according to the law?

Punishing [perpetrators] according to the law is the most appropriate action to protect the victims from repeated human rights abuses.

Why do you think such human rights abuses happen?

It is because of their desire to control the country and to increase the influence of the majority group [Bamar] over ethnic minorities.

Do you know about the peace process?

I do know about the peace process from the news. I see that the ceasefire process is good because civilians are not afraid and do not flee from the war anymore. However, the livelihoods of civilians have not improved yet. The fighting still breaks out sometimes in some areas.

What do you expect from the ceasefire process?

I expect to see civilians enjoy their livelihoods freely and develop. The national government should provide guidance for civilians. In our area, there are many rich people, as well as poor people. The national government has the responsibility to adjust the economy and the lives of civilians to achieve fairer living conditions.

Do you think that you have security in your local area?

No, the military can enter our area at will anytime.

What are the benefits of the peace process?

There are little benefits, like a decrease in conflicts and displacement. We do not have to flee and hide our rice in the jungle anymore.

What are the disadvantages of the ceasefire process?

The disadvantages are land confiscation caused by development projects, such as mining and construction. Most local people lose their lands and face livelihood issues. Development projects, such as dam construction, damaged our lands. We cannot plant like in the past anymore. The lands that are left got narrower. The mice and insects also came out of the jungle and damaged the crops. Rich individuals bought lands from indigenous people and implemented large scale agriculture activities. For instance, in Th'Yeh Chaung village, there was about 3,000 acres of lands in the village. Now, they have very small lands left for housing. Some of them were even cast out from the village. This was all caused by forced land confiscation from individual businesses associated with local leaders. All the impacts fell on the local people. It damaged their livelihoods. Some of them could not work on their lands and had to displace. Some people had to sell their domestic animals because they could not feed them anymore.

Is your livelihood going well now?

No, we still struggle a lot to secure our livelihoods.

So what does the peace process mean to you?

I think there is no peace yet because we always hear about the fighting happening in many parts of the country, including our area [Karen State], Kachin State and Chin State. We cannot say that the peace process is permanent.

What are the barriers to achieving a sustainable peace?

The armed groups who want to win over power are barriers to building a sustainable peace. Our country is now controlled by a military governance system. Actually the military should listen to the people's voice too.

What would you change or suggest to achieve sustainable peace in the country?

If I had power, I would get rid of everything that negatively impacts the civilians. I would also recommend the government [KNU and Myanmar government] to prioritise diplomacy rather than militarisation.

Who do you think has the biggest responsibility to make peace?

I think that the Myanmar government has the biggest responsibility to make peace because they control the whole country.

What could you do to promote peace?

In our own corner, we can only have a peaceful relationship with our neighbors including Bamar people and the Tatmadaw. I cannot do more than that.

What main human rights abuses are happening in your area after the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)?

The main causes of human rights abuses are dam construction projects, gold mining and deforestation. Logging activities by individual businessmen resulted in the loss of a lot of trees. Our farmlands were flooded because of deforestation, which impacted our livelihoods.

Is there any challenge for religious and ethnic minorities?

We cannot secure our livelihoods and cultivate our lands. People [not mentioned] come, cut our plants and damage our lands when we do not monitor them closely.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice means equal rights.

Who is responsible for handling justice in your community?

In our community, the KNU takes action when it comes to justice.

Have you ever heard or experienced corruption and injustice in court proceedings?

No, I have never seen and heard about this.

What are the barriers to accessing justice?

As we are ordinary people, our rights are often violated by rich individuals and authorities.

How do you want the justice system to be reformed?

Reforming the justice system has to be accompanied by a consultation between civilians and the authorities.

Do you want compensation, reparation or a court judgment for the past human rights abuses you have faced?

I want a court judgment, not compensation. However, I would also prefer reparation, such as an apology.

Which authorities should be held accountable for human rights violations?

It depends. The Myanmar government should be held accountable for what they have committed. The KNU was well.

What are the best ways to prevent human rights violations?

The most important thing is the military. I suggest the Myanmar government to withdraw the Tatmadaw from the local areas, and to never let them enter again because it causes fear among the community members. We have to stay in the forest and hide in order to feel safe.

What are the root causes of displacement?

It is the conflict between armed groups.

Do you feel safe to return to your village? What about other displaced people?

For us, it is now safe to go back but there are some villagers [from other villages] who are afraid to go back because there is a military camp next to their village.

What are the main challenges preventing the return of refugees and displaced people?

Some refugees who fled to Thai refugee camps because of the fighting returned to their village. However, they faced food shortages and lack of shelters when they first returned. I think these are the challenges that they face.

Why do the refugees or displaced people want to return? Is the resettlement place safe for them?

They might think that they will be able to stay because there are still other people who live in the village. There are security concerns among the returnees because the Tatmadaw military camp is nearby.

Was there any support or resources prepared for the returnees?

No, they have to work for everything and struggle by themselves.

Do you think the situation in the country is stable?

No, it is not stable yet.

Do you want to suggest anything to the government authorities?

I would recommend the government to stand for the civilians and not be selfish. They should protect the civilians.

Source #5

Source doc #	Source # 5
Log #	18-124-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dawei Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
Full Text	

Mergui-Tavoy Interview | Saw Kq--- (male, 65), Kr--- village, Dawei Township, Mergui-Tavoy District (November 2018)

Have you experienced conflict? How? Do you often think about it?

Back in 1996 and 1997, we suffered a lot. At that time, when Tatmadaw soldiers came into our village, they tortured and killed villagers. Elderly people were killed mercilessly. As for the village administrators, they wanted peace so that they went to meet with Tatmadaw soldiers. They were beaten by the Tatmadaw soldiers when they went to see and speak with them. Sometimes, the Tatmadaw soldiers beat villagers and demanded weapons from them to get promoted to a higher rank. Villagers sold their belongings to purchase guns from other places to give them despite their hard situation. In addition, the Tatmadaw soldiers frightened villagers by

demanding villagers' livestock and belongings. Instead of showing respect, the Tatmadaw soldiers violated our rights. They considered us as animals. We felt like our people lost our dignity.

Were there human rights abuses in your areas in the past? If yes, when and what happened? If you can't remember the date, please estimate how long ago it was?

It has been over 20 years that human rights abuses have happened in our areas. At the beginning of the dry season, the Tatmadaw soldiers came to our village. It was around January or February.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

We were displaced during the conflict period. We couldn't go back to our village to care for our livestock and plantation. We were afraid to return. That has affected our livelihood. At that time, we were afraid of both the Tatmadaw soldiers and also our own people. Sadly, some of our Karen people betrayed their own people to get money. Different circumstances caused us to flee from our village.

Were you or your family displaced?

In 2000, I had to run to escape from the Tatmadaw soldiers' cruel action in the Ta Poh area. After that, I went to live in the town.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I witnessed the killing of an elderly man and another man from A--- village by the Tatmadaw and buried long after they died. The elderly man was very old, and he could not even walk. Similar to this case, my wife's cousin was arrested to be a porter. As he was carrying loads, he was so tired that he couldn't walk. He suffered from the disease of dizziness. The Tatmadaw soldiers brought him for an injection to end his suffering. He had a friend who looked at back him when he was injected. His friend was told not turn back to look at his friend. Later, my wife's cousin was beaten to death and then buried.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

As I ran from my village, I couldn't do anything living in the town. That's why I had to sell my livestock and my lands.

If you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life and the life of your family?

When we went to stay in the town, my children had to live among Burmese. For my children, studying among the different races undermined the development of their education. After that, we came to live in hill areas. While there, my children suffered from malaria and they had to stop studying at school. Moreover, we had to start our life from the beginning. That kind of situation affected our dignity.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

At the time of the conflict period, we couldn't do anything. We accommodated Tatmadaw soldiers' requests to avoid their punishment. We arranged everything in wise ways to not have conflict emerge among villagers. The Tatmadaw soldiers threw cups and plates at us even though we went to meet them as requested.

Were they throwing cups and plates to injure you?

The Tatmadaw soldiers forced us to agree with them even if something was untrue. We didn't do anything wrong. However, they wanted to hear us agree on something untrue. We're just ordinary farmers who possessed no arms. Furthermore, the Tatmadaw soldiers wanted us to say a lie. Even though we didn't have any guns, they pressured us to agree that we have guns. That's why we had to satisfy them by saying lies.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

Actually, the Tatmadaw soldiers should respect human rights. Instead of bullying us, we wanted people to support us during the conflict period. At that time, we didn't know what human rights are. If we have known about human rights, we might have known how to respond to the perpetrators.

Do you think the Myanmar government would allow [humanitarians aid] organisations that wanted to help in the conflict period?

The situation was worst during the conflict period. It was impossible for the organisations to aid us. We had to live in a difficult moment under the Tatmadaw soldiers' pressure. We were afraid to accept their help and the organisations that were willing to help us couldn't come into our village and help us.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

In my perspective, human rights abuses happened in our area because of the fighting in the country. We don't want fighting in the country. We do want peace and unity. To be able to live in peace and unity, we need equal rights, freedom, and security. These three things are important. It's not possible to live together without having equal rights. Besides, if we follow federalism, everyone should be tolerant of various cultures. Principles shouldn't set by a person or an organisation. The setting of principles should come from inclusiveness and involvement.

What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

There was a preliminary ceasefire in 2012. In 2015, they had agreement on the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement). Having peace in the country should be accompanied by both governments' genuine involvement. We need to find the root cause of the conflict and how to solve them. Otherwise, it will not be possible for us to make genuine peace. I am an indigenous man and I can't live without peace. In addition, having no peace will prevent helpful development. As a result, my descendants would face the same difficulty. So the NCA is relevant to all of us.

How much do you know about the peace process?

Both governments agreed to the NCA. Then, they discussed about the political difficulties after the 90 days. In the meeting they also had discussed about where both militaries should reside.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life?

There're advantages and disadvantages to the NCA. After the NCA, we had freedom of speech and also in our transportation. Along with that, many companies came into our area and confiscated villagers' lands. That's one thing that caused insecurity for our people. Besides, it's so frustrating. The companies' lands confiscation could have tremendous impact on our history.

There's history in the lands that they've confiscated. If we lose our history, our people would be extinct.

Do you feel safer now? Has your livelihood improved?

Actually, we don't have sufficient foods for our livelihood. We still have concerns over companies' lands confiscation in our area. We don't feel safe. There's a code of conduct for both governments to follow. However, the Myanmar government doesn't follow the NCA code of conduct in our area. They agreed not to take weapons to their control area. But they didn't respect one another. The business men have more opportunities for cooperating with the Myanmar government. That's one thing that allows them to exert influence on the villagers.

What does peace mean to you? What do you think about it?

In my perspective, peace is something that is sustainable. Furthermore, I think peace is something that can be guaranteed for life. That's a life we're longing for. We cannot trust this peace-making process one hundred per cent. In peace-making, the interaction of consensus, respect, and trust are necessary. According to the peace process between the Myanmar government and KNU, there's a lack of trust. That's why we can't trust it fully.

In your perspective, what do you think are the biggest barriers in making sustainable peace?

To be able to acquire peace, the attitude of loving peace is very important. There can be no development without peace. So we have to be careful of starting a business while there is no exact peace in the country.

What improvement would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I would like to say that every appointed government should respect human rights. In addition, they should respect indigenous people's rights. As a government, they should protect the rights of the people who are living in their country. Furthermore, they should fulfill the needs of the civilians.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve peace process?

I would suggest them to give full opportunity to every citizen. That's what we want. In solving a matter or conflict, it is important to take into account the attitude of everybody. Mutual trust and respect are also necessary while problem-solving. Therefore they should find the best ways to make peace.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

According to the situation we see, we cannot trust the current government. In our prediction, federalism is good. We need to change our attitude in order to have a federal government.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

We have to support peace-making. It is really necessary eliminate our narrow-minded view and cultivate a broad-minded view. After that, we need to love of other ethnicities like our own.

Since the NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

The community is facing violations of indigenous rights, human rights, and the rights of living.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

The Tatmadaw soldiers took some of our lands, livestock, and the products from our plantation.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

At the time of the conflict, the Tatmadaw soldiers raped women whenever they came into our village.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities?

Our rights were violated when the Tatmadaw soldiers came into the church. Still, they went up to the villagers' houses and brought took bible to use it as toilet paper. They violated our freedom of worship.

Are there still human rights challenges facing women and ethnic beliefs in your area after the NCA?

We cannot say exactly that the situation is better after the NCA. The government has signed [documents] with foreign countries to [preserve] ethnic rights. However, they don't obey it. It is clear that the principles set by the governments are not followed.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

No. I feel like they do not respect the rights of minorities. They practice aggressive chauvinism.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice means the rule of law to me. There will only be justice with the rule of law.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We practice both KNU and Myanmar government justice systems in our area. Some of the cases were solved in the council, which is Myanmar justice system.

What do you know about this justice system? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

Judgments made by both the KNU and the Myanmar government in the village aren't always right. The Myanmar government always practices bribery. They didn't care about our people. Likewise, we have experienced the responsible people in our areas practice an unjust system.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

There's bribery in both the KNU and the Myanmar government justice systems.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to get justice?

I have experienced injustice in the judiciary. I have seen that the judges favour businessmen in the justice system.

If you have experienced past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

In my opinion, the authorities should amend the laws and follow them so that human right abuses would not happen.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

The perpetrators should be given punishment according to the laws. If they practice it in the

correct way, the situation would become better. The authorities should go among the civilians to observe what is happening, so that they know the truth.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

Both the KNU and the Myanmar government have responsibility to make the human rights situation better. Sometimes, human rights abuses took place in our areas. They might know the situation in the village or sometimes they might not. We want authorities to be familiar with villagers by coming to our community, so that they can make the situation better.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

We have to change our ideas and bring creative thinking or advanced concepts. Moreover, we have to treasure the rights of all humans.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

We all have to cooperate to be able to stop human rights violations because it is very important.

Do you have anything to add to this conversation?

In my opinion, the NCA should bring beneficial, genuine peace and sustainable peace in the country. We do want peace with equality.

Would you allow us to use your information?

Yes, you can use the information that I have provided you.

Source #6

Source doc #	Source # 6
Log #	19-3-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District

Full Text

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Kf--- (male, 47), Kg--- village, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

What do you do for your livelihood?

I have done farming all my life.

You were a teacher before right?

Yes.

What is your position in your area?

I am a Kheh Der village tract [position censored for security].

Are you married?

Yes.

What about the youngest one?

Three years old now.

How many villages are in this Kheh Der village tract?

There are 15 villages in this Kheh Der village tract.

Have you experienced conflict?

We experienced conflict before the ceasefire. I just remember the experience from 1975 to now. Before that, the Tatmadaw called the villagers from the whole Kheh Der village tract and put them in the Mu Thel area. Some people fled to refugee camps and some people fled to other villages. People who came to live in the Mu Thel area were the ones who had no choice. Our parents brought us here with them. The Tatmadaw forced them to be porters and sentries at night for them. They kept the villagers' paddy in one place so people had to each collect the a designated amount of food. They prepared the food or paddy for three days and let villagers get it once in three days. The villagers had to bring a ticket with them even if they went outside to look after the cows or buffalos. When they found out that you did not bring the ticket with you, they tortured or killed you. The villagers had no right to complain about it. They tortured you brutally when they asked you to be porters. Some people could not bear the pain anymore so they ran away. We faced these difficulties until 1997. We did not dare to harvest our farms close to Tatmadaw bases. They based their army camps close to the villagers' farms so that it would make the villagers afraid and dare not to go to their farms. They burned our houses and ate all our animals. They also based their operations along the way that we used for buying and carrying our food and materials. We had to go secretly in other ways and ask Karen soldiers to guide us when travelling. When they caught us, they killed us. They even killed children. The children whose parents could not come and take them, Tatmadaw soldiers put them in the fire and burned them alive.

Have you ever witnessed it?

Yes, I have seen it because they were my friend's family. The parents could not take their children with them and when they went to take their children, they saw their children had been burned alive. They ran back to us and cried all day all night for their children. The Tatmadaw put the two children inside a room and locked them and burned that room.

Do you still remember the year of that incident?

I think it was in 1997 or 1998.

Were you still single at that time?

No. I got married for two months at that time.

Which village did they burn?

They burned all the villages around here.

What is the name of the village where they [Tatmadaw] burned the two children?

It was in Kh--- village. It is also in Kheh Der village tract.

Are the parents of those children still alive?

Yes. We were fleeing when they burned our villages. We did not know that they burned our houses. We just heard from the porters that followed them. The porter that ran away from the Tatmadaw told us that two children were burned alive. We did not know and dared not to watch

it during that period.

Did you experience torture by the Tatmadaw?

We did not even dare to face them because they would surely kill us if they saw us so we were always running away from them. At that time, when some villagers were going to visit the other villagers in their houses, when the Tatmadaw saw them on the way, the Tatmadaw killed them. They went around because they did not know the Tatmadaw would come. One woman and her two children were shot while traveling to another village to visit her father-in-law. Her children were shot and died immediately so she left her dead children and ran away. She said a Tatmadaw soldier shot her and she was injured. But she still trailed her children and ran but then her children were shot again so they died at the same time. The woman was shot in her thigh and rib, so it took her a long time to recover, but she is still alive today.

Did the Tatmadaw shoot her from away?

No, she said the Tatmadaw soldier shot her but it did not hit her so she was told to stop. She did not stop. Instead, she kept running with her two children. She thought that if they shot her until she died, that is fine for her as long as she ran. But she did not want to stop and let them shoot her in the face to face. Her children were shot in the head so they died right away. She left her dead children behind and kept running. When she reached the village, she could not even walk. We had to carry her and take care of her. Another woman was also shot when she came back from her plantation. The Tatmadaw shot her on her way back home, and she died right away. Her two children were still very small at that time.

Did they also rape girls and women at that time?

We do not know about that because when they caught women or ladies, those ladies never appeared again. Maybe they did whatever they wanted and then killed them.

Do you often think about those experiences sometimes?

Yes, I just think that it happened during conflict period so it will stop when there is peace.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

I think the worst experience was being faced with diseases, starvation and restricted travelling during the conflict period. Our children were not able to go to school. They had to study when the situation got a little bit better and ran again when the conflict started. We had to carry them and let them study in the forest.

Were you or your family displaced?

Of course. My children were all born in the jungle when it was raining heavily. Three of them were born in jungle. Only one [of our children] was born in a house. Two days after he was born, we had to flee to the jungle again. Sometimes, I feel very sorry for my wife because she is now facing health problems, as she had to run in the rain even when she newly gave birth to her children. I now have ten children. I had six children while we were displaced. At that time, I carried two children, my wife carried two children and we also had to carry our belongings at the same time. We climbed the mountain with full packs on us. It also rained a lot and everything got wet.

How has the conflict period affected the lives in your community?

It affected the lives of our community in every way. It affected our health, education for our children and our livelihoods. The Tatmadaw cut down all our plants.

So how have the local people in your village overcome this?

We called a meeting in our village tract and organized a few people such as teachers to teach our children. We talked about how we would support those 5 or 6 teachers to give them some paddy. People who could afford to give them, they gave and people who could not give it, they did not give. When we could not afford it, we also depended on our KNU to support us. Some organizations like KORD also helped us. We also offered a helping hand to each other. We sometimes asked for medicine for the villagers injured by landmines from some organizations.

Who do you think were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They were the Tatmadaw.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No. Nothing has been resolved.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

I think for the Tatmadaw soldiers or commanders that always abuse human rights, they should not be alive in this world because they will always continue to abuse others.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

I think they should be protected and made to feel safe. If they do not have safety for their lives, they will not be able to work for their livelihoods.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

I think the root cause is greed and the ethnic cleansing attitude that exists among the Tatmadaw. They want only one group of people and one religion to exist in this country. They want us to learn only Burmese language and they also built some pagodas in our areas. Most of the mountain people are not Buddhist. They are mostly animists. They told us to worship monks and offer the monks meals. So we became followers of the monks. They did not allow us learn Karen subjects. They allowed only Burmese language to be learned. I think their main purpose is to cleanse all the ethnic groups in Myanmar. They are also greedy with the natural resources in our Karen state. They also confiscated our farms and made them become theirs. They are heading more to brigade 5 and are selling things to Paw Kay Hkoh Hkee. They have a big store there.

Did you also go and buy things there?

The villagers dare not go there. Only the Tatmadaw soldiers alone go and buy things there. They have many shops there.

So what do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it?

I have read about the NCA code of conduct. I do not understand all of it but so far I read about it, and it makes me satisfied. The travelling is getting easier but there are still Tatmadaw army camps along the way, in Ee Tha Plaw village and Kler So village in Kheh Der village tract. That makes us feel unsafe sometimes when we pass them. We still do not dare to sleep at our farm hut alone or with just two people. We still have fear remaining from the past. We also worry that they will take our property, like paddy or animals, so some people do not even do farming anymore. If they remove their camps from our place, it will make us feel better. The NCA code of conduct is very good and if it is applied, I think it will be beneficial for us.

How do you think is the ceasefire relevant to you?

Our leaders signed the ceasefire and we are their children so it relevant to us. The local people like us need genuine peace. We do not want the fighting to happen again. If our leaders do their best and follow the NCA code of conduct, it will make the villagers happy. We really hope that the fighting will not happen again.

How do you know about NCA or peace process?

We received a letter from our leaders about the NCA. They organised a meeting and distributed the letters. It was in Burmese language at first, but then they gave us Karen language [materials] later. The villagers have read about it as well. Even though each house does not have one copy, we got three or four books for each village. Some organisations raised awareness about it too.

How much do you know about it?

I have read it but I cannot remember how many chapters and sections it has. I will remember it when I look at the book.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

We do not want to talk about peace yet because we can still see that the number of Tatmadaw soldiers and weapons are increasing. They send more troops to their camps. The way they travel concerns us a lot. They also transport their rations and materials, such as bullets. They are sending better weapons this time. We do not know their purpose in doing that because they are doing something the villagers do not like. I think we still do not have peace yet because we still have the concerns from seeing the Tatmadaw activities.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

We just need a sustainable peace but in 2013, a year after signing the ceasefire, the Tatmadaw shot a soldier from the KNDO Battalion. It happened because the Tatmadaw crossed the designated area so KNDO soldiers were going to them to warn them. Then the fighting happened between them, and a KNDO soldier died and one was injured.

How many Tatmadaw soldiers crossed into the restricted area?

The entire column of them crossed into the restricted area. But I do not know the exact number of them. They crossed into the restricted area until now. They went to brigade 5 and started a conflict so we are also afraid that they will come to us. The villagers dare not to work or build better houses. Some people do not dare to go to work on their farms. So, we just need a genuine and sustainable peace.

What advantages do you get from this peace process? How has it affected your life?

It affected our life more negatively because they are still giving trouble to farmers. When farmers make irrigation channels for farming, they stop those channels and dig a new one. It really affects the lives of our farmers here. They do whatever they want to do even when they are constructing the road for transporting rations. They are always free to travel by themselves, so we cannot do anything. Sometimes, we told them not to go here or there, but they always responded that they just are just going and see the water situation. A villager once told me that some Tatmadaw soldiers visited him once or twice and then the next time, he lost his few ducks.

Do you think you feel safer now?

No. I do not feel safer at all.

Has your livelihood improved?

Yes, my livelihood has improved a little bit because the travelling is getting better now. We can travel to the places that are not close to the Tatmadaw place but we cannot go to the places that are close to them. They do not do anything to us but it is just because we are afraid of them and do not want to go near them.

So, in your own perspective, what does peace mean to you?

To me, peace means every individual and each group of people should have rights and sovereignty for their own home.

So how is peace right now in your area?

Peace in my area is like the mirror that we cannot see through. It means we cannot foresee peace and what will happen next. We cannot guess whether it really is peace or not. I think there is a lack of trust between people in the present situation.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

I think the barrier in making sustainable peace is this Tatmadaw military that is greedy in everything.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

There was no Burmese or Tatmadaw here in the past so it was really peaceful here. Therefore, in order to achieve lasting peace, we want the Tatmadaw existing army camps in our area to move from our place. They do not need to stay here. Our Karen are already here and they can do that. We have our own soldiers, security people and our national army. In my perspective, to achieve lasting peace, the Myanmar military should take out the Tatmadaw army camps that are active in mountain areas.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would like to suggest to the Myanmar government that they should stop the fighting that will be caused by Tatmadaw because it is making our civilians suffer and our nation poor. I think if they stop it, our country will be developed in the future. I want them to consider the civilians and not harm the civilians. Even though they have enough weapons, I do not want them to only think about fighting with those weapons. I understand that there must be an army in a nation but I do not think they should trouble the people. For KNU, I would like to suggest them to persuade the Myanmar government and Tatmadaw to not fight any more for the sake of peace during their dialog. I want them to talk about the sovereignty of each ethnic state in Myanmar.

Which government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I see that our KNU practices more justice so I think they could potentially guarantee peace and justice.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

As I am a village tract administrator, I sometimes advocate for the villagers here and I also give awareness to them. There are some monitoring team members who always watch what we do. If we do something wrong, we should let them know about that too.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing after signing the NCA?

We do not have human rights challenges in our community right now. Neither the KNU nor the Myanmar government has committed any terrible human rights violations so far after the NCA. But we still have concerns about the current situation.

Are these concerns affecting your livelihood?

It affects our livelihood a lot because if we did not have concerns, we would start doing our farms first and then do husbandry after that. We would also make plantations that would be beneficial for us. But we cannot do any of them now due to our concerns. We worry that if we do that, they will destroy everything.

What about the challenges that women are facing?

They cannot go outside alone. If they want to go outside, they should go as a group of at least four people because they have to cross the Tatmadaw army camp. They are afraid to go out alone at night, and if they cannot call their friends to go with them, they just don't go. They still have concerns like that.

What does justice mean to you?

I think justice means there should be transparency with each other.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

In our area here, we just use the KNU justice system.

So what do you know about the justice system you are using? Do you feel that it is fair?

Yes, I think it is fair. We address accountability systematically at the local level and if we cannot handle it, we send it to the higher level. We go step by step and follow the rules that are written down.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

Yes. I have heard of it. For example, if you want your case to be hidden, you should pay this much or that much. But we practice it differently. We do not do like that. If something happens, we call the relevant people to investigate the case and we even cook for them when we call a meeting with them. We pay them like buying them betel nut or cook for them to tell us what actually happened. We, who take the accountability, are the ones who bear expenses. They even complain that it is not tasty. The township level also practices the same like us.

What do you think is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

I think the best way to stop human right violations is to stop planning for fighting.

So what is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

I think the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar is for international organizations to sometimes put pressure on Myanmar. I do not know that much about the entire Myanmar but I think Myanmar should be pressured by other countries as well.

As you were displaced, when did you come back to your village?

I just came back four years ago. Some people still do not come back because they do not dare to come back. There are only 16 households here in this village. Some people from refugee

camps want to come back but they still do not dare to come back yet.

What do you know of the current services available in the area you are returning right now?

I do not know about that but CIDKP is taking the responsibility for water. When we first came back, CIDKP supported us with food for three months. They also give us awareness about agriculture.

Do you have a school here?

Yes.

Until which grade?

Until fifth standard.

Where do the students continue their study?

If they go to Kheh Der village tract school, it goes until seventh standard.

Is it a KED school?

Yes.

What about if they want to continue to study after seventh standard?

They have to go to the township [school] in Per Poe Hkee or in Mone Township. If they do not want to go to the township then they have to go to the District [school].

Have you ever tried to connect students with those schools?

No. People have never asked help from me. I think if we have the school here, it will be better.

Do the villagers that returned here have concerns about potential fighting?

Yes. They have concerns about that.

Would you like to say anything else?

In terms of healthcare, I want to have a proper clinic here so that it will be easier for our villagers here who went to study medicine and come back to help the local people. The reason is that different patients are coming to ask for treatment. Some patients got in accidents, some are the women who will give birth and others have different diseases, so we need enough medicine. We do not have enough medicine yet so we cannot do that much to cure the patients. We have three backpack medics in this Kheh Der village tract. We cannot afford to buy medicine as well. Therefore, if we have a clinic here, it will be good for us to take of one another. Also, people many people come to the clinic, which costs us a lot. Health is important, but some people do not bring any food and even come and ask me to give them paddy. I have to give it to them because they do not have anything.

Source #7

Source doc #	Source # 7
Log #	19-4-A6-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District

Full Text

Hpapun Interview | Saw Ki--- (male, 69), Kj--- village, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (December 2018)

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religion?

I am Christian [Catholic].

What is your occupation?

I do farming. As I get older, I depend on my children.

How many family members do you have?

There are eight people in my family.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is over 40 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 21 years old.

Have you experienced conflict?

During the 'four cuts' period, the situation was really difficult. We lived in fear because of the tension and fighting between the Tatmadaw and the KNU. We could not even stay in our village. Villagers frequently had to flee into the forest.

What were your difficulties during your run to the forest?

We and all of our villagers ran to the forest with so many of our young children. We couldn't bring food with us.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

We also were afraid to stay in the forest. That's why we went back to our village. All our livestock were eaten or taken by the soldiers [KNU and Myanmar].

There's a time fighting occurred next to our village.

When did that occur?

It's been 38 years now.

Could you tell me a little about it? How did it happen?

When the KNU heard that Tatmadaw soldiers were marching, they fired at each other. During the fighting, two of my sisters-in-law were shot and died. They were my wife's sisters. They were 19 and 20 years old.

During that time, did you have any position in the village?

No, I followed other people when they left because I was afraid to stay at home.

Does this incident always stay in your mind? Do you often think about it?

Yes, how could I forget this miserable event that happened to my family?

When did it happen?

It happened in the summer, before villagers finished their harvesting.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

It's hard for me to say because I had lots of bad experiences during the conflict period. We couldn't even live in our village at that time. Later, I was involved and served in the guard force. We couldn't dare to live in our village, so we fled to the forest.

What was the worst experience for your family staying in the forest during the conflict period?

The worst experience for our family at the time of conflict was not having healthcare workers when my wife nose got bleeding [health]. We couldn't do anything but just said a prayer. We were blessed later on. The bleeding was stopped after somebody used a traditional practice [on her].

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I witnessed two of my sisters-in-law being shot. My sister also got injured as she fled with her aunty. She was really fortunate.

If you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life?

We couldn't do any farming or plantation work. My friends, who showed compassion toward us shared their foods with us. Later, when the situation got a little bit more stable, we raised our few hens and sold them. I realized that if I continued living here [my village], it would have bad effects for our family because I have a lot of small children. Then, I was told by other people that refugee camps provide rations to the refugees. As we were afraid to live in our village, we followed other people who fled to refugee camps.

First, we went to live in Kk--- village. After that, we went to live in Meh Hkah Hkee [Thailand]. Eventually, we finally moved to the Mae La Oo refugee camp. My children later got married there. When I got older, I returned to live in my village.

How many years since you returned to your village?

It's been just two years since I returned to my village.

Did any of your friends return together with you?

I don't know because we fled separately to the different areas. We didn't live in the same place.

Is there any livelihood opportunity for you, now that you are back?

No. the situation is still unstable because there are armed groups living nearby.

Do you think you are safe here?

No, I don't think so.

Were you forced to return or [did you return] by yourself?

We returned on our own. We thought we were getting older so we should come back. My wife told me that the situation is getting better now. So we made the determination to go back and live in our village after the NCA.

Do you still think that you are a displaced person, now?

Yes, I still think I am.

What do you were the barriers to your return? Do you feel safe?

I was once a village head. The villagers were very happy to see me return. If a quarrel came up among villagers, they came to me. It's such a worry for me to see the situation as a displaced person.

What kind of worries did you have?

Not everyone will like you even though you are saying the truth. We were afraid they would inform the Myanmar government and BGF. That's what I was afraid of.

Have you experienced livelihood problems?

They only problem is that I have struggled with my ageing. Sometimes, even a case of thieving a hen, they came to report it to me. However, I just tried making reconciliation between them with love.

Did you get aid after you came back from the refugee camp?

No, we didn't receive any aid. We just brought back the clothes and blankets [we were] given when we lived in the camp.

How do you see the situation in Myanmar, nowadays?

The situation in Myanmar now is a little more calm after the NCA. But I am afraid that things will turn out badly because Tatmadaw soldiers came to a KNU-controlled area. If it happens again, the village will suffer a lot.

What do you think of the political and human rights situation in Myanmar?

After the NCA, the situation has gotten better gradually. Sometimes, we thought that the Myanmar government would violate the agreement between the two groups.

What arrangements do you have for the future?

As I get older, I would like to live peacefully cultivating plants in my village with all my children and siblings and also relatives. Besides, I would like to live a satisfying life with all my villagers as well. As Karen people, we are happy only if we can live peacefully in our village. If we have sustainable peace, we can work independently in our communities. If fighting happens like before, we will have to run and our lands will be destroyed. We really do want peace for all people.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

At the time of the four cuts strategy, they had equivalent resources [arms and soldiers]. Both sides were shooting. After their men were injured, they retreated so that later villagers could come to the village to stay. When fighting happened, villagers ran. After things seemed to calm down, they came back to live. That is how the local people have overcome the problem. We had to run when we heard the Tatmadaw soldiers came into the village because they forced

villagers to be porters. Every time they came in, they requested four or five men to be porters. They even caught villagers on the way when they saw them.

Did this kind of situation occur only during the four cuts strategy, or were there other times?

There is still forced labor, but reduced.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

The main perpetrators we witnessed were Tatmadaw soldiers. If they hadn't come, we would not have faced that bad situation.

[Tatmadaw soldiers] arrested my niece and one of my cousins in a paddy field. After that, they punched and beat them. We were afraid to go and help them at the time. Finally, the Tatmadaw killed them and buried them [together] in a hole. My cousin's wife faced difficulty raising her children alone after the death of her husband. But my niece was single. Now, his wife is living in Kj--- village.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No. Instead, we were afraid of them [the military]. We had to be satisfied but we couldn't do anything.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

No, the perpetrators would never give us compensation because they are soldiers.

When did the incidents happen?

It took place 30 years ago.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

No.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

They deserve the punishment equivalent to the abuses they made.

Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims?

It's really a pity to see the victims with lots of small children. As rulers, they should think of a better way to aid the widow left with her children. In my opinion, they should be provided for financially.

But I don't know her opinion. I was just saying my perspective. It's been many years since her husband died. No one pursued the case.

Should they lose their positions of power?

I can't remember all the cases from the past. At that time, there were no people interviewing us like you do now so I cannot remember. People suffered and died.

Two of my sisters-in-law died. And, two other men were killed and one was never seen again.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

In my opinion, as long as there is no cooperation from both sides, it would be hard for us to ask compensation or go to the court.

In my perspective, a criminal should be charged with the case in court.

How?

They should be sent to the judiciary. Most perpetrators are sent to the judiciary.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

It is because of the fighting.

Why did the fighting occur?

The fighting occurred because of trespassing [KNU and Tatmadaw overstepping].

The local people suffered a lot from the fighting. They died, they got injured, they suffered.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

We heard about it.

What do you think about it?

In my opinion, the situation got better after the ceasefire. But I didn't see any big change. Now, we are happy that the fighting decreased. There is no questioning when travelling to buy food. On the other hand, the Tatmadaw soldiers trespassed into a KNU-controlled area. They would like to colonize. That's a great worry that I have. Some villagers have the same view. Sometimes, they were patrolling in the [KNU-controlled] areas.

The KNLA front line soldiers said that they cannot tolerate it anymore and want to shoot them, but their commander didn't order them to do so yet. When we met with them, we told them not to do that. [...] We pleaded them because we as villagers, we want peace.

What do you know about Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) or peace process?

I don't know a lot about it. I heard about it. The peace process is not progressing.

How much do you know about the peace process?

We heard it from people who went to live in the town. Actually, there should have been development within the four years. But the peace process is getting nowhere. I listened to the BBC and the VOA to get more information. I don't understand Burmese very much. If I didn't understand some words, I went to ask people to explain it to me. Both governments do not fully trust each other. As civilians living among them, it is dangerous for us.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

In my perspective, after these 60 and 70 years of revolution, I would like to see them working, walking and eating together. I would expect them to bring unity and peace. Also, I would like them to support us with foods.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

No. If you go and ask in the entire village, they would tell you the same answer.

How has the peace process affected your life?

The road for transportation has gotten better. And, our children can travel independently without being interrogated on the way. We live close to KI--- village, so we went to buy foods there. Before, we were asked if we brought the foods for the Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU soldiers]. [now] It's

nothing like that situation that happened before.

Do you feel safer now? Has your livelihood improved?

I don't feel safer. Our livelihood slightly improved.

What does peace mean to you? What do you think about it?

I won't say it is genuine peace. If there were real peace, we could work, go and live independent without any confinement. To be honest, there are still [skirmishes].

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

Even though it is Karen State, they cannot take full governing power. That's the biggest barrier.

The Myanmar government should think of our Karen people after its decades of reign. There's no peace because of the ineffective reign of the Myanmar government.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

I would just like to see our Karen people ruling their own state.

If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I would like to see Karen police and armed forces settle in the town and take responsibility. Now, we do not see Karen armed forces and government in the town [taking responsibility]. We would like to see better ruling. In the peace process, I would like them to work together in unity.

What's the barrier?

An honest governor must know who are the people interfering in the peace process. After they find out, that person should be taken to the court.

Do you know which groups or governments should it be?

Myanmar governments have reigned in this country for decades. [with suffering but no progress]

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestion would you make to improve peace process?

I cannot suggest all alone. I would like to suggest KNU leaders to truthfully engage in achieving peace and freedom.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

In my opinion, that would be the KNU governments.

How?

They [KNU soldiers] received good training. Now their communication with the local population is a lot better.

What do you think about the justice of the Myanmar government?

It's clear that Myanmar government ruling is unjust. I say this because when they [Tatmadaw soldiers] came into the village, they took villagers' possessions such as livestock and so on. They even caught villagers and forced them to be porters. After a long time, they lost the trust of the civilians.

The situation of Tatmadaw soldiers stealing villagers' livestock is still happening in the villages. However, the villagers don't want to see them patrolling in the villages. Now, it is decreasing because they are afraid that their acts will be reported.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

It's hard to make a contribution to peace and justice.

What's the barrier for you?

Drugs are also the biggest issue in communities because a lot of teenagers are using drugs. Where do those drugs come from?

Could you tell me about it?

The drugs come from the Myanmar government. Before, there was no opium and ya ba [amphetamines].

Have you heard about drug issues in other villages as well?

The drug issue is not only in our place, it's spreading all over. I think people get the drugs from the town.

Where is that?

The nearest place is KI--- village.

Where did they get the drugs?

I don't know because they sell drugs secretly. There must be groups of dealers. I don't know exactly who they are.

What are the problems of using drugs?

I don't see the problems come up. After being scolded by me, they stopped using it. It's a lot less now.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

Opium and ya ba [methamphetamine] are the main drugs people using. It's one of the challenges the community is facing.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihood?

After using the drugs, these young people forget to work. They are even disobeying their parents. And their thinking capacities are getting worse.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

My cousin's wife suffered all alone with her children after the death of her husband. As a widow, people have a contemptuous attitude toward her. When I heard, I told them not to have this kind of attitude. In that case, her husband was killed by Tatmadaw soldiers.

How many minorities are living in your village?

There are only Karen people in Kj--- village.

How many religions do you have in your village?

There are three religions.

During the conflict, did religious groups suffer?

The Christian religion suffered the harsh, discriminatory talk.

How?

They [Buddhist] said the people who rebel against Myanmar government are Christian.

When did it happen?

It happened after the formation of the DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army].

Was the discrimination among religious groups solved?

No.

What about the current situation concerning religions groups?

It's now gradually getting better. It [religious discrimination] is disappearing now. They are now celebrating Karen New Year in unity. They even respect the rights of others.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice means having trust in one another. Now, they are participating in religious affairs together.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

In this current situation, if a person commits adultery, the village head has to take action as traditionally.

When a crime is serious, where do they go?

They use the KNU justice system.

What do you know about this justice system?

People like to use the KNU justice system because they don't want to use the Myanmar government justice system. When they go to the Myanmar justice system, they are sentenced inappropriately. (for example they were sentenced to 3 years instead of two or one year) In the KNU justice system, they follow the rules. (for example they sentence criminals according to the punishment they deserve.) That's why people who committed crimes don't want to go the Myanmar government justice system. So they come to us.

Do you trust KNU justice system?

Yes, I do.

Do you feel that it is fair?

Yes, I do.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

According to my experience, I haven't heard of that.

Have you experienced that?

Yes, but we didn't want that. The KNU even takes care of criminals.

Have you experienced human rights abuses in the past?

Yes.

What kind of reparations or justice do you want?

In my opinion, I just would like them to be sentenced according to the crimes they committed. We want the cases to go to the court.

Would you want to take a case to court? Would you want to receive compensation or reparation? Would you want an official apology?

In my perspective, I would like to take a case to court.

Do you think the Myanmar government and KNU have responsibility for justice for human rights abuses?

Of course, yes.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

We cannot do anything without the rule of law's influence. But now the dictatorship is influencing the rule of law. To be able to stop human right violations, the rule of law should have influence.

Is there anything would you like to talk about?

No. I just would like you [KHRG] to try to find ways to achieve peace.

Would you allow us to use your information?

Yes.

Source #8

Source doc #	Source # 8
Log #	18-118-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Naw Ji--- (female, 55), Jj--- village, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District (2018)

Did you live in Jk--- before?

Yes, but I do not dare live there anymore since my son has some issues, so we ran away. Since we do not go back there, we sold our land to others.

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Where do you live now?

I am staying in Jj--- now.

What is the village tract you live in?

I am not accepted in the village tract yet and people asked me to go back and stay in Jk--- village. But since my children are studying, I cannot move back there. Still, they do not register

me in their village tract yet. The leaders from the District told the people to accept me here but we have not heard any response about it.

So in what village tract is Jj-- village located?

I think it might be Kwee Du Hkoh village tract. I am not so sure because I just moved here recently.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have eight children including the married ones. We have 10 family members if it includes my husband and I.

Do you have any experience of being interviewed by others?

Yes. Always. When we lived in the refugee camp, we did not know who to share our experiences with. Sometimes we needed to hide the things we wanted to share.

Have you experienced conflict?

I have seen the suffering of others even though I did not experience it myself. I did not experience any torture but my siblings experienced it.

Do you often think about it?

I think about it but we can do nothing about it.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

Yes. In the past, we had to give food to KNLA soldiers who came back from the war. When the Tatmadaw heard about it, they came to arrest us. At that time, they arrested a married couple, raped the woman in front of her husband along the P'Reh Loh [Sittaung] River and then killed them. After that, they kicked their bodies into the river. Tatmadaw soldiers killed a lot of people in my village at that time.

Do you remember when it happened?

No.

How old were you at that time?

I think I was more than 40 years old already.

Were you still single that time?

How come? I already had some children.

How old was your youngest kid at that time?

No. I cannot remember. There was fighting at that time between the KNLA and Tatmadaw and people were moving around. At that time, I moved to JI--- village during the rainy season. But I moved back to my village in summer.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

When my brother was in service and came back to our place. That night, the military column came to us and called both me and my husband. We did not know it was because of my

brother. My husband was crying in the kitchen so I told him not to cry and I said if something happens, I will die instead because it is my brother's mistake. When my brother got back home, I scolded him and said "why did you mess up things like this? You should kill us first before you do that." Then, my brother called the village head and village elders and told them if anything happen to his siblings, he would do something bad to this village. After that, the case settled down a little bit. Again, my son had another case later and I did not dare to live there anymore. Later, we moved to Ei Tu Hta refugee camp in 2010 but my daughter has been there since 2009.

Did the Tatmadaw torture you when they discovered your brother came back?

They did not know exactly about my brother. They said they will kill all rebels' relatives. We worried and were afraid that they would know my brother was a soldier. They did not let us contact each other or send foods. I have seen so many people tortured because they communicated with their relatives who were soldiers. So we were very terrified when Tatmadaw soldiers came right under our house and called us. We were poor so we could not give them money either. We worried we would die, so we moved our place.

Did the Tatmadaw soldiers know about your son?

No. but villagers knew it. We tried to keep it a secret but we could not cover every mouth so a lot of people came to know it.

What challenges did you face when you fled?

We did not have enough money to cover the transportation costs. If we went to the mountain side, there were a lot of Tatmadaw soldiers, and my kids were also very small so it was very difficult for us. My youngest child was only five years old so we were afraid to go through the mountains. My younger sibling met us and we went to Hpapun [District]. We left very early, at 4am, because we were worried that people would notice. We went by foot from Hpapun to Ei Tu Hta camp. I had my old mother with us, and people had to carry her.

Were you checked by Tatmadaw soldiers?

No. We were not checked by anyone on that side. We also worried a lot about that but fortunately no one checked us. I went there in April, 2010.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

I cannot count the troubles I have been through. I had to leave my farm so I sold it at the lowest price.

How much did one acre of farmland cost at that time?

It cost 2,500,000 kyat but I sold it for only 1,800,000 kyat.

How many acres of farm did you have at that time?

I had around three acres.

What did you do to earn a living at that time?

I did farming.

What do you do now?

I don't have anything with me now, so I just do part time jobs. For example, if people ask me to transplant paddy or clean grass, I go and do it.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood and those of your community?

I cannot count how much it affected our livelihoods.

We do not need to talk about it since it happened in the past. Even though you talk about it, it does not make sense and does not make any change. In the past, when we did farming, the price of our paddy was limited. They gave us very little for our paddy.

Could you go around freely at that time?

We could go outside only when we were allowed to.

Did the Tatmadaw force people to become porters?

Yes, a lot. We had to give them people when they asked. If we did not give them, they came and took people by themselves. They tortured us a lot. I do not want to talk about it anymore.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

How can you solve that? Those were the orders from them so no one could solve it. We could not do anything.

Were you or others in your community displaced during the conflict period?

No one ran away. Our village head tried his very best at hospitality and tried to give them what they wanted because he wanted to live in peace and did not want them to abuse the villagers.

Did you have a good village head?

Yes. The past village head was good and kind unlike the present ones.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They are SPDC (State Peace and Development Council).

We cannot solve anything since it was in the past. It is easier for the people who have more money to solve their problems.

Was there any justice for you or other victims of human rights abuses?

As I told you, we could not do anything at that time.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

Who was there to punish them? They were promoted to higher positions instead because they followed the order of their leaders.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights?

If possible, I want to cut them like we cut fish paste. However, we alone suffered because we could not do anything back to them. When the KNU came to our village to collect taxes, we had to welcome them. But the Tatmadaw did not allow us to welcome them in our house. When they became aware of it, they start torturing us. If we did not welcome our own people, we were considered traitors as well. We were so afraid of [the Tatmadaw] because we lived between the two groups. We were innocent victims at that time. When two buffaloes fight, the grass gets damaged.

Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their positions of power?

I think it is meaningless to talk about this because we cannot do anything.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

People just helped the victims for a while. The people from Ei Tu Hta refugee camp were told to come back and stay in their own villages. The people responded that they do not dare to go back because the activities of Tatmadaw cannot be trusted at this moment. But we were told "this is the period of ceasefire so this is the best time for you to go back to your villages." Some people wanted to continue to stay there but they were not allowed to stay. They said they will make that place into a Peace Park.

If you were displaced, were you forced to return?

Yes. The rations stopped. And who would allow us to farm together there? The place there is so narrow. So we came back because we did not want to argue with each other. People from Brigade 2 and Brigade 3 told the leaders that they did not want to come back but they were not allowed to stay there anymore. For Brigade 5 people, that is their area so they were allowed to continue to stay. Therefore, they told us that the best thing we can do in the present time is to go back and stay in our own birth place. We could not say anything to them.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

How can we help the dead people? It does not make sense to help them because they already died. We did not need to expect to help them at that time. No one cared for them. They had to die like animals.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

Killings, conflict and human rights violations happened because the Tatmadaw did not want the [KNLA] to exist. If they knew that you were a Karen soldier, they would kill you immediately.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

Yes, we heard when we lived in Ei Tu Hta camp that the KNU and Myanmar government had made a ceasefire between them. We were happy when we heard about it because we thought that we would be able to travel freely and peacefully.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

Just like I have said, we can work and travel a little bit easier. I just know that about the ceasefire. Please tell us what you know about ceasefire too.

What do you know about National Wide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

Yes, I have heard about it.

How did you hear about it?

A lot of people from Ei Tu Hta camp talked about the NCA. Some leaders came to us and said they had already signed NCA so we could go back to our village and stay there.

What do you expect to get from this peace process??

We just want to work and travel peacefully without any conflict with each other. We do not want to see any violations like in the past.

Do you think you have peace in your village now?

How? We just recently heard that we need to prepare our belongings, food, and things like that, so I am so worried and concerned about it right now.

So you mean you do not have peace yet?

No, we do not really have peace yet.

What are the advantages of the peace process for you?

It is just that we can travel quite smoothly and easily. We are not disturbed by others like in the past.

Are you staying in the village?

Yes. I am living here in this village, but my house is over there so come and visit me.

You live here but it is not your village right?

No. This is not my village but I do not have a piece of land in my own village so I cannot go back there. I sold my land because I thought I would never go back and live there. Coming back here was the plan of our leaders.

What are the disadvantages of the peace process? When you came back from Ei Tu Hta camp you did not have any land to live on?

Yes. The leaders did not even arrange anything for us.

Do you mean you came back all by yourself?

No. I mean since we reached to here in this place. We were sent by others and we came back 9 households altogether. If the leaders arranged the place for us to stay or cook, it would be better. The thing is they did not do it for us. We do not know where to cook. When we first came back, we only knew one family so we asked them to stay with them. Their house is small and we have a lot of family members so we could not stay there for a long time. After I realized that school has the dormitory, I sent my children to the dormitory and built my house with bamboo. I did not have any thatch leaves for my house. They did not come and ask whether we needed anything for our roof or anything. They did not even give us something like a tarpaulin for our roof. When I was first about to build my house, I asked people and they kept saying it is all their land so I built my house over there. Someone called me and said "you can come and stay here", so I cleaned the land, cut some plants, and then built my house. We came in June during rainy season so it rained a lot.

Did you come back in June this year?

No, last year in 2017 and I think it was on 23rd June and it was heavily raining. It was not our own area and we were new to the place and we did not have anything for our roof during that time. We went to cut some T' Poh (plants like canes that grow in a wet place) and used it for our roof. Therefore, when it rained heavily, it dripped in our house so we all became wet. When someone came and interviewed me last time, he only had a small dry place to sit because it rained and the house got wet. He needed to sit in a dry place because he worried his camera would get wet.

Do you feel safer now?

For myself or for the whole village?

For yourself and your family.

I think it depends on our leaders because we do not know anything. If people run then we have to follow them. So it is in our leaders' hands.

Has your livelihood improved?

I am just transplanting paddy for others and helping them, and in return they give us food to eat or a little money to use.

How different is it from your life in Ei Tu Hta camp?

In Ei Tu Hta camp, they distributed rice for us and we worked part time to buy some other foods. It was fine in some ways and also hard sometimes just like here. The main thing is if we are healthy, we will be able to work for our livelihood.

So your livelihood situation is good?

It is normal. We have to work since we have nothing with us.

Is your life similar here and in Jj--- (your own village)?

No, it is not the same. We could find a way to work in Jj--- even though we had so little. But we have nothing to do here.

What does peace mean to you?

In my own opinion, peace means no fighting and we can work in peace.

What do you think about the current peace process?

The current peace process is uncertain so we do not know.

How do you personally feel about it?

I do not know. We heard that fighting happens often in Brigade 5, so we are worried because we also live in an area that is controlled by the KNU.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

The barrier will be fighting. I do not know about other things.

What about torture?

Yes, it will be the consequence of fighting.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I cannot suggest anything because I am not educated like them. They are politicians so they are more powerful than us. They can do it so they are doing it.

We do not need to suggest anything to them because they already know the rule that they cannot cross the boundaries. They are stubborn and crossed the boundaries so we cannot do anything. We cannot give them advice because our education level is lower than theirs. They (Tatmadaw) were attacked because they crossed the KNU boundaries even though they know

the rule. If I have to say then I would say to them that they should live in peace and have understanding with each other. One should obey the other one when they have rules to follow. I would say “civilians like us will have peace only when both of you have peace. If you still fight with each other, then we will be the victims that suffer from that.”

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I think both governments are responsible.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I do not know about it. I think I cannot do anything.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

I do not know about it personally. I think different people face different things.

Did you experience human rights abuses in the past?

I only had human rights challenges when I lived in the refugee camp. Should I talk about that?

Yes, you can.

It was like the rations of my children who were away were cut. They only gave us the share for those who showed up themselves. We could not do anything even though we did not feel well. Sometimes people came to interview us and asked us about the shares that we got. We had to say we got enough rations. If we said the share is not enough for us, we would need to buy our food outside and they would ask where we bought our food. We had to say we bought outside but not in the camp. We could not say we bought it inside the camp. Actually, we bought it from the people who work in the camp food store. They also told us that we could not say that we bought from them. We had to say we bought it from outside like at shops.

Were the people who sold you rations from the food store? Did you have any other people who you bought it from?

Of course they are like section leaders. They are responsible in the camp and they cooperate together.

So your rights were abused, right?

We did not get to say what we wanted to. Isn't it called rights?

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihood?

I just talked about it.

What human rights challenges do women currently face?

My daughter went to attend school in Mae Ra Moe [refugee] camp and her ration was cut. We had to ask for food for her only when she came back.

You said whenever you did not get enough food, you had to buy it. How did you earn money to buy food?

We grew some things and sold things in a shop. We sometimes made charcoal for selling. We also did part time work.

Was it challenging to work like that?

No. We did for ourselves so it did not give us any trouble.

What human rights challenges do minorities currently face?

The minorities were Burmese who got married to Karen people. There were not a lot of them staying in the camp. I did not see any difficulty about that. We faced the same thing when we were in the camp.

Which religions were represented?

We had a lot of religions there but the majority is Christianity.

What is the minority religion?

It was Buddhism, but it was not that much less [common].

Did you have any problem with other religions?

No, we did not have any problem with religions.

Were you able to safely return home from the camp?

We were told that we needed to go back but some also said that they could not trust the current situation of the peace process because the Myanmar government always does something different from what they say. Our Brigade 3 groups were told that we would be sent to Jm---village so whoever was going back needed to submit their names to leaders. People told us that the leaders had the best plan for Brigade 3 people. They showed us photos of the place and it was so nice, so we were very happy about that. Later, the plan did not happen anymore and we were told that there was no response from leaders. I felt like my heart was not inside of me because I had stopped sending my children to school. Therefore, I thought I would go back by myself but I did not have any money for my travel costs. But later, a person who worked as a camp committee member told me that I should wait for the leaders' plan. So I said "I will wait for the plan that the leaders have for us." We waited for a long time but it did not happen. A lot of people came and interviewed us, asking us whether we had enough safety for the return back or not and whether landmines were still planted in the villages or not. We told them that we did not know because we had not returned yet. We still waited for the leaders' plan and our children did not go to school anymore. Later, they said that we need to attend the training being given by KWO. We were told that the leaders would help us for at least six months or three years when we reached the targeted village. So KWO gave us the travel cost for returning back here. We thanked them so much for arranging things for us. After we reached here, we waited for the support of our leaders, but it did not come. Therefore, when people came to interview me, I was annoyed and scolded them like I did to you. So when people heard about my interviews, they came and gave us some support for three months.

Did it affect the education of the children?

I went to the camp because my son sent me with the name of the district. The leaders told me that I was a district person and not from township so I had to go back to Jk--- village tract where I came from. How could I go back there? I do not have any land there and my children will not be able to go to school if I go back there. So I decided that I will live here no matter how hard it is and how people talk about me. I thought that I would register my name in this village tract but the township does not allow me to register it so I cannot do anything.

Did other families from your village face the same problems?

Yes. There is another one too. She could not bear with this situation anymore so she went back again to Ei Tu Hta camp. Her family faced the same problem as me.

The other house there also did not register at the village tract yet because he was once a KNLA soldier. My son told me "leaders from the district level allowed me to register myself here but no one accepts me yet." I can stay like this but I worry that if something happens and it needs the leaders' approval, I could be in trouble. I just need their guarantee if something happens. I came back since June 2017 and until now I am not registered. My son said that he will call the district leaders and ask them if they told a lie.

What does justice mean to you?

I think it is equality of all beings. Isn't it?

Yes. What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

It is KNU justice system because it is a KNU-controlled area.

What do you know about this justice system? Do you trust it?

I have never heard about it since I came back because I do not see any meeting called by leaders here. So, I do not know about it.

Have you heard of any policies made by the KNU headquarters?

Yes, I have heard of their policy when I lived in refugee camp.

Do you trust it?

I think I have to trust it.

Do you feel that it is fair?

I do not know about it because I have never experienced it. I can tell you about this when I experience it myself.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

I have never heard of bribery in the KNU justice system.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to get justice?

I have never experienced it so I do not know about it.

Have you ever seen it in the experiences of your neighbours or friends?

No. I have never seen it in my relatives or neighbours.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

I do not understand about it. I think since we live under the policy of the KNU, the KNU is more responsible for that.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

There is no hope in stopping human rights violations for me. It is meaningless even though you hope for that. When we first came back to this place, we submitted complaint letters to the township leaders. It is like you throw it into the river.

Did you submit it to the district too?

We already submitted it to the township level, so it depends on them whether they will submit it

to the district level for us or not. If they do not submit it then we cannot do anything. They have not given us any response, so we do not need to hope for that. We submitted our letters but we do not know whether they threw them into the rubbish bin or submitted them to district office. We were altogether eleven households who submitted complaint letters. You asked about rights so I told you we do not need to expect anything.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in Myanmar?

I do not hope for that either. I will just waste my air if I talk about it.

Were you displaced in the conflict period?

I already told you about that.

How long were you displaced for?

I went to the camp in 2010 and came back in 2017.

So it took 17 years.

No. It is only 7 years. Some people went to camp in 2006 but I went in 2010.

Where did you go?

I went to Ei Tu Hta refugee camp.

Is that in Thailand?

It is on the Myanmar side. They call it a temporary camp and it is not legal. It is not like the other camps located in Thailand.

What was the root cause of the refugee situation?

It was because of the SPDC.

What challenges did the displaced persons face?

We faced a lot of challenges. We cannot calculate them all.

Can you tell us some of them?

It cannot end if I tell you. People who are displaced since 2006 suffered more than me. We cannot tell of everything we faced. Some people gave birth on the way, got sick and died on the way.

Did you have any concerns at that time?

Yes, we really worried that the Tatmadaw would know that we left.

If you were displaced, were you able to safely return home?

I did not dare to go back, so I'm staying here in Jj---.

Do you feel safe right now?

Safety is in the hands of our leaders.

What about other displaced families from your village?

Some people still live in the camp.

Do they still get their rations?

No, but children still get their food ration. Eleven households returned but only nine households came back with the plan of the leaders. Three households came back before others.

Were there any challenges to returning home?

The only challenge is the land. We do not have any land anymore.

Were there any concerns regarding land or property?

I have nothing left there.

What made you return?

Like I said, people told me to return. If I still got rations or food, I would probably have stayed there until now. They told us that the leaders had already signed the ceasefire agreement and the rations in the camp also stopped. We thought we could come back so we returned. We did not have any work place in the camp either.

Are you still a displaced person?

No but I do not know how to call myself. I am a villager but do not have any land because I am not accepted to any village yet. It is somehow like being a displaced person too.

What is preventing you from returning to your village?

I have no land.

Did you sell your house?

I just had a small house and I gave it to my daughter. I just sold my garden land.

Were there any challenges to your return? Were there any concerns regarding land or property?

It affects everything when you do not have any land to live on.

What do you want for your future?

I just want to be healthy so that I can work and earn for my livelihood.

Source #9

Source doc #	Source # 9
Log #	19-5-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thaton Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Km--- (female, 67), Kn--- village, Thaton Township, Thaton District (January 2019)

A customary village leader reported: "around 14 or 15 years ago, during the conflict period, we suffered the Tatmadaw forcing us to porter for several days. We tried many strategies to avoid being arrested by the Tatmadaw and forced to porter. [The Tatmadaw] arrested our children and said that they would keep them for only two or three days, but my sons never returned. It has

been 13 years already. I never heard about my children after that. We lost four people in total including other villagers. I am a survivor who almost died during the conflict period. I suffered too many violations and abuses. My sons were arrested by Tatmadaw Battalion #9, under the authority of Battalion Commander Myo Aung. (we also call him Ta T'Kloe Hkoh). One of my sons was 19 and another one was 17 years old, and they were with another man around 27 years old and another around 56 years old. The Tatmadaw took them to the Tatmadaw investigation gate. People told me that they murdered them at the Battalion #9 camp, but we did not witness the incident. I asked the people about my children. They said: They arrested these four villagers because the Tatmadaw accused them of being KNLA soldiers.”

Source #10

Source doc #	Source # 10
Log #	19-6-A7-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Naw Ha--- (female, 51), Hb--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

What is your occupation?

I have a plantation.

Where do you live?

I live in Hb--- village (Mile 20).

Could you tell me the situation in this area before the NCA?

Yes, I witnessed and I experienced it myself. In September 1994, I experienced something I would never forget. This was happened in B--- village. A villager, who was staying in the hut at harvesting time visited by the KNU corporal, was arrested by the Tatmadaw. He [the villager] has family and his wife was about to give birth. What I would like to say is that they should've freed the innocent person and punished people who are guilty. Unfortunately, the villager was being killed along with the KNU corporal.

What is the name of that villager?

His name is Saw Hc---.

Where did he live?

He lived in B--- village. As it was harvest time, he went to stay in his [crop field] hut. [He] was arrested along with the KNU soldier. After they were arrested, the villager's belongings such as cardamom, rings, necklaces and money were taken by the Tatmadaw soldiers. The Tatmadaw soldiers retained them. Later, the Tatmadaw killed both of them at a place called Mile 20. The villager's wife was left in her mature pregnancy struggling for the family livelihood. While they were killing both of them, a villager went and watched. So the Tatmadaw arrested him and tied him up. With the help of his wife, the Tatmadaw freed him. His wife was able to answer the questions asked by the Tatmadaw soldiers [she was able to convince them he wasn't a soldier or that he wouldn't report it].

Do you still remember the name of the commander and his battalion?

I don't remember the name of the battalion. The name of the commander is Bo Kyaw Oo.

Do you know which division they were from?

I don't remember it.

When did it take place?

It happened in September 1994.

Do you remember the name of the commander who grabbed the villager's possessions?

The commander didn't grab the villager's possessions. Actually, the villager's belongings were taken by the corporal who served at the Tatmadaw army camp. I don't remember his name. At the time the villager was detained, a female villager petitioned to free the man as his wife was in mature pregnancy. Regardless, the Tatmadaw killed both of them.

Why?

They were afraid the villager would report about them.

How many days were they held before being killed?

The Tatmadaw took both of them from B--- village to K--- in the evening. They spent the night there. In the morning, they had to dig their own graves one mile away from K---. Then, the Tatmadaw soldiers killed them mercilessly.

Did you witness how the soldiers tortured the people they arrested?

They were tied up from the back, kicked and beaten.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

I would like to say that nobody wants to be a village administrator. Because they are like a leaf, which gets a hole whenever a thorn falls down on it or a leaf falls on it [vulnerable civilians could easily be damaged by authorities]. Whenever the Tatmadaw soldiers come into the village asking them [village administrator] about the KNU/KNLA soldiers travelling into the village, they are beaten even though they respond with the truth. That's how the villagers have suffered before the NCA.

Do you allow us to use the information you have provided?

Yes.

Source #11

Source doc #	Source # 11
Log #	18-122-A11-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Saw Jn--- (male, 46), Jm--- village, Kho Hkee village tract, Htantabin Township, Toungoo District (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married? Do you have a family?

Yes, I have.

How many children do you have?

I have four children.

I want to ask you about the conflict. Do you know about or have you heard about the conflict such as land confiscation and killing from the Tatmadaw military?

I think we have to look in the past from Tatmadaw military and also from the KNU. Is that right?

Yes. But you can think of something after 2006.

We have experienced it since 1990, not 2006. After the Tatmadaw coup d'etat in 1988 until to 1990, we had to start feeling and facing discrimination.

What did you face?

We were displaced to Thandaung Gyi because of the order. So we had to change and carry our belongings for days and nights.

When did it happen? What year?

It was in 1991 and 1992. Then our villages were damaged after those years.

Who ordered the local people to move or change to live in Thandaunggyi at that time?

It was the military who ordered us.

Was it the Tatmadaw or the KNLA?

It was the Tatmadaw. It was around the coup d'etat in the 1990 election. It was the socialist period and the 1988 students' demonstration had just happened. I was a student at that time. However, I did not get to study anymore after the students' demonstration and all the schools from the entire country were closed. We lost a chance to study because of many problems. Our parents could not afford to send us to school either, so we left the school and until now we have not gotten to study anymore.

Were you a witness to the village's displacement and did you experience it?

Yes, I was. They said that if we didn't move before the deadline they gave us, they would burn

our houses, our belongings and everything [else]. So we had to move because we could not stay in the village. We had to carry everything. For example, we had to carry our sewing machine, pigs, buffalos and cows.

Where did you go?

We went to Thandaunggyi. They had not prepared any place for displaced people there even they said we had to move. They said we had to stay in Thandaunggyi but they did not tell us which area we had to stay in. So we just had to stay with our relatives and depended on them. So we had many problems and difficulties.

Did they give you any place to stay when they ordered you to move?

No, they did not give us any place.

So the local people had to leave the houses in the village.

Yes, we just had to leave the houses like that.

What happened to those houses? Did anyone go to back to stay after that?

Some people did not dare to go back and stay in their houses. So some houses were destroyed by termites. We went back to stay in the village in 1997 and 1998. However, the fighting and conflicts happened frequently so we did not dare to stay anymore. They did not tell us to move back to our village so we just went back by our own decision. However, we had to stay in fear and were frightened because the fighting occurred very often and sometimes we had to flee from it. In the summer when we were done working out plantation, we went back to stay in Thandaunggyi. Then we asked permission to go back and work in the working seasons. We had to ask for the permission letter for three days or one week and bring the rice if we went back to our village to work from Thandaunggyi. If they saw us carry more than three bowl of rice, the Tatmadaw soldiers would take them on the way.

So they specified the amount. Did they specify the amount of rice as well?

They specified three bowls of rice a week.

When did they specify three bowls of rice a week?

It was between 1995 and 1997. We could not bring medicine or dry batteries. I also had to struggle very hard in 1992. It was the worst in 1991 and 1992. We did not know anything but our areas became a war zone. We met the Tatmadaw group when we were back from the hill farms. We did not know the fighting was happening and that period was when tiger's tail operation influenced. They [Tatmadaw soldiers] would arrest everyone whoever they found on the way. The Tatmadaw soldiers were fighting with Toungoo District Brigade #2 soldiers [KNU soldiers]. However, we did not do anything and we were arrested when we came back. They tied us up with rope and tortured us.

Did you get beaten?

Yes, I got beaten on my head. It was just because of the blessing from God. If not, I would already be dead a long time ago. That is the period when tiger's tail operation was in operation. Later on I found out that their Operation Commander named himself as tiger's tail.

Were they from government Tatmadaw?

Yes, they were.

What did they do other than tie and torture you?

They did many things to us. The vegetables that we carried back from our hill farms for our parents, family and relatives such as beans, eggplants, tomatoes and other vegetables, they accused us that we were going to give them to Nga Pway or rebel groups [the KNU soldiers]. They accused us of many things in many ways. They took my Myanmar citizen card and my wallet after they arrested me. I told their Sub – Battalion commander that I have a citizen card. When they sent me to the Operation commander, I did not have my ID card with me anymore. It was because the soldiers from the check point took it when they sent me to their Operation commander. Then they found it when they checked the soldiers from the check point. They buried the ID card in a hole. Then they asked the local people to fill and cover those holes. Then I got my ID back when the fighting happened and they asked the local people to dig those holes. However, when they arrested me, they did not see any ID card or any proof. So they defined me as a member of a rebel group. So they tied us and tortured us. There are many people who had this experience because they tied everyone who they arrested.

How many days did they tie you?

They started to tie me 30 minutes after I was arrested. Then they told me, “You are very lucky. You even got the gold necklace from the government.” Even if we wanted to get the necklace, we did not get it. I asked my friends who were from Jo--- village why they were arrested and tied like this. Then they said it is not your turn yet, but you will see it in your turn. Then it was my turn a few minutes later. Then they tied from my head down to my legs. Their Company commander asked me questions one by one and beat me every time before the questions with the cane while eating. He beat me before asking each question.

How many times did he beat you?

I counted the time he beat me on my head was 22 times since I was arrested. They also banged me with the gun and the big stick. In the first time when they arrested me they just beat me with the cane. Then they asked me “where your friends, soldiers and groups.” They asked me many times. But I did not know about that and they told me “if the fighting happens I would kill you.” How would I know? I just came back from the farms and I met with them. They said “the fighting was happening but you came back so you must be someone from the rebel group.” So they asked me many things. But I did not know that the fighting happened. I did not hear anything when I was in the hill farms. They asked me “which section do you live in?” I said “I live in section [censor for security].” Then he said, “section [censor for security] is a rebel village. We also arrested one person from that section last night. Your section was a rebel section and the fighting also happened in that section frequently.” They said “your section kept the rebels” and they accused us many things. They did not stop beating me as they were talking and asking so many questions. A few minutes later, [the car] from new Jp---village went to the old village. There were no people from the village at that time because they were afraid and had fled to another place. There were only two or three people [elders] from the village and they were arrested. The fighting started when we arrived at old Jq--- village. They beat me hard and severely when the fighting happened. Then they even pointed the gun at me. There were some people who could understand [us as well]. When we reached [Jr--- village] they burned the hill, rice barns, and the cardamom garden near the fighting areas. It was in February and in summer so things burned easily. They beat and hit everyone they saw just like ants. Then someone came to me and asked me, “Don’t you know me?” I said, “No, I don’t know you”. Then he said, “Do you know how many were killed by this knife?” I said, “No.” Then he continued, “This knife already killed 7 people and it would be 8 with you. This knife killed Muslim people and now this knife came to kill your Karen people.”

Who was that? Where was he from?

He was one of the soldiers.

Was he a government soldier?

Yes, he was. He was from tiger's tail operation group who arrested me. He said "we came from Rakhine State. We killed many Muslim already." I don't remember their Battalion number. He continued, "We were the ones who killed the Muslim people and now the government sent us here to kill you [Karen people]." I was so disappointed and depressed. I thought they were going to do that to our Karen people and we would be in big trouble. I did not think I would be alive by that time because we were just like ants between them [the Tatmadaw soldiers]. It was because they beat and hit everyone they saw at that time. Then I thought it would be better to die than to stay and be tortured by them. They just saw us and treated us like ants. I just consoled myself, "Oh, no problem. We are just human beings so we were born and we will die one day. However, while they were cutting slowly and had nearly cut my neck, the commander shouted at him [the one cutting] and demanded, "Who asked you to kill this person? Where did you get the order?" Then he released me and my neck was bleeding a little bit. It was because he had already cut it. My friend even cried. My friend is now living in Thandaunggyi section # [censor for security]. My friend told me "you will be killed by K'Da [it means how they call the Tatmadaw military soldiers]." My friends from Jo--- village and Thandaunggyi [town] pitied me because they thought I would be killed. I told them, "Don't say anything, I am ok even if they kill me. Just tell my parents if I was killed. Don't say anything. If I die, you can tell my parents about this. If you tell this, you would be in trouble." I reminded him again and again. However, he could not tolerate how I was being punished. So he was sad about that. Finally, we stopped in [Jr--- village] and stayed there for two days from Sunday to Tuesday. They ate over 30 pigs from Jr--- village.

Were they the government soldiers?

Yes, they were. We called them K'Da and they were the military soldiers. There were 100 or 50 people from Thandaunggyi who were forced to porter. They also had the K'Daw porter group, people who they arrested from the cinema from Ya Ta Shay and Toungoo. There were also many porters who could no longer walk. There was one old man that they killed outside of the village when there was fighting. I did not know that because I just heard that they caught a rebel man and killed him. That old man was deaf and when everyone fled from the fighting he was left in the village because he could not hear and run. They just caught that old man during the fighting and killed him. No one knew that he was killed but when people found him and saw his clothes, they were sure that he was killed and our Karen people would have many problems. They said the main point they came here for was to kill Karen people. I thought it did not make any difference because I was going die anyway. So I told them everything openly that those Muslim are from abroad. They came here to stay so it was fine that you killed them. But our Karen people are one of the ethnic groups from Myanmar and we are just living in the boundary of Myanmar map location. You should have told us if there is a law that said Karen people cannot live in Myanmar by the boundary of Myanmar map. Otherwise, we are not going to stay if there is a law. However, we don't want to be punished and be discriminated against and killed as well. We don't want to stay as well. Then I told them, "where should we [Karen people] stay? Tell us the places and the boundary of where the Karen should live. I will lead all the Karen people and going to stay in the place where you decide for us to stay. So you can kill those who don't to stay in the place where you decide the boundary ends. They beat me and abused us and viewed us as if we were not human beings like them. They beat me with bamboo the size of

my arm and the bamboo even broke into pieces. They said, "This rebel is really strong." Then a few minutes later they brought one of my friends from Thandaunggyi and I didn't even recognize him. It was because he got beaten so hard and his whole face was bruised and his nose was broken. They brought a new one in a few minutes. He was from Thandaunggyi Section # [censor for security] and his name is Saw Js---. He was a Muslim and his wife was Karen. They were asked to fetch the water and he was forced to carry the loads. The people who were forced porters and the soldiers were going together to fetch the water. It was summer so it was hot and there was not much water left. Therefore, the soldiers and the forced porters had to hurry to fetch the water. Then the soldiers got to drink it and he got angry at the soldiers. Then, he shouted at the soldiers and said, "you are human, I am human and we both are human. It does not matter you are soldier and we are forced porter. You are thirsty and we are thirsty as well." Then he continued, "would you dare to fight one on one without weapons?" When they went back to the village, the soldiers asked: "where is the one who dared the soldiers?" He was beaten so hard, and tied up with rope. He got beaten hard with a pestle. He fell and writhed [in agony] on the ground. His nose, ears and mouth were bleeding. Finally, my turn came and they also beat me with the pestle three times. It was just because of the grace of God, I was fine. The Muslim was beaten as well and he fell and writhed. Then, he lost consciousness and the Tatmadaw soldiers walked over him and kicked his chest and head with their jungle boots. I was a bit shocked when I saw that. Then I prayed in my heart, "God, if I have to die now, please let me die. But if I have to survive, please protect me from this dangerous situation. I heard one of the preachers say that if you pray and believe, God will protect you from the pain and the power that men put inside the stick that beats you. God did the miracle for me directly because I got beaten with the pestle on my head three times. The first time they hit me, I just felt a little bit hurt. I did not feel anything the second or third times. But I just felt angry and I thought that it is just kind of killing me slowly. I should have died but I did not die. So I thought that I should fight against them. However, I did not do anything back to them. Finally, I came back from Jo--- and was released from Jt--- village. They untied the rope and then I got to come back home.

Were you included in the forced porter group?

Yes, I was included.

How long were you there?

It was about two weeks.

Did they inform you and help you to get the medication?

No, they did not tell me anything. Three days after arriving home, I could not go out anymore. I just had to lie down on the bed for one month. Sayama Daw Ju--- and Saya Jr--- gave me treatment and medication so I got better.

So you just got the treatment by yourself.

Yes, that Sayama scolded the soldiers, "how did you treat the villagers badly like this? Now they have to get treatment and medication in the village. You did not help them at all for the treatment and medication."

Was there anyone killed in your village?

There was no one killed since then. But the fighting should not have happened. When the fighting happened, they arrested all the villagers that they saw in the time when the Kya Mi [Tiger's tail] Tatmadaw troop was powerful. After the Tiger's tail, Yat Ka Tatmadaw troop took power. After Yat Ka took power, the fighting happened very often. When the fighting happened

in Jq---lay, ten local people were arrested. Then the fighting happened in Ker Weh and when the fighting happened in Thandaung two people were arrested. Two of them were father and son and they were carrying water so they did not know it. When they came back on the way, they were arrested by the Tatmadaw soldiers. They were even stabbed by a knife in their thighs.

Was it from the Tatmadaw military soldiers?

Yes.

What do you think? Should the perpetrator be punished?

We do not know anything so how we can say they should be punished?

How about now?

If we got to know human rights, political knowledge and the awareness trainings given by NGOs, we would be able to submit the perpetrators' names with complaint letters. However, we did not know anything in the past and we just had to do whatever they asked us.

In your opinion, how should the perpetrators from the Tatmadaw be punished?

There are still some people who do not dare to go back to the village. There have been no official announcements that we are able to go back and stay in our village now. There are no schools now. However, our KNU leaders told us to come back and stay in our village and do any development in the village. Only a few people came back to our village, with fear. They think that the political situation is not stable yet.

Do you not trust in the political situation and the government yet?

No. It is because they say one thing and they do something else. Their words and actions do not match.

By which laws and articles should the perpetrators get punishment??

I experienced this situation in my village as well. Before, the Tatmadaw just considered our village as a rebel village. In 2005 and 2006, one of the village heads from New Jp--- village was killed. The village head from New Jp--- village and four people from Old Hq--- village were killed but their bodies were not found. Since then the villagers were afraid to stay in the village.

The village head was killed as well. Who killed them?

It was the Tatmadaw. They asked the village head to send the message for them. So the village head went and then he met with the column. Then we did not know where they took him.

What message did he have to send? Who asked him to send it?

It was the Tatmadaw. They had different groups such as those who were staying in the army camp and those who were patrolling around the areas. They were from corps #44, #55 and #66. We did not know where he was since he went to send the message. We could not know about or find him until today.

With what laws should those soldiers be punished? Should they be punished with national or international laws?

We want the compensation for those who were killed during that time, for their families and parents that were left behind and for the village. We want to identify those who were killed innocently.

Do you just want to identify those who were killed, or to use it for the punishment?

Yes, to use it for the punishment. We want to show that the Tatmadaw soldiers killed them badly and we want the compensation for those who were killed. We want those who caused human rights violations to be punished.

So you mean the perpetrators will be punished and the victims' families will get compensation to support themselves?

There are still families whose family members and children were killed and they are now in trouble.

These are true incidents. The corps #66 started breaking and causing human rights abuses. How do you think about the justice system in Myanmar? Do you trust it?

No, I don't trust it.

Why?

Yes, if I have to give you an example, there was one teacher from Thandaunggyi Section # [censor for security] who was going to teach in Thandaung Section # [censor for security]. She just went in the morning and came back home in the evening. One of the Tatmadaw military soldiers from the tea leaf industry raped her and took her earrings. When he took her earrings, he cut her ears. Then he killed her, but we could not find any evidence for this case. Luckily, there were two girls who were going to study at Ju--- High School too and they saw that incident but the perpetrator told them not to tell anybody. Then the perpetrator threatened them, "if you tell this to anybody, I will kill you two too." However, they could recognize the face of the perpetrator well. The detective from Yangon came and investigated this incident. Finally, they found out the result and they said this perpetrator had already quit his job that year. They checked all the soldiers from Thandaunggyi but they did not find the right one. Finally, they called the perpetrators and showed those two girls. Therefore, the result came out that he is the right one and the perpetrator who killed the teacher. If there had been no evidence, they would have just buried the incident like that.

How did he kill that teacher?

He killed her in the tea leafs garden. It was in rainy season. She came back alone on the way and there were many people in the garden. They had knives so they raped and killed the teacher. Then they took her necklace and earrings. They cut her neck.

How did they punish them?

We do not know how they punished them. But because of those two girls, we could find out the perpetrators. They already crossed out the perpetrator's name to bury this incident.

So you could find out the perpetrators.

Yes, we could find out but we do not know whether they got punishment or not.

It was not the Tatmadaw who found out the perpetrators. The villagers were who found out. Is that right?

Yes, not only those two girls. The teachers and the education officer also told that. She was his niece.

You do not know if they got punishment or not?

No, we did not know if they got it or where they were sent.

Since 2011, the KNU and the Myanmar government started following the ceasefire agreement in your areas. How do you think and feel about it? What are the changes since the ceasefire was started?

We can travel well and freely in our areas. There is no fighting so we don't need to go for forced portering. In the past, we always had to go for forced portering and volunteering.

Could you go back to stay in your village after the ceasefire?

There is no one who dared to go back and stay there. The Tatmadaw soldiers are still beside the village. After the election in 2010 and in 2015, we did not trust the Tatmadaw military. If the Tatmadaw take over again, there may be more chances for the fighting to happen. So until 2015, no one went back to stay in the village. The NLD won the election in 2015 so there were some people who went back to stay. There are some schools that are just starting to be rebuilt in our village tract. There are five schools that already constructed.

How about in your village?

Since we fled from the village, there was no school was built. Our village school moved to Jv---village after that. If we get more students, we can report it for building a school. However, people still don't trust in the NCA yet.

Why don't they trust in the NCA?

It is because there is no civilian involvement in the NCA. It is just between those two groups [KNU and Myanmar government]. So we cannot say it is a true ceasefire process. There are other groups involved in the ceasefire but there is no peace.

Do you mean even though they have the ceasefire there is no peace?

They just do it for their own benefits. However, the KNU will bring out true peace because they represent our ethnic group. There are still less civilian, local people, their decision, voices and participation. It is just the KNU and Myanmar government. There cannot be true peace.

So you mean the people should participate and the Tatmadaw should go back.

Yes. The Tatmadaw should go back to their base since they signed the ceasefire agreement. Even though they talk about the peace process, they are still present near our village. They are present more in the local people areas. There were less military camps before the ceasefire was signed. For example, they stay on the way from Baw G'Lee and P'Leh Wah road. Before, they were only in Thandaunggyi, but now there is one group in Thanduunggyi and Ta Wah Law Hkee, one group in Koe Weh and one group in Jr---. So we don't trust them because they are just pretending now. We are not sure when they will start the fighting again.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

It should include the civilians' desires and decisions. There is no one who wants wars because we have had to experience many years of wars. Since 2012, we did not need to go for forced portering and we can travel freely.

Aren't there any changes?

There are no special changes. There is no war and fighting so we can travel well and easier. The government is taking over, so the working conditions are better and we can work in freedom now. In the past, we had to live in fear. If the fighting happened, we had to be afraid that we would be arrested to go for forced portering. We have been able to sleep peacefully

after 2012. Before we had to be on guard and could not sleep well.

What should be done to achieve lasting peace?

The civilians and local people's desires should be included. They should participate in the meeting with the KNU, government and Tatmadaw. There was one time I attended something called the Peace Process Forum, and Sayama Jw--- explained to us that the peace process is now just like a big head and small butt. They limited how many people from the government and EAOs, but there are less representatives from the civilians. We have to see whether there are many people from armed groups or civilians. If there are more civilians, there should be more representatives from the civilians. Now it is like ten people from the government, ten from EAOs and six civilians. So it is like a big head and a small butt. The civilians don't understand this peace process because they have less participation. They are just doing by themselves.

What are the changes since the NCA was signed in 2015? For example, are there less or more military activities and fighting?

After the NCA was signed, there was no fighting in our area. However, our KNU soldiers are just being patient. It is because they don't follow the rules from the NCA. The Tatmadaw soldiers are going beyond the limited areas. If the KNU soldiers are not patient, the fighting can happen. The Tatmadaw are giving excuses, like entering into the villages for medication and treatment, with their weapons. They also go beyond the limited areas and roads. So there are some times they meet with the KNU soldiers. However, the KNU soldiers avoid them. Otherwise, the fighting can happen if the KNU soldiers don't avoid them.

So the fighting doesn't happen.

Yes, the local people also tell the KNU soldiers to avoid the Tatmadaw soldiers to prevent the fighting.

Do you think the NCA can be broken if the KNU soldiers fight them when they meet?

Yes, of course. They want NCA to break.

Who wants that?

The Tatmadaw soldiers want the NCA to break. They don't have income since the NCA was signed and when local authorities rule the area. Before, they just used to order the local people. That's what I think.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We usually use the KNU justice system. We first solve it with the local leaders and authorities from the village and the area. If we cannot solve it at the local level, we go to solve it with the KNU leaders.

Do you trust the KNU justice system?

Yes, Everything is done with the KNU justice system.

How?

There are no negative consequences after the court. It means that we don't need to go twice.

How about the Myanmar government justice system?

No one wants to go to the Myanmar government justice system because they have many appointments after you go once. They don't finish cases directly and the local people here

cannot speak fluent Burmese so they don't want to go.

What should the KNU and Myanmar government do to improve the peace process and justice system?

Even though they talk about the NCA, it is just like a trick. If we look carefully, it is just like frying the sturgeon [fish] with their own fat.

Why is it like frying the sturgeon with their own fat?

They usually try to turn the villagers against each other. We usually hear they praise this bridge and they criticize the other bridge.

Do you want to add something I haven't asked you?

We guess in 2020 the Tatmadaw is going to take power. If they take power, the fighting can happen again. At the same time, they strengthen their military camps, and we see that they don't retreat from the areas. Just like in the federal discussion, the army should stay in its own territory. So they should go back to their places and the KNU soldiers will stay in their areas. The Karen soldiers have to protect their people. Now the Tatmadaw military are going to stay in the Karen people areas, Karen villages and forests. So we don't trust them. They break the NCA in so many ways but there are no punishments.

Thank you so much for your time and interview. Can you please give us permission to use this information?

Yes, I can.

Can I take your photos for the record but we will consider for your security first?

Yes, if there was camera in the past when we were abused by the Tatmadaw military, it would have been be great.

Can I take now?

Yes, you can.

Source #12

Source doc #	Source # 12
Log #	19-6-A6-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Naw Gi--- (female, 51), Gj--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have three children.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is 25 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 18 years old.

What is your occupation?

We mainly work in our plantation.

Do you have any other responsibilities here?

Yes. I work as health worker.

Have you experienced conflict?

Currently, there's no conflict. But before the NCA, we faced various difficulties during the fighting period. After the NCA, we came to feel that the situation was getting better.

Have you experienced fighting in your village? Were you displaced?

Before the NCA, there was fighting frequently in our village. Living between the KNU and Tatmadaw soldiers, we suffered a lot. We were accused for living in between them.

Were there killings committed by the Tatmadaw or KNU?

No. It is because our village is located beside the road.

How about in neighbouring villages? Was there killing there?

Yes. The villagers would get beaten by the Tatmadaw whenever the Tatmadaw soldiers asked them where KNU soldiers were. Most of the villagers there were uneducated so they did not have the [Burmese] language skills to answer the Tatmadaw soldiers' questions. [...] After that, misunderstandings happened between the Tatmadaw soldiers and the villagers. The villagers were beaten as they couldn't answer questions the Tatmadaw soldiers asked them.

When did it take place?

It happened in 1997, 1998.

How did villagers protect themselves?

Villagers and even the village administrator could not protect them. That's why we just suffered.

Were villagers imprisoned after they were beaten?

No.

Do you feel there is peace in your village?

After the NCA, we could travel and live more independently than before. However, the Tatmadaw soldiers' militarization was increasing. That's made the local population have fears and lack of trust for the peace process.

Who is conducting military activities?

The Tatmadaw soldiers are expanding their military activities. As for the KNU, we have never seen them doing that.

Do you think the increase in Tatmadaw military activities could hurt the peace process?

Yes. Especially for the civilians who are residing in the mountain areas and want to live peacefully. That's what they long for.

What do you think is the status of the peace process currently?

After the preliminary cease fire in 2012 and through until the year 2018, we could live and work independently. However, we still have doubts about the peace process.

What should the Tatmadaw and KNU do to achieve sustainable peace in the country?

As an indigenous people, we just want to live peacefully on our own. We don't want to live among the armed groups. The fighting could happen anytime if the Tatmadaw and KNU do not have an understanding with each other. That's why we don't believe in the peace process.

Have you noticed how many vehicles the Tatmadaw uses to transport rations to its army camp?

I don't know many vehicles they use to transport rations. They even transport rations at night time with vehicles and also with horses. Local villagers who stay beside the road are always aware of their transportation activities.

How are the activities of the Tatmadaw different before and after the NCA?

Before, when the Tatmadaw transported rations, it was blocked by the KNU so that they couldn't carry as much as they want. Now, they transport rations on their own free from any inspection. That's why we don't know what's inside the vehicles. It makes villagers worry. Villagers are suspicious of the rationale behind storing rations. We think, who they are going to fight? Actually, the places where the Tatmadaw is located are not urban areas. But they are places where local people cultivate plantations. We don't want the Tatmadaw army base in our place. Isn't it convenient for them to live in their own place? In my opinion, the Tatmadaw should grant the KNU permission to protect against potential conflict from the border side. That's what we want.

Was there road construction or improvement when they transported rations?

Yes. Currently, the situation is getting worse in 2019. There is road construction in Bu Sa Kee. On one hand, the road construction is good for the villagers for travelling and doing business but on the other hand, we don't know their intention for the road construction. In 2019, they widened the road 15 feet on both sides where our rubber trees are planted. But if they widened the road 15 feet only on one side, it would harm only one landowner. They should act in a more just way.

Who constructed the road? Was it the government, a company, or Tatmadaw soldiers?

The road construction was conducted by a company.

Was there compensation for damaged property?

We don't know whom should we call, mom or dad. We could only fold our hands looking at our damaged lands. We didn't know whom to report it to. That's really harmful for us because we took seven or eight years to grow a rubber tree before that rubber tree is old enough to tap its sap. We would like to know who is going to solve this problem.

Did you report about your land damage to the KNU?

No. It is because we didn't know to whom we should report.

Do you think this could hurt the peace process?

The Tatmadaw soldiers told the KNU to accept their road construction. They also told us the road would provide opportunities for us. In addition, they told us that the road could be easily destroyed anytime if people don't want it. It's difficult to construct a road.

How far will the road construction reach?

It will reach as far as Mile 22. That's what we heard. We don't know exactly.

Are they constructing the road now?

Yes. It has reached the Mile 20 village area.

What should the Tatmadaw do to achieve sustainable peace in the country?

We believe that the Tatmadaw should go back to their place [back to barracks].

What should the KNU do to achieve sustainable peace?

Every ethnicity has the right to protect their own people. The KNU has a responsibility to protect their people. Even though the ethnicities work to protect their people, we heard that rape cases happen a lot. The KNU should stand firmly right by its people's side. That's my affirmation.

What responsibility does the KNU have now?

The KNU should retain arms to protect their ethnic brothers and sisters. It is really necessary to have arms to protect against insults or intimidation that could come from the other people. Nowadays, it's not the time to use sticks or knives, so the KNU should have weapons in their hands.

What responsibility does the government have now?

The government should grant permission to the KNU to retain arms the same way that they [government] are storing ammunition.

Which justice system do you practice in your village? Is it KNU or Myanmar government justice system?

We practice the KNU justice system in our village because the KNU have more understanding of us than the Myanmar government in the judiciary. If we practice the Myanmar government justice system, we will have to give a lot of time as well as money of which we are not capable.

Have you experienced bribery in the Myanmar government justice system?

Even though they came and talked about ways to report to them, it cost us money when we went there. We felt that we could only win in court if we have enough money.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

We really thank both government sides that we can live in a stable situation since the ceasefire. I do believe that there will be a peace that the civilians are longing for if they have understanding and forgiveness toward one another. That's what I would like to say.

Do you have anything else you want to say about the peace process?

Our places are green because of the protection by our KNU leaders. Places like Kachin have

bald mountains now. We really would like to thank our KNU leaders for this.

Do you allow us to use the information you have provided?

Yes.

Source #13

Source doc #	Source # 13
Log #	18-117-A5-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Jf--- (male, 42), Jg--- village, Thaw T’Ku village tract, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have three children.

Have you experienced conflict before the ceasefire?

Yes, we have experienced lots of conflicts before [the ceasefire] because we lived in a mixed-control area. Whenever fighting happened between the KNLA and the Tatmadaw, we were blamed for that.

Do you still remember one of the experiences you have been through?

When we were in Jh--- village, fighting broke out and Tatmadaw soldiers got injured. When they came back, they tortured us by calling everyone they saw and making them stay in the hot sun. They ordered men to lie down on the road and they stepped on them.

Do you still remember the year?

I think it was around 1998 or 1999. It happened like this: a Tatmadaw military trainer was shot dead and his gun was taken by the KNLA. The rest of the soldiers from that group were angry, so they came and tortured us.

Do you know the number of that Tatmadaw battalion?

No. I do not know. We only knew [their battalion number] when they stayed in their army camp. When they came to the village, we did not know [their battalion number] because they did not let us know. We also dared not ask their names and where they were based. We had to turn our

faces to the other side as soon as we saw them, so we did not know where they were from.

Who are the villagers that were called by Tatmadaw soldiers and stepped on?

I cannot remember because everyone [...] at that time was called to lie down. Some people ran away and escaped, but those who could not run were called. I was included too.

How many kinds of human rights violations have you been through?

There was an election in 1990. The NLD won that election, but the Tatmadaw seized power. After that, the human rights violations continued. In the past, when we went to work on our field, we had to bring a recommendation letter with us. We could not go anywhere without bringing the letter with us. We had to get a permission letter to be able to sleep in our field. We were allowed to carry food for two or three days only. We had to pay 1,500 kyats, 2,000 kyats or even 2,500 kyats for a permission letter. When we came back to the village, they threatened us by asking: "Did you see our enemy – KNLA soldiers – when you were in your field?" We replied that we did not see any KNLA soldiers, and they said that we were lying to them. They even told us: "Those KNLA soldiers are your brothers, right? We got news that they were there." Some people who were afraid of them were asked to give chickens or to treat the Tatmadaw with alcohol. The villagers had to do everything for them. We had to cut bamboo for them and help them fence the army camp. At night time, we had to be guards and perform sentry duty. They came to check whether we were [working] properly or not. When they caught us sleeping, they demanded we give them chickens, and they gave us many different punishments. For fencing their army camp, they just forced us to do it. We dared not refuse.

What was the worst experience you faced during the conflict period?

The worst experience was when the Tatmadaw and the KNLA fought each other. When the fighting broke out, we did not know what to do or where to flee. That was the worst experience we faced. Most of the time, we fled when the fighting broke out. In the past, around 1988 or later, Tatmadaw soldiers went to a village that is located next to my village and they shot a person with cows and pigs. When something like that happened, we dared not pay attention to it. We would just flee for our safety.

Were you or your family displaced?

We were displaced so many times. It caused livelihood difficulties for our family. KNU leaders used to avoid that kind of situation when fighting broke out. We left our house and fled to other places. When the situation got better, we came back to live in our house.

Where did you flee to?

We fled to houses that had never been visited and messed up by Tatmadaw soldiers. We also had to flee when the KNLA and the DKBA fought each other.

What did you witness during the conflict period?

Commander Maung Ni was killed by the KNLA because he was conducting illegal logging activities. His soldiers asked representatives from both the KNU and the Myanmar government to meet with them. At that time, my father was a Myanmar government village head so he was also included. I cannot forget that incident. We really had a hard time experiencing that.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

It affected our livelihood a lot. We could not do anything since we always had to flee. We always thought about when we would be caught by the Tatmadaw, and what they would do to us when

they catch us. We could not sleep well. However, since we ran away with our family and relatives, we just thought that if we suffer, we would suffer together and if we face something, we would face it together. By thinking that way, we felt a little bit better and relieved.

Have you ever fled to a refugee camp?

No. Some people went and stayed there. The Tatmadaw always collected money from us so it really affected our livelihood.

Since you experienced human rights violations, how do they continue to affect your life?

We could not work properly at that time so we have been facing livelihood difficulties until now.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

Nothing has been resolved. We always had to follow what they said. In the past, they only used bribery to solve the problems. We have never been to court.

Who were the main perpetrators of human rights violations?

The Tatmadaw, obviously. We have never been abused by the KNLA. When the Tatmadaw committed human rights violations against the villagers, they never allowed us to go to court. They just said that they would give us this and that to bury the case. We could not oppose what they said.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

No. If we talk about justice, for example, when something happens, both the perpetrator and the victim should be sent to court. The perpetrator should sign [a paper] and admit that he has done something wrong. After that, the victim should also not hold grudges against the perpetrator. They should reach an agreement. But I have never seen that kind of thing.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I have never heard that they had been punished. They just talked among themselves. Our village leaders did their best to protect us from trouble.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses in order to have justice?

I think perpetrators of human rights abuses should be sent to court and the court will have to make a decision about justice. I just want that. We do not want any money to solve problems. We just want them to be punished according to the law. In the past, one of the reasons we could not go to court was because we did not have any money. We also did not know how many steps we would have had to go through to [take our case] to the court. We had no idea about what we should do because, after the Tatmadaw seized power, they declared that no civilian should be engaged in politics. When you do not understand about politics, there is no way to even know where the court is located. We also did not know what the law was. Therefore, in order to have justice, we have to solve the case in a court.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause is the political conflict in Myanmar, because the conflict was not solved through political dialogue but through war. The consequences [of that approach] were human rights violations. If they keep solving the problems like this, human rights violations will always continue. That's how I understand it.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

What I know about the ceasefire is that they first negotiated with their mouths. Later, they reached an agreement on paper. I also understand that they decided to solve the problems through political dialogue.

What do you think about it?

I think it is good. They can only solve the conflict through political dialogue if they conclude such ceasefires.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

As a civilian, I think that the ceasefire is relevant to us. If there is peace in the entire country, civilians will live in peace too. We also want peace and we hope that our leaders will do their best for us.

What do you expect from this peace process?

I expect to get prosperity. We want to travel and work freely.

Do you think that there is peace in your village now?

We cannot say that there is peace in our village now because this is just the beginning. Some Tatmadaw soldiers still live in Karen state. If possible, we do not want any of them to live in Karen areas. Unless all of them leave our place, we cannot say that there is peace.

How has the peace process affected your life?

We hope that the peace process will have a positive impact on our life. We know that the Tatmadaw or the Myanmar government do not want to give opportunities to ethnic minorities. They open a way for us and on the other hand they give us trouble. We just worry. Can they give us true freedom and opportunities?

Do you feel safe now?

No. But it is easier to travel.

Has your livelihood improved?

It is easier to work now. We also do not see anything they forbid us to do when it comes to our livelihood. We are not interrogated anymore when we carry things with us.

What does peace mean to you?

I understand that peace is when only one government is ruling a country. For example, there are a lot of ethnic groups in Myanmar and there should be a time for them to rule the country. Every ethnic group should be involved in the government. As we heard in the news, the Myanmar government said that it will form a single army in Myanmar. That single army would include different ethnic groups. If they create it, they will have to make sure that every ethnic group has equal rights, and that they are led by their own leaders. If they cannot do like that, we cannot say that we have peace. The current situation is actually controlled by the NCA, but the NCA is at a deadlock.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to achieving sustainable peace?

The biggest barrier to achieving sustainable peace is the Tatmadaw. The NLD does not have any authority to address the human rights violations committed by the Tatmadaw. The

Tatmadaw took the power when it comes to home affairs. If they decide that they want a genuine and sustainable peace, they must go back to the Panglong Agreement. They should start from there. Everyone has equal rights. They should try and work together for 5 or 10 years and if it does not work, they can split. But the Tatmadaw already got rid of that policy because they do not accept it.

If you could change one thing in this process, what would it be?

It would be changing the system of government. The government should rule the country as the representative of the civilians. The Tatmadaw should only take part in the protection of civilians.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and the KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would just like to say that the fighting between the Tatmadaw and the KNU results in bloodshed, deaths and injuries. It is not good. In order to solve the political conflict at the negotiating table, both groups should be flexible. If one group is edgy, the other group should be humble. I mean that they should understand each other if they really want to build peace. They should also get rid of all the bad feelings or experiences from the past. Until then, they should talk to each other peacefully and agree with each other. [...]

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar? Who would be responsible for that?

I see that the current government (NLD) would like to do its best when it comes to ruling the country, but the Tatmadaw would also like to do what it wants. Unless the Tatmadaw changes its mind to build peace, the country will never be peaceful. So, the main responsibility lies in the Tatmadaw's hands.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I think that, as civilians, we try our best not to cause any conflict between the KNU and the Myanmar government because we are living in a mixed-control area. We do not want conflict to happen because of us.

The next topic is “human rights abuses after the signing of the NCA”. What are the main human rights challenges in your community?

Right now, I do not see any human rights challenges in my community, but the Tatmadaw soldiers think that we do not know anything because we live in the jungle. The Tatmadaw knows about the NCA and they should follow its provisions.

What are the current human rights challenges faced by women?

There are none in our community right now.

What about human rights challenges faced by minorities?

We do not have many [challenges]. We try our best to live in harmony with other ethnic groups here. We just face a little difficulty: when we were away from our home because of the fighting, other people came and occupied our lands. We do not know how we could get our lands back. They are Bamar people who came and worked on our farmlands. If we tell them directly, they will think that we are discriminating against them. We fear that it will cause conflict between us, so we do not tell them.

The next topic is “justice and accountability”. What does justice mean to you?

As I understand it, justice is when people who have power must protect powerless people.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it the Myanmar government or the KNU justice system?

I think that we mostly use the KNU justice system in our village. We cannot fully trust the Myanmar government justice system yet. If anything happens, we just rely on the KNU justice system. They also help us a lot. We do not have many relations with the Myanmar government justice system.

Do you trust the KNU justice system?

We trust the KNU justice system [...] but we do not know if its mid-level staff is honest or not.

Do you feel that it is fair?

Yes, I feel that it is fair.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

We just see that it happened among the Myanmar government village leaders. We do not see any huge corruption and bribery [cases] now. In the past, if the village or village tract leaders did not follow the written rules, they were kicked out of the village and were killed.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparation or justice do you want?

I want the authorities to take their responsibilities and solve the cases in a court. They should also follow the law and decide fairly. I want something like that. But I do not know if there is corruption or bribery when they process the cases. If they keep accepting bribes or processing cases unfairly, the perpetrators will not hesitate to commit crimes again and again.

What do you think is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

The best way is the rule of law.

What about the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

I think it has to do with following NCA procedures and act according to its provisions.

Source #14

Source doc #	Source # 14
Log #	18-125-A3-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Tanintharyi Township, Mergui-Tavoy district
Full Text	

Mergui-Tavoy Interview, Naw Jab--- (female, 26), Jac--- village, Eastern Tavoy area, Tanintharyi Tonwship, Mergui-Tavoy district. (December 2018)

Could you tell me about your experience in conflict?

Yes, many people experienced conflict and I did too. Such experience always stay in our mind as we cannot forget it. Especially, our experience associated with the military. Therefore, whenever we see soldiers, we visualize our past experience. Not because we always think about it. I even tried to forget such experience, but it exists in my mind and reminds me of what has happened whenever I see the soldiers.

Could you tell me about what has happened, including the time and date, as you remember?

There were a lot of armed conflicts in our community as well as other communities nearby. We have seen some tough experiences of our neighbours and we also experienced them ourselves. In D--- village, one day, some Tatmadaw soldiers attempted to rape my grandmother Naw E---'s daughter when she was coming from the betel nut plantations. She rescued her daughter by telling her to run away and she took the risk [of being raped by the Tatmadaw herself instead]. Then, the Tatmadaw soldiers brutally raped her and threw her into a well. I do not remember the month exactly but I guess it was in January 2000 because it was during the cold season.

What are the worst experiences that you have been through during conflicts?

In 2000, my uncle was a KNLA soldier. One day, [the Tatmadaw] came into my house and arrested my grandmother [and mother] to torture them in order to give information about my uncle who is a KNLA soldier. The soldiers took them for questioning, but my mother was soon released. They said, they will arrest only the mother [of KNLA soldier] but the sister will be arrested if the mother is not present. They detained my grandmother and tortured her. They asked when my uncle would come back and where he was hiding. They tortured her and cut her neck before releasing her. Fortunately, she did not die. I remember a lot because I was already eight at the time. The soldiers [then] came back into our house and shot her with a gun, punched her and kicked her. I was with my grandmother when it happened. When I saw the soldier torturing her, I held his leg tightly to [try to] make him stop. Then, he kicked me off him and I fell off the house onto some water containers. I did not break my arms or legs, but my tooth. It was the worst experience I ever faced.

Who are the Pyithu Sit [militia] you mentioned. Are they with the Tatmadaw or the Karen National Liberation Army?

They cooperated with the Tatmadaw. None of the KNLA soldiers dared to stay in the village at that time.

Do you want to talk about any event that you experienced during the conflict period?

On the day when the soldiers tortured my grandma, they forced her to follow them to the Tatmadaw base, but she refused. The soldier pushed her down with his gun and told her that he would be back again with the Tatmadaw soldiers in the evening at 6PM to take her to the military camp. After the soldiers left, my grandma, grandpa and my youngest aunt ran from the village. They ran from the lake in the back of our house and crossed the Thai-Myanmar border to Htee Kler Hta village and hid there for a night. My grandma ran with severe injuries and blood on her body. On the next day, they continued fleeing and arrived at a refugee camp. My

grandma stayed in the refugee camp for a few years and has now resettled to a third country with the help of a relevant organisation.

What are the impacts on your livelihood because of conflict?

The livelihood impact is not only for me but also the whole community because we were in the same situation. However, our family and relatives had the worst experience in the village compare to others. After my grandma left, my mother was also afraid to stay because she is the eldest sister of my uncle [KNLA soldier]. The week after my grandma ran, the soldiers instantly arrested and released my mother. So we managed to run that week. During that time, there was no man in my house. My father always hiding [in the forest] to avoid being a Tatmadaw porter. My elder brother was only 12. Our family fled to our father's village called Jz---. My mother told us that we had to sell the four plots of lands that we owned and our house before leaving the village. That was all the property we had. We got 80,000 Kyat for four plots of lands and a house.

What was the ongoing consequence of displacement?

When we first arrived at Jz--- village, we did not have a house and no one allowed us to stay in their houses either. We had a relative's family there but their house was too small. My father's relatives are all Buddhist. They did not allow us to stay in their house because we are Christians. We were not so familiar with them because we had not met each other many times. So we stayed in the barn for two to three months. After that, my aunt invited us to stay in her house. At that time, I was eight and I attended Standard Two. My four siblings younger than me could attend school, but not my big brother. We struggled with challenges regarding shelter, access to education and food. We had to work as casual workers to earn for daily intakes. We used to work carrying water and cutting firewood for casual work.

How did the communities address the consequences of conflicts for the community and local people?

There was no solution to the consequences of conflict at that time.

Who are the people who committed human right abuse?

I have seen only Tatmadaw and some other people that I do not want to call out their name [betrayers of Karen people]. They have died already because the KNLA killed them. They are members of Pyithu Sit [militia] who sided with the Tatmadaw. For instance, they would stand for Tatmadaw in tax collection but not with the KNLA. Actually they are just spies for the Tatmadaw. That's why the KNLA killed them.

Was there any solution and accountability carried out for the human right abuses you have been through?

I have never seen a group of people or individual stand up for us and take accountability.

Has any victim of human right abuse obtained justice?

No.

Was there any penalty given to the perpetrator of the human right abuse?

There was no one to penalise the Tatmadaw who violated human rights.

How do you think these people should be punished?

During the incident, we really wanted to get revenge and attack them back. But now, I do not

want to be a part of violent abuse anymore. I do not even want to talk about it.

What would be the appropriate remedy and reparation for victims of human right abuse?

First, they need encouragement and counselling. Second, they need other support such as financial, access to education and health, and social well-being.

What was the root cause of conflict in your community?

The human rights abuses that we experienced in the past were caused by military actors, and particularly the Tatmadaw.

Do you know about the ceasefire process?

I see that the armed conflict radically reduced during the peace process. In addition, civilians have more freedom to participate in voting. Another significant change was the right to learn our mother language. In the dictatorship period, we could not learn our mother language, but after the peace process we have a chance to learn our language including our national song [of Kaw Thoo Lei].

How do you think the ceasefire process is relevant to you?

I think the ceasefire process related to me in this way. We do not have to flee from war and attacks anymore after the ceasefire. We also have the freedom to state our opinion. However, it is not really peaceful. Civilians do not have to flee from war anymore but they still have to flee from commercial development projects. Authorities take advantage of the “Peace process” whenever implementing development project. This really hurts the local community.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement?

I know it but I do not remember the date and I cannot explain about the NCA either.

What do you know about the NCA?

I think real peace is not just superficial. It has to be sincere. We cannot know if a person is happy or not by looking at their appearance. Similarly, having freedom to travel in the community/country does not mean there is a real peace. We need to make sure civilians have peace of mind during the peace process. Now we have to worry and be afraid of land confiscation, and we cannot predict when it will reach us. We worry about the consequences of development projects and large scale business.

What do you expect to see in the peace process?

We were pleased when our leaders [KNU] decided to negotiate in the peace process. However, I would like to suggest to our leaders to create their political dialogue from bottom up, which means considering for local people. I suggest not carrying out any project or agreement without considering the local community situation [first]. That way, the local community will obtain the benefit of the development project implemented in the peace process. When local communities face challenges because of development projects, our leaders must also stand for us and protect our rights.

What do you expect from the peace process?

I expect to fully enjoy our rights. In the past we had no freedom to enjoy the right to express our opinion. We also want community-based organisations such as KHRG to stand up for the rights of our community. It is also necessary to raise awareness about human rights to the local communities that do not know their rights yet.

Do you think there is already peace in your community? What are the positive and negative consequences of the peace process?

Regarding this, I want to explain that our village is located in Jaa--- area. There are altogether nine villages in the area. Unfortunately, our village was designated as being in a forestry area. We never heard about the forestry designation in the past. We fled from the war, but when we returned after the war it was gone if it was not confiscated [by arm groups]. Now, we stay in our land that we inherited from our previous generations, but we do not even have a right to own the land. Our lands are owned by the authorities. This is not the benefit of peace for the local community. Roads being constructed was a good thing and the right to raise awareness on social issues is also more flexible [not restricted by authorities]. The negative consequence is we do not have a right to own our lands.

Do you think you have safety and good livelihood conditions?

We cannot guarantee for our safety or our livelihood as long as there is no actual peace.

So what is your perspective on peace?

As I said, peace does not only refer to the appearance of peace. Actual peace is inside. The community should have a safe environment and freedom to travel around. Now, we hear that fighting is happening in different parts of the country. So, we do not trust the peace process and feel safe.

What are the barriers to making sustainable peace?

Trusting each other is the barrier [Not being faithful, violate the NCA code of conduct is the barrier] to build sustainable peace process.

What changes would you like to see and make in the future if you could?

I want to see and make our people improve in education and in every corner [of life]. If I were authorized, I would stand up and advocate for my people's struggles [with human rights violations].

How would you like to suggest the KNU and Myanmar government to improve the peace process?

I want to suggest to both governments to assess local situation and consult with civilians when developing the legal principles and laws because those are the fundamental things that we all should follow. Having agreement from the civilians would improve the peace process.

What are the main NCA violations in your local area?

Land confiscation is a violation of human rights as well as the peace process.

How do these violations impact your livelihood?

Land is our main property that we rely on for our livelihoods. We face an income shortage and a lack of food resources when our lands are confiscated.

How do these human rights violation impact the lives of women?

Women are the main group responsible for housekeeping. They control most of the household supplements such as cooking materials and foods. It impacts them directly when there is a financial shortage.

How do human rights violations impact religious and ethnic minorities?

The land confiscation, which is a proposed National Park in our local area, could cause damage to our lands and displacement. We could also lose our culture and religion because of such displacement.

As an ethnic or religious minority, how do you perceive that your rights are respected and recognised?

We have the right but even if the lawyer tries to help you the mistake is the mistake. [the answer is confusing and does not seem to answer the question.]

How do you understand the idea of justice?

I understand that doing something in the right and honest way means justice.

Which authorities are accountable for judgments in your local area?

It is the KNU who are accountable for judging criminal cases that happen in our local area.

How does the KNU handle the cases?

When a criminal case happens in the community, the information is reported to the KNU authorities. Then, they arrest the perpetrator and arrange the penalty.

How do you see the judgment system of the KNU?

According to what I saw, one of my friends killed his stepfather. The KNU arrested him and kept him for two years' detention. As he was still young, the KNU released him after two years of detention in order to continue his study. I see that this is a positive judgment. For the Myanmar government, they would arrest [someone] for at least six to seven years for this kind of crime. The perpetrator [young criminal] would lose many opportunities to learn and develop their new life with such a long detention.

Do you think the judgment of the KNU is justice?

Yes, I think it is.

Have you ever heard about corruption and bribery?

No, I have never known about that.

What are the barriers to accessing justice?

I think corruption and bribes are the main barriers to accessing justice.

For human rights abuses currently happening, what do you think is the appropriate reparation or compensation on such abuses?

Authorities should consult with the victims of human rights abuses to decide the appropriate reparations and compensation. For instance, in 2014, two years after the Preliminary Ceasefire Agreement was signed, a former Tatmadaw soldier raped two little girls who had been left alone. One girl was eight years old and the other girl was 12 years old. Their mother left them in the shelter [while she was at work]. These two girls were not given any compensation or counseling. The little girl [eight years old] does not know anything yet but the older one [12 years old girl] felt shame when she was told about this case [by neighbours]. These victims should be protected even when material compensation is not available. There should also be the laws to protect these kinds of victims.

How do you want such criminal case to be handled?

I suggest the authorities to follow the laws in arranging penalties. I would also suggest the authorities not to accept bribes and to avoid corruption in setting penalties.

Do you think reparation or compensation are appropriate for the remedy?

I do not think monetary compensation is the right remedy. It is important to punish the perpetrator according the laws. The judgment should not be associated with any forms of corruption.

Do you want the reparation such as asking for forgiveness for the human rights abuses you have faced?

I would not trust the perpetrators even if they asked for forgiveness because I believe that the cows that jump over the fences would do it again later. So, punishment is the appropriate thing.

How do you think the KNU and Myanmar government are responsible for justice?

Both of them are responsible to follow the laws.

What is the best solution to stop the human rights abuse?

There has to be transparency between the national government and civilians.

Source #15

Source doc #	Source # 15
Log #	19-10-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Fm--- (male, 47), Fn---village, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (January 2019)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Which village tract is P'Na Wah Plaw in?

It is in Thaw Ta Ku vlllage tract.

Do you have a family?

Yes, I have. There are six people.

How many children do you have?

I have four children.

How old is the youngest child?

The youngest child is 18 years old.

Have you experienced conflict?

Yes, in the past my grandfather was working in the revolution [worked as KNLA soldier]. So the Tatmadaw called us the rebels. Then, they drove us out to the west of the river. We had to stay there and then in Zc---. We had to stay in many other places. In 1992, we had to move to Zd--- and in 1999 to Zc--- again when the DKBA came to the area. In 2000, we had to go to Ze---. When we were in Zc---, we could stay and work safely. Then, we were told that the KNU called us to meet with us. Then, the three of us, Saw Zf---, Zg--- and I went to meet them. However, we found out that it was not the KNU; they were the DKBA. We were tricked and we knew the person who came to tell us. That person is still alive now. We went there but we did not think anything. When we arrived, they left already because they could not wait for us. After two days we came back, and Zg--- and Saw Zf--- were killed, and I had to flee again. Zi--- asked me to stay in Zd--- and I thought they might know the situation [something will happen]. So, I just went back to Zh--- and I thought he [Zi---] knew the situation. Since 2005 and 2006, I assumed responsibility as a village head [from KNU]. The Tatmadaw was going to kill me so I had to flee again. Then, I went to stay in Zj--- for two years. However, I could not stay there anymore so I went to stay in Zk---. I just got to come back here in 2015.

Do you know the battalion number that as was going to arrest you?

I forgot the Battalion number but the Battalion commander was Aung Tun Oo.

Was he the battalion commander or company commander?

He was the Battalion commander.

Where was his army camp?

I don't remember.

Were they from Mone or Tone Daw? Or were they just patrolling?

Yes, I thought they were just patrolling. We will know if we investigate it. At that time, the Tatmadaw arrested the people who the KNU had asked to be security guards. I told the village tract head in charge, Saw Fo---, that he cannot ask villagers to be security guards in Plaw Tu areas. Most of the people had bad experiences. It is because we have already experienced that since our grandparents' and parents' times. Our parents were always arrested and beaten. So I told him that we would just provide security and send the news [to KNU] secretly. But he replied, "No, you have to find villagers to serve as security guards". Then, we had to attend the meeting every two months. When I started working, I asked for a recommendation letter from the village head, elders, trustees and Union Solidarity and Development Party, and asked them to sign it for me. It was not what we wanted to do but we had to do it for the protection of our village. I just did it because I was assigned to do it. When Aung Tun Oo was looking for me, I had to hide and flee from him. Later, he arrested the KWO and security men. I did not know what to do and I thought that it would be a big problem for the villagers if I don't solve this problem with this recommendation letter. Therefore, I asked someone to send the letter to Aung Tun Oo. I told them if they don't send this letter to Aung Tun Oo, people who were arrested would be in a big trouble. Then, Aung Tun Oo was a little bit relieved.

Did he release the people whom he arrested?

Yes, he did.

Did he torture them?

No, he did not.

Were your parents tortured?

Yes, we were young at that time and it was when the four cuts strategy just started. We also had relatives who were working in the KNU. So if anything happened, my parents just had to deal with that. When the Tatmadaw heard about that, they arrested my parents and tortured them. My father was arrested and taken from Ler Doh [area] to Shaw [area]. My father said he was laid down on the road and all the soldiers from the [military] column stepped on him. He almost died. The recommendation from the village did not help them anymore either. In Zl---, one of my cousins went to stay there; he introduced us to Fp---'s father. He was the village head and he recommended my father. So my father was released but he got beaten badly. My mother also got beaten, [to the point that] her teeth fell out. Our experience was a bit hard to face and go through.

When did your parents die?

My parents died long time ago. I have had to live and grow up in other villages since I grew up and until before the ceasefire. I am so happy that I got to come back to stay in Fn--- village. I just got to come back to stay in my village after the situation became a little bit better and when the peace process started. I am so happy because of the ceasefire.

You had so many hard and bad experiences. What was the worst experience that you had?

Since I grew up, I have known that there are many of relatives who work with the KNU. I also thought of all my Karen leaders as my relatives and as my siblings. However, my own people misunderstood me and it was an experience that I could not forget. They thought that I was a Tatmadaw or a DKBA spy. Since I grew up I have never thought or planned to get someone in trouble or killed. Zm--- and Zn--- asked me whether I was a Tatmadaw or a DKBA spy. I had to flee from the Tatmadaw and I really worked hard for my people. But they misunderstood me so I asked them who told them about the rumor. I said that my brother was now working with the KNU. So try to discover about me well and then bring the one who sent this news to me. If I broke my promise to my people, then just kill me right now. Even in our own people the dishonest people were killing the honest people. I can never forget this because even I worked really hard but no one tries to see and recognize it. So it has no benefits for us. Therefore, I hope that our people will try to stand for the right things.

When did you face difficult situations and was your family displaced to other places?

The Tatmadaw always came and asked for me, so I could not stay at my house. I just built a new house but I had to go and stay at my cousin's garden in a hut, but it was not safe for me. My wife and children moved to Zk---. However, I joined them later. When I was in Zk---, two of my friends, Fq--- and Fr--- from Fs--- area were arrested by the Tatmadaw and told me that "You cannot stay here in Ler Doh Township anymore. It is because the Tatmadaw from the Division asked me about you. They gave me the electric shocks. At first, I said no to them and tried to deny them. But they kept giving me electric shocks and I could not bear it anymore. So I had to say yes he lives here. Therefore, my friends came back and told me not to stay here." They even came to tell me in Zk---. Therefore, I left Zk--- and went to another place.

Are they your cousin?

No, they are just my friends from Fs--- area. They are still alive now after the Tatmadaw military arrested them.

Why were they arrested by the Tatmadaw?

They were the village heads at that time.

Were they the KNU or Myanmar village heads?

They were the Myanmar government village heads. They were arrested maybe because of their villagers' cases.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of your community?

If we look at now, we came back to stay in our village but we don't have anything with us. We cannot even ask for wood to build a house. If we talk about it, then it will be like we are discriminating or verbally abusing our people. However, we don't but we tell the truth. We had to face discrimination from the Tatmadaw and we also had to try to overcome the problems. They [the KNU] don't help us and we cannot ask them for anything or help either. It is not just me, there are also other people who cannot ask them for help. Now they don't even know us anymore. I want my people not to live like that anymore. So it demotivating for the people who are willing to work for their people and country. I don't want to work anymore but now what we are doing now is to no avail. However, we want to work hard in our heart. Now, we have to come back and start our lives in the village from the beginning. The other villages around us did not need to displace so they have no problem. The villagers from around here don't need so many things because they did not need to displace. We are people who had to flee and displace because of the fighting. So, they should understand us and let us cut the wood and bamboos for us. We don't talk about money; we just need them to build houses. People want to visit and stay with us but they don't come because of the situation [living in a hut]. [The situation in] our village is not easy to improve.

Can we say that these are the consequences of the past conflicts?

Yes.

Did other villages have experiences similar to your village?

I think all the villages from Ler Doh Township had these experiences. The guerrillas came and killed people. Before the guerrillas, Battalion #351 entered the village, then tortured and arrested people from the village.

When did the guerrilla [warfare] start?

The guerrilla [warfare] started between 1999 and 2000. They entered [our village] in the same period as DKBA. It was relief that the DKBA was partially in control. However, the DKBA also tormented the villagers later on.

How have the local people in your village overcome this?

They tried to solve and overcome this but still there were some that they could not.

Did anyone find ways to liberate the village heads?

We knew that they were arrested and we tried. In 2000, we did not know that the DKBA and Tatmadaw were cooperating. In the past, the DKBA arrested Ft--- from Shwe town and he was killed. Then, Thara Zo--- and some people were also arrested but they were released. It was because the case was investigated.

Did you hear about corruption of witnesses for people who were arrested?

They were not easy to liberate without money.

Which government was the main perpetrator of human rights violations?

If we look at the past, most of the human rights violations were caused by the Myanmar government. However, both governments [including the KNU] committed human rights violations and killed people.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Have you heard anything about it?

No, none of the human rights abuses have been resolved.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

No, there was no justice. No one even listens to us when we are talking about past human rights abuses. Is that our fortune? We don't even know how to talk about it. So I just want to ask myself: 'Why was I born with this difficulty and misfortune?'

Did you hear whether the soldiers who committed human rights abuses got any punishment?

No, I didn't hear anything or see any punishment for the human rights abuses committed. Most of them just said: "We are wrong". After that, all the cases were forgotten. My grandfather Fu--- said that he was not god so he can't put the lives back to the dead bodies. However, the human rights abuses happened again and again. The policies changed a little bit in 2005 and 2006, so there was no more killing.

In your opinion, should the perpetrators be punished for committing human rights abuses?

Yes, of course. If they don't get punishment, we will get it [the punishment].

How should they be punished? Should they be brought to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they apologize? What do you think?

They should be brought to court for to be punishment and they should change the policies to stop these kinds of abuses from happening again.

So they should go to court to process the cases and the victims should get justice and the reparations.

We don't need to dream and talk about reparations. It is a long shot to get reparations. It is enough if they stop these kinds of human rights abuses from happening again.

What should be done for the victims? What should they get back?

I want to say this not because I want anything from them. They should come and see our situation. After they see our situation, they can decide whether they should help us or not. We just came back to our village after long-term displacement. We have nothing left now. When we ask for reparations from them, it is like we're participating in bribery. However, it is not like we are asking for a salary for what we have done. We have sacrificed ourselves with our hearts.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause is both governments that like to have conflicts between them.

Which government doesn't like to have peace?

The Myanmar government seems more aggressive and doesn't like peace.

I think it is just because of the conflicts and fighting.

They can only bribe and work when there are conflicts and fighting.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

I only got to read about the ceasefire in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. I don't about the rest.

What do you think about the ceasefire?

I think it is good and we hope it will be better.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

Before the ceasefire, we had to flee and displace. We just got to come back to our villages after the ceasefire. So it is a good and peaceful thing.

What do you know about the NCA and signing in the NCA?

It is just a recommendation and guarantee for the conflicts and fighting not to happen again. We hope the fighting won't happen again because it is not a joke. The representatives from other countries were also included in it and from our own country as well. We see that the ceasefire is good and the signing is an evidence of the NCA [it demonstrates that there will be consequences for violating the NCA].

What improvements would you like to see from the ceasefire in the future and what would you like to suggest?

I hope that the ceasefire will improve more in the future. I want to see both governments meeting and trying their best to improve with the UN.

Is there peace in the villages in our areas?

I think it is not fully peaceful yet but we hope it will be peaceful in the future.

What are the benefits that you can get from the ceasefire?

I think there will be benefits that we can get from the ceasefire. We can travel and work in freedom so I think it benefits us.

In your opinion, do you feel safe?

No, it is not fully safe yet.

What do you mean by not fully safe yet?

I mean both governments should take responsibility for us to be safer.

Has your livelihood improved?

If we have to compare [to before], the situation has improved a little bit.

What does peace mean to you? How do you define it?

It is hard for us to define peace because there is no peace yet. However, the situation is a little better, so we are happy. We hope it will be better and better.

What will be happen if the situation is peaceful?

If the situation is peaceful, they should live under rules. They should live in their own parts and rules. They should have their own laws for themselves.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

Even the Myanmar government said the ceasefire is for the entire country but they are still fighting with the Kachin ethnic group and also in Brigade #7 in Kaw Thoo Lei [Kayin State]. If the fighting is still on-going, it won't be easy to start peace. As the NCA applies to the whole country they should follow that word and stop fighting. If they don't follow and do as they promised, it is not easy to have peace.

What else? Is there only the fighting?

Yes, I think there will be many obstacles but I don't know all of them. Now, we are working in the villages and it is not easy to control and work with the villages. However, we don't have much knowledge about politics because we don't have many experiences. So, we cannot talk about it much and we don't know whether it is true or false when we talk about it [politics]. We get a chance to do this interview so we just try our best to talk about it.

What improvements would you like to change for the peace process if you have power?

If we have the power to change something for the peace process, we won't follow the way these governments are doing. We will try and do the best.

So you will change the policies and laws?

Yes, we will change.

Which governments would you like to report to for improvements related to the NCA?

We will report it to our government, the KNU, but we don't know we can or not and whether they will accept or not.

What kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I want to say that we have to follow and do what we said. We have to follow the rules and the laws. Even when they talk about the "Ceasefire", there is still gunfire. So, it is not safe for the local people and we cannot say that it is already peaceful. We cannot say that there will be no peace or that it will always be peaceful. We hope both governments will organize and meet each other and sign the NCA for peace. We want them to negotiate and after they have signed. Their actions should follow their word. If they said they will stop fighting, they have to stop and they should not let their soldiers patrol in the areas and strengthen the army camps and soldiers. They should stay in their own place. Finally, it should be the Karen ruling Karen state and Kachin ruling Kachin state. They should stay in their own place even if they want to ask for taxes. There will be no peace if the ethnic groups cannot rule themselves. So, I want to suggest that they stay in their own place and follow what they said.

Which government is more important for the peace process?

The Myanmar government is more important because they are the one who don't like peace and love conflict.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

As a civilian, we can do the best that we can. We can just work together with the local people and with both governments. We can tell them and make suggestions to improve the situation. We don't have full opportunity to work and change everything yet.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

We just saw from the administration. Administrator Zp--- from Zq--- [village] fined us 500,000 kyat for building a church and he threatened to put us in jail. But we did not think about it anymore.

Why?

He was fired because of these human rights violations.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

No, I don't hear about that.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

No, there are none.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities?

No. There is none.

There are Karen and Burmese people; do you see any discrimination?

No, there is none.

How do you understand the word "justice"? What does justice mean to you?

In my opinion, it will be good for us civilians if the government has love for us. Justice is good if there is justice.

How will you define it?

I define it as the best if there is justice. It is just like the symbol of "equal to".

What is the justice system like in your village? Do you feel that is fair?

I see that the Myanmar government justice system is not fair for the civilians' livelihood situation.

Do you think there is justice from both governments?

There is no justice from both governments yet.

Do you think that all the justice systems are true and fair?

No, not all justice systems are true.

Do you trust it?

No, I don't trust.

Do you feel that it is fair?

It is fair sometimes but sometimes not.

Have you heard about corruption in the justice system?

Yes, I have.

Are they from both governments?

Yes, they are. Corruption happens always and it doesn't disappear.

If you have experienced past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do

you want?

They have to improve it but we cannot tell them and do it for them.

Would you want to take a case to court or receive compensation or reparation? What do you want?

I think they should go to court.

Which government has the responsibility to give access to justice for human rights abuses?

I think the Myanmar government.

What is the best way to stop human right violations?

The best way is for both governments to meet and to give access to justice.

Do you want to add or suggest anything?

I hope our leaders will help those who had to displace in the past and arrange something for us to live in peace.

Thank you so much for answering all the questions.

Source #16

Source doc #	Source # 16
Log #	18-135-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Thaton Interview | Naw Ha--- (female, 60), Hb--- village, Bilin Township, Thaton District (December 2018)

Where do you live?

I live in Hc--- village. I was born in the area outside of the village around Noh K'Neh

Why do you live in Hb--- village?

I am feeling sad for my father because he could not go to school when he was young. He worked on logging for the family's income and he had to sing his name whenever he sold the logs in town. He could not write, so he had to pay someone to sign for him. At that time, the pen's ink was made with rice water, so my father bought two pens and when the first pen's ink was gone, then he took out the other one. He said [according to other people], one day he hoped his children would become educated people and they would not have to do a business-related job. They could be teachers and educate their children.

Do you live in Hb--- village?

Yes, I have been living here for five years. I am from Hd--- and I married my husband who is from Kler Lweh Htoo [Nyaunglebin] District. In 1978, I visited my husband's village and we worked for my husband's older brother Bo He--- who was the [KNLA] military trainer. The

recruited soldiers were very young.

What is your religion and ethnicity?

I am a Christian Karen.

What is your job now?

I am a farmer and I am also a teacher. I could finish planting paddy on my farm within one day and then I could teach the students [the other days].

What is your position?

I am a kindergarten school principal.

How long have you been a teacher?

I have been teaching here for five years.

Do you work for any other organisation?

I work for the Karen Women Organisation [KWO] as a Bilin Township KWO committee member.

How many family members do you have?

I have seven children.

What is your youngest child doing?

She/he is studying, but he/she has small brain [mental illness]. He/she can speak, but sometimes we cannot understand his/her speaking.

How many households in your village?

There are 88 households.

Have you experienced the conflict in the past? For example, in your job, fighting.

When my children were young, I could not fully work [as a teacher]. In Hb--- village, I saw almost all students brought their younger siblings with them to school, so I decided to found a kindergarten school here so the older students would be able to study freely. When I first arrived to this village, I asked support from the KWO for the expenses. I thought I would be able to return to my village after I got teachers for this school. I faced problems paying for kindergarten teachers, so I asked support from my children, my neighbours and villagers.

Local civilians faced many difficulties to support the school so they decided to transfer the school to the government education department in order to receive support from them. The government teachers said she could not rely on or trust anyone. She also complained about teaching the students: "I am teaching here just like I eat my own rice and look after the other people's cows [working without pay]." I replied to her, "Why did you tell the children like that?" She replied to me, "I talked about the money issue, not the children. I am here like my fortune; I don't know how long I have to suffer it." I understood that she did not work with heart and favour in teaching children, so I felt like working with other ethnic people is not like working with our own people. I was sad to hear her words. She returned to her village for a month and another government teacher replaced her. I asked that [replaced] teacher, "are you happy teaching here?" She replied me, "no, it is really hard to teach children here because they could not answer my questions about the lesson I taught them." Later on, that teacher left the school and migrated to a foreign country to earn more income. When I saw the absence of the teacher I

reported it to the education administrator and asked whether we could replace her or not. When my daughter phoned that teacher, she was angry that I took her absence case to the education administrator. She complained that villagers did not support her with food such as rice, onion, or oil. Villagers offered to provide rice for her, but she said she did not like to eat villagers' rice [she liked rice from the town]. She complained that she did not like to stay in Hb--- village. She was arguing and complaining a lot, so I replied her, the KNU did not ask villagers to support the school teacher. The government [Bilin] Education Department officer ordered the school committee to meet them, so I and one school committee members went to the office as representatives. When I arrived to the office, the education officer asked me, "Aren't you too busy to travel from your village to here? [The officer tries to make a point]" I replied, "Yes, I was." She told me, "What do you want to say?" I replied to her about that teacher's past situation where she gave the first prize to the student she liked rather than the actual winner. She accused my son of cheating school funding, complained about watching someone else's cows [teaching for free]..

The teacher [who argued a lot] said, the school in a rural area did not need school materials, so the school committee did not have to buy anything with the school's finances, and only [school] in the Town they needed to buy [school furniture]. She told me, "figure out three things that school needs." I told everyone there were no table, chair, drinking water pot and wardrobe for books. Actually, there were more than three needs for the school. My son told me, "Mom!! That teacher is oppressing us. If they [government teachers] keep doing things like this, I will resign [working for the school]." I asked my son to teach until the end of the year. That teacher told me to tell all Hb--- villagers to go to the office and sign their name, and then she would resign from the school. When I arrived at the [Bilin Township government Education Department office], the officer told me, "The teacher reported that villagers did not allow her to stay in the village." I replied, "Nobody told her. She just speaks on her own." The [government teacher] was absent from the school too often.

Villagers were very afraid [about going to office] and they worried that they would not receive support for the school anymore.

When was it that the Standard Four students could not sit the government exam, and how many [students was it]?

It was in 2015. I do not remember the number of the students. It was when the school was the civilians' school, and the school became a government school for only two years.

Did the school principal and committee voluntary change the school to being a government school?

Nobody forced them. They voluntarily did it because they worried for the future of the children's education [if not, the students could not continue their education in a government school].

What is the name of that teacher [who argued with the local civilians]?

Her name is Ma May Zin Oo. She taught for two years.

Were there any conflict between that teacher and villagers, and students?

She beat the students' head every day.

Why did she do that to the student? Students could not do the exercise...??

As is children's nature, they kept playing and talking even though the teachers ordered them not to play or to do something. The students could not do her exercises also, was one of the

reasons.

Whenever she talked to the students, she also kept beating them.

Did any study get major injury?

No, but last year, she was over beating the children, so the [middle] school principal told her not to beat the students' heads and that we [local teachers] never did it. She even asked the students to beat their friends' heads for her.

Did you experience conflict in the past? For example, fighting?

Yes, I did. When I was a child, my father registered his name to help the revolution. My five siblings [including her] were young at that time. One day a [KNLA] general gave my father a gun to hunt for him, and then when that general was arrested by the Tatmadaw, he told the Tatmadaw that my father was his follower. Therefore, the Tatmadaw arrested my father at Ta Au Ni village and tortured, bit, and punched him until his face welled in blotches and did not look like human face anymore. He was submerged in water until he almost died, and then the Tatmadaw took him out. They tortured my father the whole day and brought him to the house in the evening. When they arrived to my house, they closed my father's nose, put the gun's muzzle into my father's mouth, held my father's hands and legs, and then fed the water that we carried [from the river to the house] into his mouth until my father's stomach over full, and then they kicked out the water from his stomach.

Were they Tatmadaw?

Yes, they were. They tortured my father because they accused my father of working for the [Karen] revolution. Actually, my father was close to that KNLA general so he had discussed with that general that he wanted to cooperate in the revolution. But he had not started working for the revolution yet.

When did it happen and how did you know that Tatmadaw tortured your father?

[I know] It was 52 years ago because it happened when I was eight years old. The Tatmadaw used the water that I had carried [from the river]. My mother and all of my siblings watched the Tatmadaw torturing my father. The Tatmadaw pointed the guns at us and told us, "don't look here", but I love my father so I did not listen to them. They told me that they would shoot me and beat me to death, but I was not afraid of them anymore because he was my father and I loved him.

How did you feel when you saw the Tatmadaw torture your father?

I felt so much hate toward them. When the Tatmadaw arrested that [KNLA] general, the Tatmadaw came to Ta Au Nee village and ordered all villagers to gather in front of them. The Tatmadaw asked the [KNLA] general which villagers worked for the revolution and then he pointed into my father so the Tatmadaw brutally tortured my father the whole day. They put my father into a bamboo cage and asked my father, "What do you want to say?" My father replied, "I want to see my children." So they called my older daughter and I to meet him. When we arrived at my father, we sat beside my father and looked at him.

Did the Tatmadaw torture him until he died?

He was tortured the first day, and then second day they took him to Hi--- [village]. There were some people [villagers] spoke on his behalf that he was not in the revolution and he was just a farmer, so they released my father. At that time, my grandfather worked for religion [Buddhist], and he ran away because he thought that my father was arrested because of him.

When my father arrived at helipad my father told us that he would climb the coconut tree for coconuts for us. Later on, that [KNLA] general told the Tatmadaw, "He [my father] is my follower and he will work very hard work for revolution." Therefore, the Tatmadaw arrested my father and took him to Hi-- [village], Maw Kyaw Kaw area. The Tatmadaw ordered him to dig his own grave. He could not walk properly because he was brutally tortured by the Tatmadaw. When he dug his own grave, his hands were injured by the strings that Tatmadaw tied tight around him, swelled into bunches and his skin was burst from the torture. He could only dig his grave a little bit, and then the Tatmadaw shot him dead. They could not even cover his body well. Later on, my mother got my father's body and buried him in a proper grave.

Did you see his body?

No, only my grandmother and my mother went to my father's body.

Who were the people who got your father in trouble?

He was Bo Thay Nyo.

What was his job?

He was Karen, a [KNLA] general.

Did he still alive?

No, he died at the same time he was arrested.

Have you ever replayed the scene of your father's brutal torture and think about it?

Yes, I do. When you are full and are not thirsty anymore, you cannot drink water. Can you imagine when the Tatmadaw closed my father's nose and gradually poured water into my father's mouth? When they closed his mouth, he could not breathe, so he had to swallow the water that the Tatmadaw poured in until his stomach over full with water and then the Tatmadaw kicked out the water from his stomach. Thus, the water came out from his nose and his mouth until his ears were bleeding. If they tortured far from the house we could not see it, but they tortured him just beside the house in front of his wife and children. It was at the Ta Au Ni school, before that place was covered with bushes.

Did they torture your father near your house?

Yes. It was when the peace process was broken [when General Ne Win seized power in a military coup]. My grandfather said the Tatmadaw might burn down our house, so we had to flee to the Ta Au Ni grave compound.

How did you feel about the Tatmadaw torturing your father?

I felt so much hate toward them, and I wanted to get back at the Tatmadaw [the same way they had treated my father]. We [my family] are not satisfied with the Tatmadaw.

Did any human rights violations happen in your village? For example, killing, etc.

It was also happened to my family member, my younger brother and his friend. The Tatmadaw arrested them on their way back home from the farm. The Tatmadaw accused them of bringing food [to the KNLA] and put them under the ground in darkness for over one month. They could get out only to defecate. People went to the farm [they brought some rice or kitchen materials] and then could cook their meals when they were hungry.

When did it happen?

It was in 1980.

How old were you at that time?

I was over 20 years old.

What was your younger brother's name?

His name was Hpah Chi. He passed away. He had only one eye, because his other eye was blinded by an eyelid abscess. During the conflict period, he worked on our farm for our family's livelihood and we had to be careful of landmines and Tatmadaw whenever we travelled. When he was on his way from the farm, the Tatmadaw saw him and arrested him. He had to stay under the ground until he was almost dead. When he got out, he had jaundice.

What was the number of the battalion that tortured your brother?

I do not remember, but my mother knows it.

How long did the Tatmadaw keep your brother under the ground?

Over one month. They said they were under the ground just like they were in a trap. One night, a cobra fell onto the ground, but fortunately that cobra did not bite them.

Did any other villagers also face human rights violations like your brother?

There were a lot of people arrested and put under the ground with my brother, in total four people. The Tatmadaw suspected them [of communicating with the KNLA], but did not suspect the revolutionary workers.

Do you remember the date?

It was during the "Four Cuts" strategy, around 1980. Nobody could be witnesses that they were innocent because the Tatmadaw saw rice pots on their farms and they suspected the villagers [of having brought food to the KNLA].

Do any human rights abuses like this happen now?

Nowadays, it does not happen anymore. The Tatmadaw murdered my father before the Myanmar military "Four Cuts" strategy because at that time, I was only eight years old.

What was your father's name?

His name is Saw Hf---

Was your father a farmer?

Yes, he was just a simple farmer.

What was the worst human rights violation you experienced during the conflict period?

During the beginning of the Myanmar military "Four Cuts" strategy, my husband was a teacher and his older brother was the KNLA military training commander. Whenever they [KNLA] recruited soldiers, they brought the newly recruited soldiers to us. At that time, they brought 50 new recruited soldiers from many places. People [Tatmadaw] would not believe that we had that many children and the Tatmadaw constantly entered and exited the village. Therefore, they [50 new soldiers] had to sleep in the forest at night time and came to school in day time. At that time, the [KNLA] recruited soldiers were only between nine and 12 years old; [Saw] K'Ba Kyaw was only nine years old. My brother-in-law [KNLA military training commander] said, when the children went to the front line with him and the fighting happened, the children were making

noise, whistled [in happiness and exiting]. Therefore, he told us, "If you do not control those children we could die because of them. Take those children to school and teach them so they will be able to read and write for me." My husband was a teacher at Hg--- [village] and at that time, and the [KNU] education administrator was Ko Lay. My husband was paid only 600 kyat per month, so it was very hard for our family. We could only buy rice for our family and we had to make sesame paste by ourselves. Anyway, he was paid only 600 kyat, but he was happy to do his work as a teacher. [KNLA newly recruited] soldiers were with us so we always concerned and worried for our security. Other people saw to fault my husband worked for the military because he had to train the child [soldiers] for his brother. We had to look after them [child soldiers] with clothing and providing food to them.

Was your family displaced during the conflict period?

We did not permanently flee to other places, but we had to run into and sleep in the forest when the Tatmadaw got close to our village. The Tatmadaw questioned any villagers they arrested [about KNLA] during the beginning of the "Four Cuts" strategy. Therefore, we did not feel secure.

Later on, when Ma San Yin [a KNLA leader] entered into Aa Lin Win, [a troop of KNLA soldiers separated from the KNLA and cooperated with Tatmadaw/government] and my husband visited his sister [in another village], people gossiped that my husband was a [KNLA] general, so we could not return to Hd--- anymore. My husband uncle's had to write a recommendation letter that he was not a revolutionary and he was just a teacher. The people said my husband was a [KNLA] general in the position of vice-military training commander, so we could not return to Noh Hd--- anymore and we had to stay with my husband's sister.

During the conflict period, did you witness any of the human rights violations?

Which witnesses should I report? When children [child soldiers] stayed with us we saw many problems and insufficient food, but we were happy to work [for our people] and I want to talk about it. As I am a teacher here, villagers love me very much, but sometimes I am also depressed with my job. Villagers could not provide food for me, but this village is looked down upon by others so I want the children to access education.

Did your experiences impact your family's livelihood?

No. My children told me, "Mom, you can live happily and eat whatever you want, we will provide food for you because you are the only one [without father] with us. Don't go anywhere. Just stay at home. If you are away, we worry for your health." I replied them, "My father wants us [his children] to work for our children to access education." I also supported students who furthered their study in Thaton and Maung Pwin [Yangon] towns too.

During the conflict period, did you face livelihood problems?

There were problems and we always faced livelihood problems during the conflict period so we even had to eat rice soup due to the food shortage. We did not have enough rice so we mixed more bamboo shoot into the rice and we could survive like that year by year. We always dealt with the problems so there were no problems for us anymore.

How about the past human rights abuses such as Tatmadaw murdered your father and tortured your brother like this kind of abuses continued impacting your livelihoods and family?

No, none of those [torture and killing] happened to my family. After my father died, my mother studied medical training and then she worked as a health worker, so she had to stay at the

hospital. We grew up without parents with us, so we felt discouraged. My mother had to follow [KNLA] soldiers to Mawscow [area in Thaton], among the 20 soldiers. Mawscow was where the KNLA had to change places several times per night, especially after they received money [from the villagers or other KNLA troops]. When they patrolled in Mawscow one night, the Tatmadaw approached them and attacked them; shelling mortars and shooting them so there were five soldiers dead out of 20. My mother's leg was hit with a bullet, and the bullet stuck in her leg until now. We were sad when our mother got injured.

When did it happen?

It was in 1979.

Who attacked them [KNLA]?

They were Pwi Thu Sit [militia] including Tatmadaw soldiers. It happened in fighting in Th'Ro Wah area. My mom said it was a hard situation when she joined the revolution as a health worker because if men crossed the river with the water level at their waists, for her the water level was at her neck and she had to defecate in the water. She just had to follow the other soldiers like that because she was short [it was harder for her]. She was the only woman among the men [soldiers], so it was hard for her and we also worried for her [security and health].

Is your mother still alive?

Yes, she is. She is over 80 years old now. She worked for the revolution together with [KNLA general] Bo Ei Tha and Thara Aong Sein who passed away.

Is the bullet still inside her leg?

Yes, it is. I told her to get surgery, but she said at the beginning she did not realise that the bullet hit her [leg] and she still swam across the deep river [escaped from the Tatmadaw attack]. The Tatmadaw attacked them early in the morning so she had to run into the river. She saw a lot of her blood in the water and she thought that leeches were biting her. When she arrived at the river side, she was dizzy that she fell over.

Did any conflict happen in your community?

Another family member also faced it. He was my father's brother in law. He was shot in his head by a [unknown] soldier during the fighting, so he was died. We were sad. One of my nephews was shot by [an unknown soldier] when on his way back home from the farm he met the fighting in Kyone Waing village. The bullet hit his leg and his leg was broken.

When did it happen?

It was during "Four Cuts" strategy.

What were the villagers' agency strategies when they faced human rights violations?

Whoever faced [human rights violations], they had to face all [alone]. We could not help or even speak for each other.

Did people do anything to resolve the human rights violations?

No, we did nothing. We could not dare to speak on behalf of one another.

Who committed those human rights violations?

They were [Myanmar] government people, military. Like my father's brother-in-law died because of fighting. A drunken man whose wife passed away was sad, so he fired the gun, the bullet hit

my niece's vagina, and now she resettled to Australia. She is the sister of my nephew, and her leg was broken by a bullet while he was carrying her on the house ladder. My mother said her injury was major bleeding. The amount of blood was more than one small can, so she turned pale. My mother said the local hospital could not treat her injury anymore. Fortunately, she was rehabilitated by the local health worker's medical treatment.

Were these all caused by armed actors?

Yes.

Have any of these human rights abuses been resolved for justice?

No, never. Actually, the drunken [KNLA] soldier who fired the gun and hit the girl should pay money for the medical fee as compensation. At that time, we did not dare to say anything. If this kind of abuse happens now, we dare to speak out [ask for compensation].

When did it happen?

It happened around the end of the "Four Cuts" strategy.

Why did his wife pass away?

She was sick. At that time, when the Karen [KNLA] were drunk and they did not agree with something spoken, they fired guns and nobody dared to speak against them anymore.

Due to the lack of investigation for justice, do the victims access to justice?

No, never.

Have you even seen the perpetrators being punished?

No, never.

Were any perpetrators prosecuted for their recent abuses?

We [villagers] just heard that [people who commit] the drug, like opium, abuses were arrested during this raining season, but we did not see it with our eyes.

What do you think should happen to the perpetrators of human rights violations?

Personally, I want the perpetrators to be punished as severely as the victims suffered in order to learn from their mistakes and realize that "aww it [violation] hurts" so that they will never repeat the abuse again. If they are punished, it should be with a prison sentence of many years.

Do you think the perpetrators go to court?

Yes, they should. The simple mistakes are fine not to go to the court. From our situation, the human rights violations and abuses happened in large numbers in our community, so they should indict the perpetrators in court so that they learn from the punishment and never repeat the abuses [to reduce human rights violations in the future]. I want the perpetrator to regret what they had done to the victims and [as an example] for other people to not commit the same mistakes.

If you are a victim, what do you want the most from the perpetrators?

I want them to be punished.

How do you want them to be punished?

There is law for it [punishing perpetrators] in the court system. If the abuses are not serious, the

punishment will be low and if the abuses are major, the punishment will be high, so I cannot limit it [the punishment for the perpetrators].

What kind of vow do you want the perpetrators to make for you?

I want them to vow not to repeat those kinds of actions [human rights abuses] again in the future.

What kind support should be provided to the human rights violation victims from the conflict period?

People should provide medical healthcare services and nutritional food supply for them. If they do so then we will be happy.

Why do you think human rights abuses happen in your area? For example, killing, land confiscation...

I think it is because of the pride of people [authorities]. They hold the power and said they could do whatever they wanted, and nobody could stop them and all people [civilians] were under their control.

Do you know about the ceasefire?

Yes, I know it from the leaders [KNU]. They said they consider the suffering of the civilians so they joined the ceasefire.

What do you think about the ceasefire [or peace] process?

In my opinion, it is good for [reducing] the suffering of the civilians. On the other hand, we [still] cannot gain the freedom of livelihood, so it is not good.

What do you mean rights to live in freedom?

This part is not good because we already understand the heart [habit] of the Burmese [Tatmadaw/Government]. The first time, they said they would build peace, but they processed it [peace building] in a short period of time and then they betrayed us [the ethnic armed organisations]. At the beginning of the meeting, they agreed to equality [in all departments], but finally they sought to defeat Karen ethnic people. They did not keep their promise because they thought they could be violent and make the Karen people lose [surrender the battle in front of them]. These ideas are in their heart [head] so they continue doing it [committing human rights violations and attacking ethnic people]. Now, it is during the peace process period and [KNU Bilin] Township Administrator who is my uncle and other leaders tell villagers about the peace process. [Bilin Township] KWO chairman Hpee Lay Htoe asked me, "How do you think about the current peace process?" I understand that whenever the Burmese [government/Tatmadaw] asks for the local population number, it is to access funding [from foreign countries].

How did they ask for the local population number?

They asked the local population for the ASEAN's [Association of Southeast Asia Nations] cooperation [in investment], and if they have a large population, they would receive support from foreign countries.

Do you think the current peace process is good or not?

I think the peace process is good for the local civilians [because they can live in peace]. On the other hand, it is not good because we [still] ask for freedom for the country [Karen State] because they [Myanmar government and military] do not keep their promises. They just want to

win [defeat ethnic organisations] so they proposed the peace process [to make EAOs lose or surrender].

Do you have any concerns during the peace process?

No, I have no concerns because we enjoy freedom of movement.

Does the peace process relate to you?

No, the peace process does not relate to me [I do not participate in the peace process]. On the other hand, it relates to us because during the peace process, the government [workers or Tatmadaw] take the opportunity to learn [spying] about us and our people [administrations of KNU] so if they attack us again, there will be no place to live [we will be stateless].

Do you know about the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]?

I heard about it, but not in detail.

What do you know about the NCA?

I know that they [armed actors] will not recruit soldiers, they will not fight against each other and they will be based in their own territory. They just said so, but not in practice they do not follow the rules because they [Tatmadaw] are still based in Karen state.

What do you expect from the NCA?

From the peace process, I want to live in my own country with my own nation [for Karen people]. Our forefathers found the country [Karen State] and had been living for a long time, and they planted many things in the country, so we desire to get and live in our country. I want my nation [Karen people] to be able to live in freedom, and then they will know their language and their culture.

What do you expect from the peace process?

I want real and genuine peace, no more fighting and all my people to be able to live in freedom. We will not try to defeat Burma ethnic people, we just want them to live in their region and we will live in our area in peace. We want to live in peace and freedom in working for our livelihoods. We do not want to live under them [Tatmadaw/government] and follow their desires. We would be satisfied if we could live as we desire like this.

Do you think there is total peace in your area?

No, not yet. Because the Tatmadaw said, there must be only one military and no other armed groups should be allowed [in the country]. When there is only one military, there will be only the Tatmadaw military, and no other ethnic army like Kachin, Kayin, Kayah. Ethnic armed groups will not be allowed [to hold arms] and we will have to live under their [Tatmadaw] control. Therefore, we cannot not agree with it because we feel uneasy, distrustful, dissatisfied and unhappy with our future.

Do you have anything else?

No.

Does the peace process benefit you?

Yes, it does because I can travel freely. I see the problem that the young children had to follow their older siblings to the school when their parents went to farm, so I came here and set up the nursery school with no security concern. I can work on it freely and people [villagers and

authorities] welcome me well.

Are there any negative consequences of NCA that impact you?

The problems I faced are when I cooperated with government workers is they misunderstood and blamed us [local staff]. They believe we are wrong about everything and speak about things prematurely. These are the biggest problems that I face.

How about the benefits for civilians in your community?

The nursery school I opened here is good for local villagers because they know that their children gain more knowledge and confidence, and their parents can leave their children [with the teacher], so they can go to their farm without any concern. The civilians have full benefits from the peace process because they can enjoy freedom of movement for their work and business, [which they need] for their family income. In the past, they often had to be porters and watchmen for the armed groups; sometimes three times per month. The one they had to fear the most was the [Myanmar] government military because they arrested all men to be porters whenever they entered into the villages. When there were no men in the village, women had to be porters and even sometimes they said women had to go only around three days, but sometimes it took a month or ten days long. There are no violations like these now so civilians can work on business for their family's livelihood and they can build their big houses.

Are there any impacts of the NCA against civilians?

The impact is worse than during the conflict period.

Can you explain more please?

The civilians can enjoy the benefit of the peace process, but they government comes to the local area and constructs bridges, clinics and roads with the budget they received from foreign countries. Therefore, local civilians think that only the government could provide those things to them, so they have a strong desire for the government [to help]. They do not know that those budgets are from foreign countries. This kind of strategy makes the Karen people [KNU] weaker and weaker. I want our leaders [KNU] to give awareness to the civilians so they will understand it [the development process]. Some villagers said, "Why do the Karen have to recruit soldiers? This is not useful. After they recruit soldiers and they have money, they just cooperate with Burmese [Tatmadaw/government] for business."

Do you feel safe now?

No, I do not because the NCA is unreliable. If they [armed groups] fight each other again, we cannot look for the refuge place anymore because they [Tatmadaw] know all of our locations, so they can easily arrest us. There is a vehicle road [that the Tatmadaw uses] so when they come, they can kill all of us with guns [bombs] so it is not secure.

Have your livelihoods improved?

Yes, it is improved compared to the past because we always had to work [on farm] with worry. Now, we [villagers] can migrate to the other countries like Bangkok, Thailand for job opportunities. When they have money, they buy motor tractors so they can plough their farm easier.

What is the meaning of peace for you?

I understand that my people [KNU] push for peace and freedom for civilians to be able to live in peace so they have been standing up, fighting and talking for the peace until now, but they have

not received it yet. Therefore, even though we are between them [Government and KNU], we also worry for them [KNU] about whether they will receive it [peace and freedom] or not.

You mean you do not believe the NCA yet, correct?

Yes, I do not believe it yet.

What do you think about the peace process from 2012 [Preliminary ceasefire] and the 2015 NCA until now?

I know the peace process had a signature part, but the actions are not trustworthy for me. I know the leaders [KNU] have been experiencing many problems and feel sorry for the situation of the civilians and try their best [for the benefit of the civilians].

In your perspective, what is the biggest barrier to the peace process?

I think, to build sustainable peace we must rely on the government. They call themselves a democratic government, but they still practice as a dictatorship. The other countries may have one military, but civilians can enjoy the freedoms and they do not defeat [violate the rights of] the ethnic people. We also want sustainable peace so we want this government to act like they talk [democracy system] and there will be genuine and long lasting peace [in the country].

What change [improvement] do you want to see to improve the lasting peace?

I want this government to act like it talks [democracy system], such as by giving the Karen country [recognition of the Karen state and administration], no more fighting and then we will live in peace. I want them to keep their promise and I do not want it [betrayal of the EAOs] to happen again. When they keep their word then there will be change for us.

For example, if you can change one thing for the sustainable peace, what do you want to change?

I want [to change] the governments [Myanmar government and Ethnic states government] into the real democracy with all Karen and Burmese [government administrations].

Want to you want to give suggestion to the Myanmar and KNU government for the sustainable peace?

I want to say to the Myanmar government that even though they perpetrated whatever abuses [against ethnic groups] in the past, I want them to do their best in [improving] the peace process for sustainable peace. I want the KNU leaders to be brilliant leaders; not like turtle [timid] or autocrat. They should love civilians as they love themselves. They should cooperate with civilians and work for civilians in unity and love.

There are two government systems, Myanmar and KNU governments. So which government do you think can bring peace for you?

For my people, the KNU government will bring us peace. I said the Myanmar government does not bring peace for us because they are betrayers because they do not keep their word until now. However, my people [KNU] always protect us.

Why do you think the Myanmar government does not bring peace for you?

Because they like to use their authority and they want to control and govern everything [in the country] including all ethnic groups under their power. They do not keep their word and whatever they say, in the end they just want all people to be under their power. They want them to listen and follow whatever they order. This is what I see.

Do you believe the government?

No.

Do you believe the KNU?

Yes.

Why do you believe the KNU?

I believe the KNU because they have been sacrificing themselves they did not have bullets [before fighting against the Tatmadaw]. For example, like my older brother-in-law Bo He---, he did not have bullets with him at the battlefield. Once he returned to the Town [government controlled] during the [prior] peace process and when he returned [to KNLA controlled areas] and went to the front line, they [KNLA] gave him a gun but not bullets because they did not believe in him. His general asked him, "How many bullets do you have with you on the frontline?" He replied, "I have no bullets with me." The general asked him, "What will you do?" He replied, "No problem. What I need is the other soldiers to shoot, and after they do it I can grab bullets for myself." He enjoyed fighting for the revolution. Even though, the [former KNLA General] Bo Mya tried to kill him, he still served the KNLA. He and other soldiers were tied in order to be killed by the order of Bo Mya. The other soldiers were killed beside him and their bodies fell on him so he decided to escape because if he did not, he would be killed as well. Since then, the KNLA did not trust him. However, he returned to KNLA and the KNLA asked him to go the frontline [without bullet] because he was treated as a **traitor**. Unfortunately, he could not [get bullets from the Tatmadaw] and finally, he sacrificed [for the Karen revolution]. During that period, he did not worry during the fighting even though he had only two or three bullets in his hand because he could wait for his friends to shoot the Tatmadaw and then get the bullet from that dead Tatmadaw soldier. Therefore, he could get bullet from Tatmadaw in the frontline. However, we believe our leaders [KNU] because they have done a lot of good things for us and we can live in peace like nowadays so we are happy.

As you are a civilian, what can you do for sustainable peace?

I will encourage other Karen people to live in love, understanding and unity so that other people [enemy] cannot defeat us. It is good when we know how to live in love and understanding. It is like we defend the justice.

Since the NCA was signed, what human rights abuses happened in your community?

I want to report about the clinic construction: in Hi---, Kan Nee and Kyone Waing. I understand that the clinics are provided by Karen people and are good projects. On the other hand, the civilians believe that the government will support them so they want the clinics to be under government control. Now, there is only one clinic, Kan Nyee clinic, still controlled by the KNU. This is a big problem because the civilians do not have knowledge [about the government funding process] or self-confidence [to work for the community development]. They also believe that Myanmar government has sufficient medicine [medical supplies] and good medical treatment and the KNU does not have sufficient medicine. However, as we know, the [Myanmar government] clinic in Hi--- does not even open once per month. They have health workers in the Kyone Waing, but it does not qualify as KNU clinics because whenever patients sleep in the KNU clinic they [health workers] treat them very well and provide food for them. The patients do not have to pay for the medicine fees or food costs. The only one problem is they do not have sufficient medicine.

Does the government have enough medical and health worker supplies?

When the clinics were constructed, they [donors/CBOs/CSOs] handed these to the local civilians. Some civilians wanted the clinics to control by the government so they just handed the clinics to the government. The government sent health workers, but there is not enough medicine. When patients went to the clinic, health workers were absent and the clinic was always closed.

Are the clinics always closed?

They are only there to administer vaccines to the villagers.

Who or what organisation constructed the clinic?

They are CCD [DDC] or something. I do not remember well. I made a note about them [in my notebook], like BAG who support us for water supply and construct clinics.

You said the clinics are closed?

Like the clinic in Hi--- village, the clinic opens only to give out vaccines. It is better if they can open at least once per week and inform villagers when they will be open. For example, they could write on the wall "clinic closed on Saturday and Sunday" like some clinics. Now, they just keep the clinic closed. The clinic was officially handed to them but no one actually operates it.

[During the peace process], are there any violation and problems facing women in your community?

We heard about women who were raped by the men who illegally transport the Myanmar migrant workers to Bangkok, Thailand for job opportunities. These are what the women mostly faced in their livelihoods.

Do you have any eyewitness for these [abuses]?

No, I do not have an eyewitness.

What are the barriers for minority ethnicities and religions? I mean, do people respect your rights?

Yes, they [authority] do [respect my rights] compared to the past situation. In the past, people [authority] did not respect our rights. Now our leaders respect us and they allow us to practice our own religion.

For example, can you report or participate in decision making?

We can participate in discussions, but we cannot make decisions alone.

What do you understand about the justice?

From my understanding, justice means without difficulties facing me. I can have secure life and work for my livelihood.

Do you understand the meaning of justice?

No, I do not understand clearly.

Justice means the truth. For example, when an abuse happens, whether the case is settled fairly or not.

The cases in the past were not resolved by law because the law had no power over the authorities. They ended the cases whenever they wanted.

Have you ever experienced this [kind of abuses]?

There are some victims in the village.

What kind of justice system is used in your village?

They have discussion [traditional justice system on agreement].

How do they [local people] practice it? For example, when one abuse happens in the village, what do they [authorities] do? Do villagers use the KNU or the Myanmar government justice system?

The KNU justice system takes action.

What do you think about this justice system in your village?

I would like to give one case study: one of my younger brothers said: "KNU justice system is easy because even though we committed murder and are sentenced to serve in prison, we just have to cook for them [KNU police officers] for a while and then we are relieved from the punishment. We can live [in freedom]."

Is it true in reality?

Yes, he was serious about it because he really saw the incidents happen; perpetrators stayed [in the KNU prison] just a short time and then they were released. The KNU prison [punishment system] is not strict.

Do you believe in the KNU justice system?

I do not believe in the KNU justice system yet because they are weak in applying the law for justice.

Can you explain more?

Sometimes, they do not take as tough action on the perpetrators as they mandate for the punishment. Therefore, they should follow the decisions they make.

Do you think their decisions are just?

The current justice system is not completely just, but it is improved compared to the past.

Have you ever heard about bribery?

No, I do not hear about it anymore.

How about in the past?

We heard about bribery, but we did not witness it. For example, we heard a village tract administrator was corrupt. Sometimes it was true, and sometimes it was just gossip.

Have you experienced bribery?

No, I have not.

Have you experienced injustice in the court system? For example, where the violation cases were ignored and disappeared.

We just have an agreement between us [perpetrators and victims] and then we forgive each other.

Do you think it is justice for the perpetrators? For example, as you are a victim, do you

feel satisfied?

After they [court] make a decision, we have to agree with it. Even though we are not satisfied, we could not do anything and we just have to stay in silence. We are not happy with the injustice [charge].

So you mean there is no justice yet, correct?

Yes, that is correct.

What are the barriers to access to justice for you? For example, you do see justice,

If our leaders [local authorities] stand strong for us, we will get justice. The village and village tract level cannot get justice. Therefore, the local authorities should make justice for us.

Have you ever seen the village and village tract leaders settle cases unjustly?

No, I never heard of that. We usually agree with the decision and understand each other.

What do you want for reparation for the past abuses?

I want my leaders [KNU] to work hard together in the justice system.

Do you want to bring the perpetrators to the court?

Yes, I want it. I want them to suffer as much as they violated the victims, as a punishment.

For example do you want the victims to get compensation or something as reparation?

It depends. If the cases should be punished with the compensation or another form of punishments, the judge should settle the case by law.

Do you want anything else? For example, apology...

Oh yes, I want that too. After the perpetrators are punished, they should learn from their mistakes and then I want them they to vow not to repeat the abuses in the future.

What do you want to see for peace?

I want to see all civilians being aware of the laws; they will know that if they commit this mistake, they will be arrested and punished. When the civilians are aware of the law, they will know that the consequences of committing mistakes are arrest and punishment. When everyone knows the laws, there will be peace, we will respect each other, and there will be peace without [security] concerns.

Have you ever attended training about law?

Yes.

Who (KNU or Myanmar) provided the training?

KNU. I learned the government law from the book and from the other people.

Which governments are responsible for justice?

The KNU is responsible for justice because we are ethnic Karen and we belong to them.

What do you want the KNU to do for you?

I want them to strongly enforce the law, give awareness to the civilians and [govern the country] by law.

What is the responsible for the government?

There are to governing systems in my community now, so they should have a discussion between leaders [Myanmar and KNU governments]. For example, Karen villagers break laws and the Myanmar government [police officers] takes action. In this kind of situation, the Myanmar government should have a discussion with the KNU authorities before making a decision. They should not decide the case when the facts are not clear. They should do this in order to get the accurate information from the ground.

What is the best way to stop the human rights violations in your community?

I want the leaders to regularly hold awareness workshops for the civilians; twice per year or something. Not like how it is currently happening, once every two years.

What change do you want to see in the whole country? Which systems do you want to use for peace?

I want them to build peace through a democratic system. They said they do it [peace process] in a democratic way, but they do not practice it in the reality. They just walked into the bush [the direction of the peace process is taking them in the wrong direction].

How much do you believe in the peace process?

I do not believe in the peace process.

Can you explain why?

They [government] do not act as they speak; they agreed to follow the [NCA] agreement, but they did not do so in practice.

What do you mean they do not do [follow the NCA]? Can you give one example as a witness?

Last summer [2018], the fighting broke out in the Wah Tho Hkoh area, so my son could not visit me anymore. The Tatmadaw attacked the Karen [KNLA] and burnt down the [KNLA] gates. A lot of Tatmadaw soldiers planted landmines. Because of that, my son could not come back to the village.

These are all the questions I have now. Do you have any information that you would like to report?

I would like to report about the government causing religious conflict in my community, K'Ter Ti area. They constructed a Buddhist stupa in the Christian church compound and on villagers' land in Meh Kyi Hta village. If Christians did the same thing as they did, they [Buddhists] might not like it.

How do you feel?

We prefer to enjoy the freedom of worshipping our own religion, but when they [Buddhists] turn on the loud speakers and work for their religion it will be noisy to us, so it disturbs us [Christians]. Therefore, it makes us dissatisfied with it.

Do you have anything else?

I faced a problem when I asked the leaders [Bilin Myanmar education administrators] to allow us to teach Karen language and Karen history. The government produces Karen subjects, but they just translated their Burmese [about Burmese people] into Karen. For example, they translate Nya Ah Hka, Lah Tha Tha [Burmese primary school lesson] into Karen. If the lesson is about

the flag, they just give information to the students about the Burmese [Myanmar] flag. We have Karen history books but we cannot teach it. If we keep going like this, the next Karen generation will not know about their history. I want only one curriculum, the original Karen curriculum. When I raised this issue, one Myanmar government teacher told me that the monk [maybe Ma Ba Tha] produced this text book and spent a lot of money distributing them to all of Myanmar. They were funded by the foreign countries. I feel like they [government] disappointed us as one of its tactics [to make ethnic people disappear].

Do you teach Karen language as a subject in the school?

Yes, we do, but not the KNU [Karen Education Department] curriculum. [...]

Are the students' parents happy with it [Karen language taught by Myanmar schools]?

Whatever, they are happy. But I want the original Karen language [textbooks produced by KED] and Karen history. The current Karen textbooks were produced by the Monk, who is respected by people. I do not know what conflict will arise in the future.

How do you feel?

I feel like people [the government] have defeated us, because the Karen flag and history will disappear. Our children will only know about the Burmese history and then they will only respect the Burmese [heroes].

Can the students transfer their Standard to the other school?

All schools in this community such as those in Ta Au Ni, Ta Au Hkee and Hi--- villages allow transfer to government school, so they [Myanmar government education administrators] collect all the students who finish Standard Four into their school centre [Town]. But when I took the students to further their study in Thaton Town after they finished Standard Four, they did not provide school transfer letters for me. They want to study at their school until the end of the Standard so that they can transfer to other classes. This is the problem. Therefore, I do not want these restrictions on the students. The children have rights to choose for their future education, to expand their knowledge. I will continue ask permission [advocate for the children] to the government teacher, as well as to the government education administration office. I want the students to study in other places in order to be more open-minded [from education].

Do you mean the students who finished Standard Four from the village school cannot transfer their Standard?

No, they can transfer their classes, but they do not allow the students to change their school. For example, students who finished Standard Eight at Hi--- [high] school want to go to other schools, but the Hi--- teachers do not give permission [not provide transfer letter for that students so students cannot do anything]. They can go to other schools when they finish Standard Ten from that school.

Do you think it is a major problem [limitation on the students' future development]?

Nowadays, there are a lot of developments and children in the Town have more access to education, and they study very hard. Their parents also completely guide their children for their children's education, but students in the village have to look after cows and reap paddy on the farm. They are also weak in studying, they receive little knowledge and do not feel confident to express their opinions, so when they cannot compete with other students.

Do you have anything else to share?

No.

I would like to thank you very much for your time and we are happy that we can work with you [for KHRG]. Can I take your photo?

Yes, you can. But, if you publish my photo, I worry that other people will misunderstand me because I have my family in Kler Lwee Htoo District and I am here as a teacher.

You do not have to worry for your security because we will censor your face before we publish it as I explained to you before. Can I use your information that you provided for us?

Yes, you can because that information that I reported are all the truth.

Thank you very much.

I would like to thank you very much too because I learned more about your organisation [KHRG] and your work from this interview.

Thank you.

Source #17

Source doc #	Source # 17
Log #	19-10-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Naw Fv--- (female, 52), Fw--- village, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (January 2019)

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What about your religion?

I am a Christian.

What is your job? What do you do for a living?

I am a farmer.

Have you experienced conflict?

Back in 1969, my father was a village head. We had to flee from the village to the mountain area at that time. The Tatmadaw was planning to arrest him because he had contacted the KNU. We left our home and village because we could not stay there anymore.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

Yes, there were human rights abuses in my area because it was in the conflict zone. Therefore, we faced many kinds of human rights abuses such as forced displacement, forced labor,

extortion and killings. This area was a war zone full of landmines and guns firing.

So there were many kinds of human rights abuses.

Yes, there were many kinds of human rights abuses had happened. We were forbid to do the farming and our lands were destroyed by them (the Tatadaw) all. We were not allowed to do farming anymore.

Do you remember the exact date?

In my generation (the parents' generation time was passed), my husband was accused and arrested by the Tatmadaw. Then, Tatmadaw soldiers beat him severely. After that, he got sick and was taken to the hospital. It happened on December 14th, 1993. He was arrested and beaten by [Infantry] Battalion #351. However, he was sick and was taken to the hospital. It happened on December 14th, 1993. He was arrested and beaten by [Infantry] Battalion not get any compensation for that.

Was it the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) or Infantry Battalion (IB)?

It was Infantry Battalion #351 and the commander was Bo Tin Lwin. He [my husband] was beaten harshly because he communicated with the KNU.

Where was the Battalion based?

The Battalion was based in Than Boh Battalion #1 which is near Ler Doh town.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

On March 24, 2008, we moved to Qh--- village which is in Ler Doh Township. We were accused of communicating with the KNU, so they were going to kill us. We had to again flee to the refugee camp.

So you had to displace. How many places and where did you flee to?

We had to displace since I was a baby when we lived in Fw--- village. Then, we went to Qi---. We came back to stay in Qj--- village for three months and had to go back to Qi--- village. We have to flee again because my father was threatened to be killed by the Tatmadaw soldiers. We went to Qk---, west of Ql--- village, Kyaut Ta Kah Township for 8 years. After that, we came back to stay in Qi--- village for one year. We realized that we could not stay there anymore because the Tatmadaw would arrest us. Then, we went to stay in Qm--- village near to Qn--- village. I got married and I went to stay in Qr--- village. After that, we went to stay in Noe Poe, from Noe Poe to Plaw Law Bler, and from Plaw Law Bler to Hteh Htu and from Hteh Htu. Then, we went to stay in the refugee camp.

How did the conflict and forced displacements affect your livelihood?

We can say that it totally affected our livelihood situation. When we were displaced, we had nothing in our hands. We could not bring anything and we had to leave our house and animals at home. We did not even dare to let our villagers know about our displacement; we had to flee secretly from the village. We were worried that if we let the villagers know, then the enemies would know about it as well. Therefore, we had to flee without anything in our hands and we had nothing when we reached the refugee camp.

How do the human rights abuses or displacement continue to affect your life?

When we were in the camp, we heard that the KNU and Myanmar government signed the ceasefire [agreement] in the country. So, only my husband and I came back to the village to

arrange look after our belongings such as land that was given to us by our ancestors and parents. When we were not in the village, other people came and stayed on our lands. It became a problem when we went back to take back our lands. We were just refugees from the camp and we had nothing. We had to start from the beginning and cleaned the lands which we left over 40 years ago; they were bushy and not clean. We have also seen many problems such as abnormal weather, floods, mice, birds and snails destroying the paddies.

You husband was beaten by the Tatmadaw. Are there any problems that he has to face currently?

The problem now is that he cannot work in the cold weather because he has untreated internal injuries. He was beaten with guns and sticks, got punched, and even lost consciousness. So he cannot work hard like us [anymore] and he got very skinny.

Were there any solutions for human rights abuses?

There were no solutions because it was during the time when the Tatmadaw had influence and power. People did not dare to stand up against them because they had to consider their security as well. Therefore, you just had to face it and solve the problems by yourself.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

Honestly, the main perpetrators were the government.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No, they just did what they planned to do and they think what they did is right for them. So, they were not resolved.

Were there any justices for victims of human rights abuses?

The victims were not satisfied but they were afraid to against the perpetrators. Therefore, they just had to hide themselves and lived in fear.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

There was no punishment for the perpetrators at that time.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Do you want to go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

We hope the rules would be changed for the local people. For example, if we accept their money, they will think that they can pay money and do whatever they want. So we just have to change and fix the rules. If they should go to court, they have to go.

How do you think the perpetrators should be punished?

They should go to court.

What were the reasons for human rights violations that occurred?

It was because they [KNU and Tatmadaw] wanted to be powerful, more influential and fought against each other. They placed the local people in the middle of the cause of misunderstanding between each other. They just punished and abused local people.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

Yes, I hear about it on the radio. Local leaders and organizations were talking about the

Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Therefore, local people who were displaced could come back to their own places and live in their own villages. So I understand that the ceasefire agreement has started already.

What do you think about the NCA?

They just said that they ceased fighting to talk about the political situation in the country. However, they don't talk about it. On the other hand, they will just do business. Therefore, this ceasefire has many concerns for the local people.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

In my opinion, conflicts happened because of oppression and discrimination that we cannot tolerate any longer. So, we had to stand up and fight for it. We should get rights for each ethnic group in the country and talk about the political situation in the country so that there will be peace in the country. If they only talk about business, there will be no rights for the ethnic groups. If the ethnic groups don't get their own rights, there will be no sustainable peace.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

Local people had to live with depression and experienced so many bad things since around 60 years ago. Those bad things still frighten them so they don't want to trust anything that is happening now.

So there is no real peace yet.

Yes, there is no real peace yet.

What are the benefits of peace process?

The peace process is good but it still has strengths and weaknesses. The strength is that we can now come back to work in our own lands which were passed down to us by our ancestors but we still don't have freedom yet. There are still some circumstances that we have to face.

Do you feel that the community is safer and more secure now?

There is no full security yet. When we came back, there were only some people who came back to resettle in the village. In the period when the DKBA was in power, they called the villagers back to the village. However, they soon drove out the villagers from the village. The local people had experienced their tricks and fraud so the local people don't want to trust them anymore. Even when they have policies [preventing people from going] beyond the limitation areas; they just patrol around the villages among local people with uniforms and weapons. Moreover, the Tatmadaw set up their army camps in and in front of the village, right before you enter it. They set up their gates both at the head and tail of the road. If there is peace, there should not be those gates and them [the Tatmadaw]. They are obstacles for the local people to travel and cause them to overthink.

In your opinion, what should the soldiers from the army camp have to do?

They should stay in their own military base because they already signed in the NCA. Now, since the NCA was signed, if the fighting happens it is just between those two groups. They should not stay with the local people.

Has your livelihood improved?

There are no dams in the river but now they are building dams for development. Some villages get benefits from the dams but some villages are affected by the dams. Some plantations and

agriculture farms are destroyed in the rainy season due to landslide and the flood. It affects the local people's livelihood and creates challenges for them. Many of the local people are in debt because of these problems.

So we can say that the livelihood situation is not getting better yet.

The situation is only getting better for some people living and areas near the road. The areas which are far from the road and the IDPs areas are not getting better. Discrimination is still happening like before.

What does peace mean to you?

Both governments [KNU and Myanmar government] started fighting because they want to influence to each other. Then, they discriminated against each other so the fighting started and went on. Now they have signed the ceasefire agreement. However, they don't do or follow what the KNU asks of them. They just started doing business, which does not benefit the local people. They increased the salary for the soldiers and the electricity from the dam that they sell to other countries. They prepare the Ta Klee Ta Tha [ammunitions]. We don't know what they are hoping and planning to do with the income they got from selling the electricity. Many villagers' plantation and agriculture farms sank by the flood [due to the dam]. So, they cannot work for their livelihoods anymore. The KNU can travel on the road now when they get the permission to travel. But we don't know what will happen to them when the conflicts happen again. The situation is getting strict for the KNU because this ceasefire only talks about businesses, not about peace. This is not good and we want them to talk about "peace". If they want peace, they should talk about peace first. I think that after talking about peace, business will follow step by step.

In your opinion, what are the barriers for peace?

Now, the government is not talking about peace. Instead, they are trying to do business so they are constructing roads. We know that they will extract the natural resources; if they do that many consequences will follow. It will affect the local people's livelihood situation and destroy the plantations. If they excavate the mountain and do stone mining, then the water from the mining will just fall into the local people's farms. Then, that water will destroy the local people's lands and plantations. The little fishes and frogs also get poisoned from the [Keh] that use to explore the mountain. So this poses many problems and difficulties for us because the peace process doesn't talk about peace except business.

What improvements or changes would you like to see to achieve lasting peace, if you have the power?

If I have the power, [I will] change the civil wars that happened because of discrimination in the country. There are no opportunities for the ethnic groups to control themselves [exercise self-determination]. We want to talk about politics and create rules and opportunities for the ethnic groups. Then start to do the business, I think it will be better. Then the peace process and the business opportunities are in the local people hands. In my opinion, they should talk about peace first before doing business.

[To whom would you report violations of the peace process?]

Both governments agreed to work together so they set up a group called [JMC]. They belong to a group watching over the NCA called the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC). They select the representatives and there was even one person from the villages who went to the training to ensure these two governments do not violate the NCA. If any of them breaks the

laws, we can go to the office to report them.

There is an office to report it.

Yes, there are offices in Toungoo, Hpa-an and Hpapun districts. They monitor the governments and if they break the law, the NCA will break as well.

In your opinion, which government is more important and has more responsibilities to keep sustainable peace and justice?

In my opinion, the Myanmar government is more important. They have to change their policies and follow the rules that they have created.

Do you trust the ceasefire agreement (NCA)?

I don't trust it.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing during the peace process?

The local people who were displaced in the past due to fighting need to build houses to live in. According to the rules, they wrote a letter to get a recommendation letter to build a house. However, even if they have the recommendation letter, they [both governments] go and wait for the cars that carry logs and bamboos and ask for tax. [...]

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

Yes, they are. When we ask for an opportunity to work on our ancestor's lands, some of them [authorities] don't want to give us full opportunities to do so. So, they limit the times for us to work on our lands and you cannot do as you want so there are many problems.

So you mean that human rights violations are still ongoing?

Yes, it still happens in some areas which are far from the JMC, who will watch them. So they still discriminate against local people.

What are the current human rights challenges women are facing?

I don't hear about that here.

What are the current human rights challenges minorities are facing? Are there any minorities here?

Yes, there are the Burmese, Muslim and Karen. There are also people who are Buddhists, Animists and Christian.

Have you heard of any challenges for the minorities?

No, there is nothing.

What does justice mean to you?

We want our leaders to give us opportunities and freedom. We had to flee and displace so now we don't have a house. We are now living in Fw--- with a hut [not house]. This was many years ago and until now; we don't have the opportunity to build houses. They just set the time to give us the opportunity [move the times around] to cut trees and bamboo to build a house or not. One thing which make us feeling sad is we see trucks coming back with [different] kinds of flag but we don't know which group they belong to. Therefore, I think it is not the right things to do in the ceasefire period.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it the Myanmar government or KNU justice system?

As we are living in a mixed control area, we cannot just rely on one side. We have to rely on both sides. We have to ask for permission from both sides but we don't get the opportunities and freedom that we should get. We worry that the democracy government term is nearly to finish and we don't know what will happen for the local people.

So both justice systems are used in the village?

Yes, if anything happens, we have to process [case] with both governments. For example, if we are going to dig pound, so we have to report it to the Myanmar government and to KNU as well. We belong to both sides because we are in a mixed control area.

Are the justice systems from both governments fair? What do you think?

If we look at the system, most of it is just like from the past. But nowadays, most of the leaders and people work with [some] understanding. So, there are more opportunity for rich people, and people who are afraid and don't dare to talk get less opportunities. So, it affects the local people's attitude on living in unity and loving and helping each other.

So the justice system is not fully fair?

Yes, it is only half fair. The order and direction from the center [KNU] is fair enough. However, when they [orders and direction] reach to the local authorities, it becomes unfair. It becomes unfair and bias because of money [bribery and corruption]. The living standard is also getting unbalanced.

Have you heard of corruption?

Yes, I have. The rich people are stronger and have no problems but poor people have many problems and they cannot solve the problems as rich people [cannot bribe because no money].

There is still corruption.

Yes, there is. So we want the justice system and right orders from the center [KNU] and it has to be the same when it [order] passes down through to the Bridges, Districts, Townships, Village tracts and villages. If there is just working with understanding [bribery and corruption] then there won't be fair and it affects the local people. [...]

How do you want to correct and change the justice systems since there are advantages and disadvantages to all?

I would like to tell the human rights awareness group from both governments to give good training. Then, villagers will understand well and those who are violating human rights will know and realize themselves as well. Those who are weak and those who don't dare will gain more knowledge and understand as well. If they go on the right way, there will equality between the local people. The people who work in organizations should work well and follow rules from their organization. They should not be corrupt and they should work for equality.

What do you think can be done to improve and stop human rights abuses?

If the leaders from any organization break the rules, it is similar to violating human rights. Therefore, every organization should follow their rules that they established and investigate whether their workers follow the rules or not. If they don't, they have to correct them. This is what I think it should be improved.

Which government is responsible for providing an access to justice for those who faced human rights abuses?

We are in a mixed control area so both governments are responsible.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

The best way is to go to court. If they break the law, they should be punished as the law requires. They don't need to pay money for compensation. They just need to be punished.

How about in Myanmar?

Yes, they have to go to court. We just want that. We don't want them to cover it with money [corruption]. We don't want anything like that. We just want them to follow the rules and those who violate human rights have to be punished by law.

Where were you displaced? Did you cross the border?

Yes, I had to displace for ten times in Myanmar and I even had to go to Mae La refugee camp. My mother, my younger brother and my children are still there. Only my husband and I are in Fw--- now. My children are studying there and there is no house in Myanmar, so my mother is staying there. We cannot build a house because we had to displace and our house was destroyed. Now we just live in a hut. Access to education and healthcare is not good enough here so my children have to stay in the camp.

Did you hear anything before you came back to Myanmar?

Yes, we did. My family and I don't want to go to Third countries. It was just because we could not stay in Myanmar anymore and fled. We heard that the situation is getting better after the ceasefire so we came back. However, we still hear that there are conflicts and fighting in Brigade #5. People ask us not to worry or have any concerns about what we heard about Brigade #5. We told them that we will stay as long as we can stay. But when we cannot stay anymore, then we will leave. We love our people, our country and our area. We don't want to go to third countries.

Our interview is done here. Thank you so much for giving me your time for this interview and for giving us information. Do you want to add or say anything more to our people in third countries or here?

Our children are now in the camp. They hear that they will be sent back to Myanmar because the Thai don't allow them to stay there anymore and they have reduced the rations. They are not allowed to work outside of the camp as well. They will have to come back if they cannot stay anymore. However, I would like to tell our people in third countries and in the camps that the situation in Myanmar is not stable yet. We have to work very hard and we have to face many challenges. It is because they [the government] don't talk about politics; instead, they are doing the business. There are flood and many problems in Myanmar. Therefore, as long as you can stay in the camp, just stay there. The people in third countries also don't think Myanmar is peaceful now. Even if we went back to Myanmar now; we don't know what will happen to us. However, we will just stay there as long as we can and if we cannot stay anymore, we will leave. But we want our leaders and the local authorities from our areas to try their best as they promised. This way, the civilians won't flee to other countries and will be able to organize themselves and rebuild the villages that were destroyed during the conflict period. We want that. Thank you so much.

Source #18

Source doc #	Source # 18
Log #	18-135-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	
<p>Thaton Interview Naw Hh--- (female, 53), Hi--- village, Bilin Township, Thaton District (December 2018)</p> <p>What is your religion and ethnicity? Karen, Buddhist</p> <p>What is your marital status? I am a single.</p> <p>How many children do you have? I have three children.</p> <p>What is your job and responsibility in the village? I breed animals for my livelihood. I am responsible as a Karen Woman Organisation [KWO] [position censor for securityat the village level].</p> <p>How many households in your village? There are around 300 households in the eastern part of my village.</p> <p>Have you ever experienced conflict before? During the conflict period and when my mother was a village head selected by Tatmadaw, the Tatmadaw military camp based in Yo Kla village ordered villagers to provide updated information for them as Set Tha¹ [kind of forced labour] about the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) every day. One day, people [KNLA] fired the guns but my mother did not have prior information about it or about who fired the guns. She told the village tract administrator, "Tell the Tatmadaw soldiers about the gunfire if they ask you about it, but if they do not ask you then don't tell them anything." When the villager ordered to be a Tatmadaw news provider arrived at the Tatmadaw army camp, they did not ask him anything about the gunfire, so that villager returned home. The next day, the Tatmadaw ordered that villager to meet them and questioned him: "Why didn't you tell us that Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] fired guns in your village?" He was too much in fear so he blamed the fault to the village head and replied to the Tatmadaw, "The Tatmadaw village head did not allow me to report it." The Tatmadaw came into the village and arrested my mother. At that time, my mother was old, over 60 years old. They took her with them, with her hands tied behind her back, to the army camp in C--- village. Tatmadaw soldiers</p>	

¹ *Set tha* is a Burmese term for a kind of forced labour, primarily involving acting as an intermediary for messages. This may include sending orders from army officers to village heads, or serving as a messenger stationed at army camps or bases but may also involve other menial tasks.

tortured her, punched her and put her in a pillory. I did not witness how brutally she was tortured, but afterwards her body was covered in bruises from the tortures of the Tatmadaw. Very early in the morning, they tied up my mom and towed her from the Yo Kla Army camp, and around the village. At that time, my family was in a difficult situation and worried for our mother's situation because at that time Tatmadaw soldiers often killed villagers, by abusing their authority, and nobody dared to stop them [punish them] so we worried that they would kill her. When we [siblings] saw our mother towed in front of us [villagers] and we wanted to go to our mother, but they strictly prohibited us from [going near] her and around five Tatmadaw soldiers pointed guns at us. Then they towed my mother from the west of the village trough to the east of the village and then put my mother at Kaw La Klah [Muslims] community. They put my mom on the ground and ordered their soldiers to watch my mom when they [leaders] entered into the [unknown] villager's house. During that time, one teenager who went to my mother without knowing that Tatmadaw had tied my mother was arrested and tied together with my mother, and then the Tatmadaw soldiers towed them both around the village. My family was worried for our mother and asked for help from Daw Hj--- a village head of the western part of Hi---village, but nobody dared to help us. When we suffered that kind of situation, we would be too worried, so we did not feel even afraid and I just felt worried for my mother. Therefore, I decided to go and see my mother, so I went to the Tatmadaw army camp with Tharamu Naw Dah Poe. When we had almost arrived at the Tatmadaw army camp, many Tatmadaw soldiers pointed guns and mortars at me. Tharamu Naw Dah Poe told me, "Don't go, the Tatmadaw will shoot us!!" I replied to her, "The big gun [mortar] cannot be fired at us at a very close distance!! It is for the far distance shooting only!! Don't be afraid of it, follow me." It was when I was too worried for my mother so I did not feel afraid of anything. When I arrived at the Tatmadaw army camp, the Tatmadaw Sergeant blocked my way to my mother, but I approached my mother and she told me, "It is not my fault. I did not commit any mistake [against them]. They [Tatmadaw] just want to torture me. Let them do it [to me]. One day, they might suffer like me [karma belief]. Don't be distressed!!" I knew my mom was worried that I would be depressed so she just encouraged me to be strong. Despite how much she had suffered, she did not want her children to be upset, so she pretended like she was okay in order to encourage us. Anyway, we could not ignore her without doing anything for her [to release from the evil]. One Muslim man told me: "we would speak on behalf of your mother [as she is innocent]" and he told me "call villagers from the village to go together with you." Thus, I asked some villagers, including the village leaders, teacher Mu Hk--- [her friend] and the first group of government teachers assigned in my village to help my mother. When we arrived at the Tatmadaw base, they told me, "You cannot easily get your mother like this!! You must replace her with one of the three men: Saw HI---, who is a village tract administrator; [KNLA] General Soe Myint Tway; or the other [KNLA] general (I don't remember his name)." Nobody dared to respond to them. At that time, my older brother was a Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) [soldier]. The Tatmadaw even spoke against the Government teacher: "You are teachers, but your value is not worth as much as a piece of bean [worthless]." The teachers could not really handle those words, but they just had to be quiet because they had to be afraid of the Tatmadaw too. Nobody dared to reply to the Tatmadaw and I knew finding the three men to replace my mother was impossible so replied to them, "Sayagyi [General]!! The three men are not relatives of my mother so don't hope that they will replace my mother. Instead of hoping for it, you better kill my mother. Don't tow her around like this. You have done this to her so she suffers pain, fatigue, distress and weakness [all feelings of torture]." At that time, she could not even wear her sarong when it was untied. She was very old [respected people], but she had to suffer with this [torture] so it was a painful suffering and feeling for me. It was never lost from my eyes and I can see it until now. After I finished speaking, one Tatmadaw soldier fired his gun near me and then they did not allow me to speak

anymore. He shot the roof of the villager's house and then pointed the gun at my face. He fired the gun again and pointed the gun at me again. He repeated like this twice and told me, "If I shoot at you, you will die!!" I was worried too much so I did not even feel afraid of him and thought, "If you [Tatmadaw] shoot me, the bullet will pass through my body to other side." I did not think that I would die. I worried for my mother because the Tatmadaw tied her, beat her with a big and one arm span long of bamboo several times in front of me. Therefore, I could not feel fear of anything. They did not allow me to speak out. Then he [general] took out one mill grenade and pulled the grenade's safety pin and told he, "If I fire it here right now, you will die." All of the other villagers were too much in fear of the Tatmadaw. This issue was not their problem and it was not their family's problem. Nobody dared to speak out anymore and the Tatmadaw did not allow me to speak either. But, I responded to him, "If you want to explode that mill grenade among the villagers, you can but we will not die alone because [don't forget that] you will also die [with us]." Then his soldiers had to help him re-plugging the grenade's safety pin with a hairclip from the villagers. We [villagers] had to help find for the hairclip for him in a hurry. After that, he [general] told me, "Come to the army camp and you can get your mother back by exchanging her with one goat and a duck." My mother was a village head so her fellow villagers loved her and they were happy to help her. The only thing [problem] was, it was during the conflict period so they did not dare to follow her to oppose the Tatmadaw.

I told the other villagers to find one goat and a duck for me and took them to the Tatmadaw. I wanted to go with them to the army camp, but teachers [in the village] did not allow me to go and see the Tatmadaw because they were angry with me a lot. They worried for my security and worried that the Tatmadaw would commit some violation against me. Therefore, I just followed them halfway and waited for them in Hm--- village.

When villagers brought a goat and duck to them they released my mother, but they did not allow her to return home yet at that time. They would provide medical service for her injury [from the Tatmadaw's torture] treatment. They were not dare [ashamed] to let my mother return home with her body full of bruises from their torture. They trapped my mother in a pillory and kept her in the rain, and with water high up to her hip in the Hm--- monastery compound.

When they did not allow my mother to return home, I asked my youngest aunty who was the youngest sister of my mother, and she was old to go, and stay with my mother in the Tatmadaw army camp. She stayed with my mother in the army camp for two nights and the Tatmadaw injected a medical syringe in my mother, but we did not know what kinds of medicine was in the syringe. Actually, I just wanted my mother to return home, and it was okay if they did not provide any medical treatment for her because there was a health worker, Tharamu Mu Naw, in the village. But the Tatmadaw did not agree with that. They did not allow other people, even my aunty. After two nights, she could return home.

Even though the Tatmadaw brutally tortured and beat my mother, I asked her about the Tatmadaw torturing her when she arrived home, and she replied that the Tatmadaw never beat her. I was confident that she was tortured because her body was still full of bruises when she arrived home. Therefore, I wondered why my mom told us that the Tatmadaw did not beat her. I thought, she was tortured by Tatmadaw too much and she was also too old, over 60 years old, so she could not remember what had happened to her.

She told us that the Tatmadaw held a program to honor my mother and offered my mother four cans of the Tatmadaw's beans, two milk cans and 0.8 kilo of sugar to my mother as an apology according to the [Buddhist] religious belief. I told my mother, "Don't eat them!! Don't covet their food!! Throw them way!!" I threw all the food into the water. I detest the Tatmadaw so I did not want to eat their food.

A week after my mother was released from the Tatmadaw, another Tatmadaw troop replaced [the soldiers in the Yo Klah Army camp]. I do not know their Battalion number, but the Tatmadaw that tortured my mother was led by Sergeant Hani.

How long did they arrest your mother?

It was five days, including their providing medical treatment for her.

Have you ever replayed these experiences?

Yes, I can never forget it. I replay the scene again and again. At that [conflict] period, village leaders had to accomplish every single demand from them [the Tatmadaw] as they desired, but finally they did it [torturing my mother] so it was not fair. My mother did not commit a big fault against them so I think they [the Tatmadaw] are a vile group.

What human rights violations did the local populations experience during the conflict period?

They faced a lot of them [human rights violations]; they were tortured by the Tatmadaw when the Tatmadaw saw them in the forest [working for their family livelihoods] and fishing. The Tatmadaw accused them of bringing news [to the KNLA] and communicating with Tha Bo [rebel group, KNLA] by using [fishing and collecting vegetables] tactics. Actually, the villagers were purely working for their livelihoods, not doing what the Tatmadaw suspected. The Tatmadaw even tortured villagers who were arrested to be porters and got tired of carrying [ammunitions, Tatmadaw supplies] for them. Sometimes, they would just leave the villagers who could not work anymore on the mountain.

Do you remember the incident date?

I don't remember the date, but it was during the battle of Twee Pa Win Kyo [1991]². Women also had to serve as porters for months, until their clothes were torn apart. They had to carry all types of ammunition to the front lines. [at Twee Pa Win Kyo]. Therefore, civilians suffered a lot of human rights violations. It was during the Myanmar government military "Four cuts" strategy period and afterward.

Can you describe more about the violation please?

Yes, I can. They [porters] were women; they should not have been arrested as porters and taken far away and for long periods. Or, they should have been replaced by another group of porters when they arrived at another place. They did not inform the women that they had to be porters for long periods. Being porters for the Tatmadaw was too much work for women to handle. Some women had newborn babies they needed to feed, so these babies were crying, calling for their mothers. Some of them starved while their mothers were away as porters for the Tatmadaw. Without a mother in the house, there were a lot of problems facing the family. Because of the "Four Cuts" strategy, local civilians could not work [on farms] for their livelihoods because the Tatmadaw restricted and prohibited the freedom of movement around three times per year. Villagers' animals could not roam around to find food and water. We could not even get out of village because they operated around the village, so we could not go to our farms.

What was the worst human rights abuse you experienced during the conflict period?

The worst human rights abuse that I experienced was the Myanmar military brutally violating [human rights] against us.

² See more information, "[THE NEW SLORC CAR ROAD TO TWEE PA WIH KYO](#)", KHRG, July 1992.

How about your personal experiences?

I was in the community so I faced the same things that the other local civilians faced. When my mother was a village head, the Tatmadaw demanded her to do many things for them so she could not handle [all her duties] alone and I had to help her with her work load. So I did many things [for Tatmadaw].

Was your family displaced?

Yes, we were, but we just stayed in the village in dangerous and risky situation [so we returned to the village]. Since the "Four Cuts" strategy period, my father was the first village head, second my uncle, and then my mother. During the "Four Cuts" strategy, the Tatmadaw did not let any men they met live. My father knew that villagers would be in trouble because there were no people stand for them, so he took this role as a village head.

Were there any witnesses of these abuses?

We had to get a travel recommendation ticket to get out and in the village, and only between 8 am and 5 pm. We had to return the ticket after we worked on our farm. This the one of the worst experiences.

Who restricted it?

The Myanmar military.

Where could you get the travel ticket?

We could get it from the Tatmadaw Camp Commander.

How did the conflict affect your livelihoods?

We could not have freedom of movement for our livelihoods, so we could not complete our daily jobs. We had to spend three days for one task instead of one day of work. Due to the restriction on movement for our livelihoods, there was no improvement in our life and we faced livelihood problems.

How about your family?

All families in the village faced those problems. Some families could not suffer the violations so they fled to refugee camps [on the Thai-Burma Border]. During the conflict period, we faced restrictions on freedom of movement, and innocent villagers were accused and tortured by the Tatmadaw until some of them died. These were like we carried double bundles [problems]; we had 16 kilos of load to carried, but we had to carry 32 kilos [from Tatmadaw]. Therefore, there are a lot of families that fled to refugee camps.

What percentage of villagers from your village fled to refugee camps?

Onethird [of villagers fled to refugees camps].

Who was the perpetrator of those human rights violations?

They are the Myanmar military and they are the main human rights abuse actors.

Did any authority take action against them?

No, nobody did it. Nobody dared [had power] to take action and people did not even know the process of the court system. We could not report these human rights violations to any courts [no justice courts], and we did not dare to report it. Even if we brought the Tatmadaw to the court for

justice, their faults could become our faults [because they controlled everything by their power]. So we did not dare to make a sound [speak out for the justice]. Therefore, we did not dare to report it.

Did the government do any investigation?

No, I never saw them do it.

Without government action on the human rights violations, do you think it is just for the victims?

No, there is no justice for them but they just had to be quiet and the cases were lost [forgotten].

Could you please give an example?

When the Tatmadaw raped two sisters, people [village leaders] accurately reported the case to the government court. Nevertheless, the court stopped the case without any legal prosecution against the Tatmadaw perpetrators, so the two woman victims have not had access to justice until now. The victims could not do anything to access to justice [the Tatmadaw blocked access to justice and gave its soldiers impunity]. You can go and ask the village head from the western part of Hi---, he could remember everything about it: Tatmadaw battalion number, incident date, and the perpetrators' names.

When did it happen?

It was during the "Four Cuts" Tatmadaw strategy, before the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

Who were the perpetrators?

They were Tatmadaw soldiers.

Have you ever seen the [human rights violations] perpetrators prosecuted [in court]?

No, it never happened.

What kind of punishment should be given to the perpetrators, do you think?

I want the perpetrators to proportionally and sharply be prosecuted by law to bring justice to the local population according to the abuses they committed. If they do not practice it according to the law, there will be never justice for us.

Where should the perpetrators to be taken [court]?

At that [conflict] period, we did not have legal knowledge and justice information so we just thought that the perpetrators should be taken to the Military Court and deserved punishment there. Nowadays, the government's governing structure has three levels—Civilians Parliament, The Low Parliament and The High Parliament—so I want this kind of case to be prosecuted in the Parliament Supreme Court level so that the judge at the Parliament level will sum up the case with the proportionate punishment by law for us.

What support should be provided to the victims, do you think?

The victims should receive encouragement [psychological services] and freedom and security to express their feelings.

What is the root cause of the violations?

The [human rights] violation and torture happened against local civilians because of the military dictatorship control over the civilians. Actually, they [Tatmadaw] should not commit any

violations against civilians.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement?

I know a little bit about it, but I do not completely know about the NCA yet.

How do you think about the peace process?

A peace process for real and genuine peace is good. Even we do not receive development projects for our community in the remote area, we would be happy if we just have freedom of movement and can work for our livelihoods. Nevertheless, I have a concern that the NCA is not for the justice, and then it will cause the opposite [conflict] for us [civilians] again.

How is the peace process related to you?

It is related to us because as other people can enjoy the freedom of movement, we [local civilians] also can travel freely and we dare to travel. I think the peace process is beneficial to us because we can work on our farm with freedom of movement for our livelihoods.

How much do you know about the NCA?

The village tract administrator read out for us about the NCA and the agreement that the Myanmar military should follow; the limitation on territory for the military. According to the village tract administrator reading out, the NCA includes 11 sections of agreement [for the military] so it would be great if the military could follow all of these effectively. Nevertheless, the military does not follow the NCA because they [Tatmadaw temporarily] were based in the monastery compound for two to three days [without consent from the local civilians]. They made up the story that they had to clean the monastery's compound and help the monastery's work so they were based in the monastery compound. Anyway, this reason was completely not true because the monks have followers so they can ask the followers for help. The Tatmadaw soldiers just cleaned their own rubbishes in the monastery while based there, and did not do the monastery work. So they just made up a story.

Where is the monastery?

It is Hm--- monastery.

Was it after the NCA?

Yes, it was last summer, in 2017.

How many times were they based in the monastery compound? Are they still there now?

No, they are not in the monastery now, but they were based there many times. The Tatmadaw movement abuses the NCA, including in the 11 sections stated that, if they [military] enter into any village, they should inform [local civilians] prior. They did not inform us prior [to coming]; they came to the village and do whatever they want as their will. Therefore, they abused the NCA.

Did the Tatmadaw based in the monastery compound commit any violation against villages?

Even though they did not commit any violation against us, whenever we or a woman as me see Tatmadaw soldiers, we are already in fear and scared of them so we do not feel secure to go to the monastery compound anymore. For men, they fear the Tatmadaw more than women. The foundations of fears are from the past violations that the Tatmadaw committed against us through dictatorship. Even when we just see them [in front of us], we are already in fear. I can

feel the others villagers' emotion about the Tatmadaw.

When Tatmadaw was based [in the village], we faced the restriction of movement and lived in an insecure environment. Because we did not trust them and we did not know the purpose of their patrol; whether they patrolled for their tactic against us and what. Therefore, the Tatmadaw based in the community disturbed our transportation.

What was their Battalion number and commander's name?

I do not know their Battalion number and commander, but they were they troop that patrolled in the Yo Kla area. Maybe Saw Gyi Lay and Saw Wa Tha may know it because they were the people who ordered the Tatmadaw to move away.

Were they villagers?

No, they were armed group [KNLA]. They did it by referencing the NCA agreement; the military cannot be based in the religious compound. The commander phoned [their upper leaders] immediately. They Tatmadaw said they informed [villagers] prior about their patrol, but in reality they did not do it.

What is your perspective on the peace process?

According to my opinion, the Tatmadaw is untrustworthy and dishonest, and they [only]signed the NCA for their political benefit [to trick the EAOs] because they sometimes check villagers when we are travelling. Actually, they [Tatmadaw] do not have the right to do it to villagers.

What did they check?

They checked our bags so when they did like this, they have a trick [against us] in their mind. This is my opinion.

What do you want from the NCA?

I want them [Tatmadaw] to effectively follow the NCA agreement and not disturb the local civilians' movement.

Do you think there is peace in your village yet?

No.

Why?

Because, civilians are not free from their fear yet.

Anything else?

That's all, I think. Civilians do not trust them [Myanmar government/Tatmadaw] yet.

Do you think the NCA is benefiting you?

Civilians can practice the freedom of movement so the situation is improved compared to the past. Some villagers feel happy because they can travel and work on their farms freely even they are checked by the Tatmadaw. They just thought that it is the military responsibility for checking and questioning villagers, so they did not take it seriously unless the Tatmadaw was harassing them. If the civilians know [human rights], they will know that it was violating their rights. Villagers just carried slingshot pellets, betel nuts and leaves, so they were not arrested and then they did not think it was a problem unless they were harassed.

What is the impact of the NCA?

The impacts are land issues such as road construction projects that damaged local villagers' land without providing compensation to the victims, and some provided disproportionate compensation, and some are land confiscation issues. Even if there is no fighting in my district, there is ongoing fighting and displacement in other districts because we are in the same KNU map [Karen State]. There are a lot of people suffering [human rights violations], so I say the peace process is suspect.

Do you feel safe in your village?

Not yet.

Could you give an example for me please?

There is less security because soldiers can travel freely and sometimes they enter the villages wearing civilian clothes to gather intelligence for military purposes. Sometimes, villagers unexpectedly might speak out wrong [against them]. It is not safe for us.

Do you think your livelihood improved during the peace process?

No, it has not improved because there is no community development available. They [government] should provide job opportunities such as by providing agriculture skills, animal husbandry skills and open economic zones for the local civilians to be able to sell their [annual and seasonal] crops. For example, if they open an animal husbandry section, they should come and buy the animals from the villagers or villagers go and sell it to their selling area. There is no development like these, so there is no livelihood improvement [in my community].

What kinds of vocational training do you want?

I want trainings such as farming and animal husbandry. The animal husbandry can cause diseases [to human] easily so they should provide proper training or do examination on animal husbandry project monthly or weekly. If we do like that, our jobs [as an animal husbandry] will not lose money and cause diseases to us. They [government] do not provide any opportunity to improve the villagers' livelihoods so I see that there is no improvement in our livelihoods. We just breed the animals in the customary way; one family breeds two or three pigs and then sells them for a small income.

Who are the responsible people?

It is government's responsibility.

What the meaning of peace for you?

Peace means civilians can access healthcare services, education, social benefits, economic benefits and rule of law.

In your perspective, what do you think are the biggest barriers in making sustainable peace?

These are all in the government's hands and they are responsible. If they make peace, there is peace. They should build peace in a systematic process.

What change do you want to see for sustainable peace?

I want to see the changing of the [2008] constitution for genuine peace. I think everybody needs it. Even though I am not an educated person, I see that the [2008] constitution controls everything, so a full 25 percent of the places [in parliament] and taken by the [Tatmadaw] military. The only way to make change [for sustainable peace] is to change the [2008]

constitution.

What suggestion do you want to give to the [Burma/Myanmar] government?

I want them to fix the 2008 constitution so the civilians will be able to enjoy their rights and what [rights] they should get. The current government and the upcoming elected government will govern the country under the updated constitution because they cannot disobey the constitution.

What suggestion do you want to give to the KNU?

I want the KNU and Joint Monitory Committee on Ceasefire (JMC) to be mindful of the rights of civilians while they do the peace process. They should think deeply for our people to regain our country with freedom of expression for who we are, self-determination, self-governance and self-jurisdiction system. They should not easily give their signature [on agreements between the Myanmar government and the KNU] unless they really receive these [expression for who we are, self-determination and self-jurisdiction system]. This is my opinion as a civilian. It does not mean I teach them. I mean, we sign [the agreement], but they [government] do not follow it [the agreement] so our signature is meaningless.

Which governments do you think can bring you peace?

The KNU also has long experience [in governing their country] for almost 70 years, so they want to have their people and their country. Therefore, I think the KNU is my Karen people so they may want to bring peace for us, bring sustainable positive future plans for us, and love us.

Which governments do you believe in?

As I am under the control of the KNU, I believe in my own leaders [KNU].

As you are a civilian, what can you distribute for the peace?

For them [government] to gain the trust of civilians, they should punish the perpetrators by laws, according to what faults [human rights violations and crimes] they have committed. Then there will be justice [for the victims].

What are the main human rights abuses in your community?

The main human rights abusers in my community are the [Myanmar] government military because they are the main actor who causes problems. Other than them, there is peace in my area.

As you said, the main actor who causes the human rights abuses in your area is the [Myanmar] government military, so what kinds of human rights abuses did they commit in your area?

They forced us to work for them without pay, and if we could not meet their demands, they would beat us, punch us, kick us or kill us.

When did these [violations] happen? Is it before or after the NCA?

There are none of these kinds of abuses after the NCA.

Do any violations happen in your area?

It has happened in our area.

How about only in your area?

Nowadays, the issues are economic problems like logging and stone mining causing impacts

and damaging local people's lands, and a lot of plantations; betel nut and betel nut leaf plantations. They take the resources [from the rural area] and sell them to the town. They [business men] could not do these kinds of business without permission from the [Myanmar] government.

Did the victims receive compensation?

They received some compensation, but it was not seen as fair by the victims.

Who are the business men?

They are wealthy individuals.

Did the wealthy individuals inform the local civilians about their projects before they started them?

No, they did not. Only leaders [government] knew about it.

Did the leaders inform the local civilians?

No, they did not.

What are the main human rights challenges facing women?

During the road construction project, they [workers] raped an underage girl.

When did it happen?

It was in November 2017.

Where are they [perpetrator]?

I don't know their location, but their headquarters is in Thaton Town. They are construction group.

Did they construct the road?

Yes, they constructed the road in Za--- and Zb--- areas. They raped a girl who was only 15 years old.

Did the case was take action properly?

The case was resolved with only 4,000,000 kyat as compensation for the victim, but there was no punishment for the perpetrator. The [leaders] said that the perpetrator was from the other part [Government-controlled area] and the victim is from a KNU-controlled area so they solved the case informally.

Do you think it is just and fair?

I think it is not fair because he [road construction worker] violently abused one young girl's life, and he has a wife. So that it is a huge crime. Because he has a wife, it means he is already at fault [responsible to the woman he married to]. He committed two abuses; committed adultery and raped the girl. Only compensation without punishment is not fair. If he was punished for committing adultery against his wife and then paid [required to pay] compensation to the girl, it would be more acceptable for me.

How old was the girl?

She was 15 years old.

Where is she?

She is in Za--- and Zb--- areas.

Did you see any other cases?

I do not know about other areas, but it is the only case I know in my area.

How about in 2018?

No, I do not know any.

What are the main challenges facing ethnics [minority]?

I want to say something on behalf of all the ethnic groups: heavy fighting happened in Kachin [State] and also in District #5. This happened after the NCA. There are a lot of challenges for the ethnic groups in Burma. [The consequences of these attacks are] displacement, food shortage, starvation and healthcare problems because of the inability to access clean drinking water. These are not consequences of natural disasters, these are the consequences of the Tatmadaw committing human rights violations against ethnic communities.

How about challenges related to religion?

Yes, there were abuses against minority religions. Any other religious minorities who marry a Buddhist girl, they must become Buddhist. If they do not follow it [the rule], they [government] will take action so it is a very big problem. If they [government] love peace, the couple should be able to make a decision between them and can believe one religion as they choose or each of them can believe their own religion.

Do you think your rights are respected yet?

No, not yet.

How?

I have to sleep and breathe with other people's [authority's] noses [no self-determination] because I cannot make any decision for myself and I have to follow their decisions.

What is your understanding of justice?

For me, justice means everyone has access to full justice, without bribery or discrimination among the judges in the judiciary system against victims.

What court system [is used] in your village?

We use the Myanmar court system.

How does the court in your village investigate cases?

It is very hard to talk about the legal system because civilians do not understand the mechanisms of the legal system, including me. Therefore, when there are abuses, we do not know where to report the case and even though we are not satisfied with the decision of the judges, we cannot do anything. We just have to force ourselves to accept it. [...]

How do you see this justice system?

The current law is right [justice] so it is great if the judges enforce it properly. I do not know how the judges adjust the cases; whether they consider the social environment instead of prioritise justice or they are not confident [knowledge]to adjust the case . I want the judges to receive systematic and quality [law] trainings to be able to make right decision in the justice system.

Which governments are responsible?

I do not limit who is responsible for it, but if the cases happen in the KNU control area, the KNU is responsible, and if the cases happen in the [Myanmar] government area, they are responsible for it.

Do you believe in the court system in your village?

I am in the centre because some cases were solved with justice, but some of them were not fair so I do not believe in the court system much. Some cases were 1.6 kilo, but the [punishment] is only 0.8 kilos so I do not feel satisfied [not proportionate punishment].

Do you think the court system in your village is justice?

No, not justice.

Do you see bribery in your village?

There is no bribery in my village, but it happened in other areas. It happens with security guards, not the judges. They ask for money in order to reduce the punishment.

How about government court system?

We are not involved in the court system, so we never see bribery issues. We just heard other people talk about it. I experienced it [the Myanmar court system] once, I had to pay the lawyer's fee but then I lost in court because I did not commit bribery.

What issue did you face?

It was when the Hi--- Tatmadaw army camp fell. The Tatmadaw soldiers from that camp arrested my older sister's husband on suspicion of communicating with the rebel group [KNLA]. He was taken to Shway Gong and then to Hpa-an Town. He was put into the Myanmar military prison in Hpa-an. Before the Hpa-an [military] court charged him, we followed him for his discharge from the indictment [of communicating with the KNLA]. When we arrived [at Hpa-an], a lawyer came to us and said he would help us in the court until he was free from the indictment because he did not contact the rebel group. He asked for money and at that period, the [Myanmar] money was high in value. At that time, 16 kilos of sugarcane jaggery were only 200 kyat. We paid that lawyer 500 kyat. He regularly asked for money, 25 kyat or 30 kyat each time. We did not know how he used that money. Maybe he used it for bribing the government [court] workers, but we did not know. Finally, the final court sentenced him [my brother in law] to prison because he was suspected of contacting the rebel group. That lawyer could not help him. I faced the problem of paying the lawyer.

How did you spend on the court and lawyer?

We paid the lawyer 500 kyat once and he also asked for 25 or 30 kyat many times. We went to the court several times, the court appointments were once per week, 15 days once, a month once and sometimes we just returned home one night and then had to go again to the court appointment. We had to travel from Hi--- village to Hpa-an [far distance]. Therefore, the expenses were very high if we compared to the current [Myanmar] money rate.

What were the barriers for you to justice?

The barrier to justice for me was my security concern about the authorities [Myanmar military and government] and we had to be afraid of them. This is my own opinion.

Have you experienced human rights violations against you and justice?

Yes, I have. During the Myanmar government military "Four Cuts" period, we could not go to school; they arrested students and teachers to be porters and we had to carry things [ammunition and military supplies] for them. Therefore, we could not access higher education. This was my right [to access to education]. At the same time, there were a lot of landmines, so we could not dare to travel anywhere.

How do you want improve the situation for the justice and accountability?

As I am a civilian, I cannot do anything to change [the governing system], so leaders [the government] are responsible for improvement and change. Everything is in their hands.

Regarding past human rights violations, what kind of justice do you want? What do you want to see for the investigation?

I want those in charge to conduct a proper investigation on past human rights violations and report [on them], and open the cases to the parliament for the victims to enjoy justice.

What do you want from the perpetrators?

I want the perpetrators to be punished or pay compensation according to the faults [human rights violations] they violated and committed by law.

For you to have peace, what do you want?

I want the armed actors to change their behavior and stop fighting. They should consider the consequences for civilians. They have to repair or update their military system and improve their work plan in the future.

What do you want to give suggestions to the KNU or Myanmar government to improve the human rights situation?

I want the KNU and Myanmar government to meticulously indict their members or followers who violated human rights and who committed rape, torture [and other forms of human rights violations] against civilians. All the perpetrators should be proportionately prosecuted by law in front of the victims as reparation. If they do it this way, many people will see that their government is taking proper action against perpetrators who committed human rights violations such as rape and torture. Then, civilians will be satisfied. The victims themselves also will be satisfied when they see that the perpetrators were prosecuted in front of them.

What is the best way to stop the human rights violations?

In the KNU control area, the KNU is responsible to provide awareness [about human rights] to civilians and punish the [human rights violation] perpetrators by law. The [Myanmar] government also should do the same thing [as the KNU].

What is the best way to stop human rights abuses in all of Myanmar?

Ummm there were excessive human rights violations in Myanmar committed by the Myanmar military and government, so the cases should go to the parliament court. The Tatmadaw soldiers [who violated human rights] should be taken to the parliament court and should proceed under the law. If we do not do it like that, these [human rights violations] will never end because these happen in all of Myanmar.

These are all the questions I have for you, so do you have anything you would like to report or suggestion to give?

Even though the current peace process has not achieved suitable peace yet, I want all the justice system in Town [Government justice system] and the KNU justice system to correctly handle the cases by law and create a secure environment for the civilians. So then civilians will feel secure to enjoy their freedom of expression and take action [against the perpetrators]. So the leaders [KNU and Myanmar government] are responsible for handling the court systems correctly.

Do you have anything else?

I want report about education in my community. The local [Karen] teachers are almost gone and most teachers are government teachers. In addition, civilians do not understand Burmese so there is also a language barrier between students and teachers. At least three local civilians teachers should participate in each school. Even though they [government] said they teach local language, the Karen language can be lost when there are no local civilians teachers in the school.

The second issue is, government teachers get sufficient salary, but the local civilians teachers do not get enough payment. Therefore, I want them [government] to provide sufficient payment to the local civilians teachers so they will not be unhappy to teach.

Do you want the KNU [to do it]?

Yes, I want them to give more financial support in order to encourage the local civilians teachers.

Do you have anything else?

No, these are all.

Can I use your information that you provide for us?

Yes, you already interviewed me; you can use it.

Can I take a picture of you?

Yes, you can, but you should not publish my picture clearly [should censor].

As I explained you about the KHRG using the photo system before I started the interview.

Source #19

Source doc #	Source # 19
Log #	18-122-A6-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Townshp, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Taungoo Interview | Saw Rc--- (male, 47), Rd--- village, Re--- village tract, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have five children.

Have you ever experienced the conflict?

Yes. I have experienced the conflict many times.

Can you tell me about what you have experienced regarding the conflict?

What kind of conflict do you mean?

I mean the conflict such as fighting; land confiscation and people were killed and arrested caused by the fighting.

In 2007, the fighting happened between two armed groups [Tatmadaw and KNLA]. I lived in a local village at that time. Many local people from the local village suffered a lot from the fighting.

Can you please tell me what happened?

The fighting happened between two armed groups so the local people had to confront these two armed groups, especially village heads. A lot of bad things that we did not want to see happened. For example, even though we did not want to see both armed groups, we had to see them. Even though we did not want to give them [what they asked], we had to give it to them. Even though we gave them [what they asked], they criticised us [because we supported both sides]. Being village heads, we had to deal with them even though we did not want to. On the other side, we protected our villagers from danger and we guided our villagers to be able to access livelihoods but sometimes they [armed actor] cannot respect us as they thought it is not a good thing to support villagers.

Which armed groups did you mean when you said they [armed actor] cannot respect you?

They are KNLA and Tatmadaw. For example, if we help the KNLA, the Tatmadaw is not happy with that. If we help the Tatmadaw, the KNLA is not happy with that. This kind of situation happened in every village. The village heads were very upset about that.

Have you ever experienced the situation when you were arrested by the Tatmadaw or the KNLA as you were village head?

During the period between 2005 and 2015, I was kept in the jail as I was a village head. The Myanmar military government accused me of having a connection with with rebel group [KNLA]. Therefore, they gave me punishment. Under Myanmar government law, I was sentenced to jail according to article #17/1 under the criminal code of having connection with a rebel group. Another article #17/3 is under the criminal code, of working together with a rebel group. Therefore, I was sentenced to 8 years jail. At that time, village heads from many villages—especially Karen villages—were sentenced to jail because of these articles. They were detained and tortured. Some people even died [due to the bad treatment]. Some people died in the jail due to hunger. Some people, luckily, and were released due to amnesty.

When did you get arrested?

I was arrested in 2005.

Can you tell me how did you get arrested? Which battalions [Tatmadaw] arrested you?

I do not remember which battalions. Actually, I was arrested during the fighting. In the fighting, the KNLA took weapons from the Tatmadaw. Therefore, the Tatmadaw asked money from villagers to buy weapons but we could not pay them money. That's why they tried to find our mistakes and then they arrested us.

Can you tell me how did they arrest you? I mean did they beat you when they arrested you?

They arrested the people in many different ways. For me, they just informed me to go to meet with them for the meeting. As I was a village head, I had to go to meet with them. Then, I was arrested. What else could I do? When I was arrested, it was like a hell.

When you were detained, how did they treat you? Did they interrogate you?

In the beginning, they questioned us in a peaceful way. I think they were not happy because they did not get the information that they wanted. So they started beating me. They blindfolded me with a cloth. I felt hopeless. They used electricity to shock me when they questioned me. They hit and beat me in different ways. They made us feel thirsty. They handcuffed and leg cuffed me and then they put me in a dark room.

What did they ask you? Did they force you to answer?

They asked me if I had weapons. How can the village head have guns? But they told me that I had guns. I could not answer their questions because I did not actually have guns. Then, they beat and hit me very often.

So they did not only accused you of having a connection with the KNLA but also they accused you of having guns.

Yes. They just said what they wanted to say. They could say whatever they wanted to say.

So you mean they forced you to admit that you had guns even though it was not true. Is that right?

Yes.

What happened then?

They could do anything they wanted to me because I was like water in their hands [at their mercy]. Finally, they sent me to court to pretend like they did the process according to the law. Then, they released an order and put me into jail. I cannot complain about anything that they did because at that time the military government ruled the country. I could not complain about what they did because that is a time when the military government ruled the country. Villagers were like water in their hands. So they did whatever they wanted to do.

What challenges did you face when you were in the jail?

There were so many problems that I cannot count. Living in jail was like living in hell. The food that we give to our dogs and pigs is better than the food we got in jail. The sentence was 10 years. There were many people who were sentenced to 8 years jail. Some were sentenced to 5 years jail. Some were sentenced to 3 years jail. Some people were even sentenced to 20 years. As for me, I was sentenced to 8 years. The food that they provided looked like the food that people make for dogs and pigs. The situation was very poor. We had to eat rice without oil and salt. It was not easy to survive in the prison.

When you lived in the prison, how was your family? Did it affect your family's livelihood?

As you know of the situation in Myanmar, one cannot get food to eat if he or she cannot work for one day. As a bread winner like me spending 8 years in the prison, how could I support my family? Sometimes I thought alone [when living in the prison]. I wondered if my wife got another husband. I wondered if my children were raped. I worried many things about my family. It was not possible for me to help them regarding the livelihood situation. [While living in prison], we lost our lands. We had debts. My children were treated badly by other people. We faced many problems. Finally, I just thank [God] that I survived my release from the prison. There are so many things we cannot count regarding human rights abuses.

Can you please tell me about what you said before, about how your children were treated badly by other people? Can you tell me how they were treated?

[As I lived in prison], my wife had to sell our lands because she needed to support our children in going to school. That's why my children were not treated equally, because were poor. They had to live in other people's houses as they were not independent. Other people insulted them because I am their father and I was a prisoner. I feel like what happened to me affected my children because they were not treated equally. My children wanted to study but they could not. That's why other people looked down on them.

Do you think that the justice system is fair?

I can never say that the law is not fair for the justice because the law should not be practiced based on the people who have power. They [who have power] just ruled the country as they liked. They did not actually comply with the law. During the era of the military government, we only feared the gun. At that time, no one dared to keep their chin up because the military simply followed orders. Therefore, nobody raised their voice about justice. Instead, it was better for us to stay silent. I have never felt or touched justice.

What do you think that what should be done for the perpetrators who violate human rights?

Nobody can hide the truth. That's why I think anyone who commits [crimes or human rights abuses] will be punished in the end. They will be like me one day because I was arrested and put into jail as they accused me of supporting the rebel group. They put into jail in the absence of the law. They put me in jail as they wanted. They just made a decision in the court as they wanted. They just gave an order as they wanted. They just arrested people as they wanted. They just gave food as they wanted. They just asked people to do as they want. They just did whatever they liked to do because they have the power. So I have never seen them being fair. They were the main perpetrators violating the law. In reality, I do not know what they think about themselves. I only see that they are the people who commit human rights abuses. As for me, I do not see myself that I break the law. I just believe that they are the main people who break the law.

Do you mean "they" are Tatmadaw?

Yes.

So what action should be taken for what they have done? Do you think that the Tatmadaw is under the rule of the law?

During the era of the military government, the law they enacted was the best for them. Their law is not suitable with international law, though some of the laws might be suitable with

international law. If the Myanmar law cannot do anything [provide any remedy] for what they have done, the international law will be able to take action for what they have done. For example, somebody commits a serious crime but the Township court cannot make a decision about what he or she has done. He or she will have to go to District court. If District court cannot make a decision, he or she will have to go to State court. If State court cannot take action, he or she will have to go to Division court. The process will be going step by step in order to take the action.

Do you think that it is enough if the Myanmar government gives them [Tatmadaw] punishment? Do you think that the Myanmar government will take action for what they have done? At which level do you think that the action will be taken for justice?

As they have military power, I do not think that it is possible for the Myanmar government to give them punishment. There is an International Military Court. If those perpetrators who committed serious human rights abuses are still alive, they should be taken to the International Military Court according to international law. If the Myanmar law cannot give them fair punishment, I believe the international law will be able to give them fair punishment. I mean those who committed crimes against individuals, communities and humanity. I think the International Military Court will be able to take action for what they have done, even if the Myanmar law cannot do anything.

Do you mean that military soldiers who committed human rights abuses should be taken to International Military Court?

Yes. It should be [the same] for any country, any armed actor and any army. If any armed actor in Myanmar whether Tatmadaw or ethnic armed groups under the United Nation commits human rights abuses, they should be punished.

Before you were sent to prison, how many months did they detain you?

After they detained me for a few weeks, they sent me to court. After they made a decision in the court, they put me into jail. I think it only took two weeks before I went to prison.

Do you think that there was transparency when they questioned you in the court?

No. There was no transparency at that time because I did not have the right to say anything. It did not matter whether I called eyewitnesses or lawyers. They just made a decision as they wanted. This is not fair. This is not suitable as a court process.

How many years did you actually stay in prison?

I was sentenced to 8 years in jail but I actually stayed in jail for seven years and eight months.

So how were you released from the prison?

I can say that I was released because I am lucky. Actually, I was released because of an amnesty from the president. We have to thank president Thein Sein because I was released two months early.

Were you released after the 2012 ceasefire?

No. I was released right before the 2012 ceasefire.

After you were released, you went back to your house. How was your health condition at that time?

When I came back to my house, I could not do any work because I had been in prison for

almost eight years. When I lived in prison, I could not drink clean water, I could not breathe fresh air, I could only eat stale food. My health condition was really poor. I have gastroenteritis and hypertension. I also have diabetes. I suffered a lot from my poor health condition.

What about your physical health condition? You said you were beaten and hit in the prison.

My teeth are not very strong anymore. My teeth have broken one by one. Then, I could not chew or grind food anymore. That's why my stomachache is getting worse and worse. They put big pieces of wood over my ribs, my back and my calves. Then, they beat and hit me. I feel very hurt, especially when it is cold season. I feel very painful. My body will be all chilblains when it is in cold season. Because of that season, I always have to take medicines.

Do you still feel frightened when you are in your community?

I do not feel frightened anymore now because both [Tatmadaw and KNU] signed the ceasefire agreements. But I worry about the ceasefire. If they [Tatmadaw and KNU] misunderstand each other, it is going to be a problem. Only the people will suffer [if they both do not get along]. I am afraid when I think about it. I mean I worry about especially children who have to study and old people.

Tell me about what you know about the ceasefire.

The ceasefire [2012] has already been for seven or eight years.

After the ceasefire, how do you feel about peace in your community?

The taste of the ceasefire is good because we have always fled from war in the past. We had to live in a state of fear. We suffered from hunger. We were afraid to see each other. We did not trust each other. Compared to the situation in the past, it is getting better now because we can travel freely even though the transportation is not good. We do not need to be afraid like before.

What do you expect from the ceasefire? What do you think about the current ceasefire situation and what are your hopes for the ceasefire?

My hopes from the ceasefire are very far from the current ceasefire situation. I hope that we will have everlasting peace. If we have everlasting peace, we will be able to work in order to support our livelihoods. If we are able to work for our livelihoods, we will be able to learn [to improve ourselves]. If our livelihood is improved, our family will be improved. If our family is improved, our country will be improved. Therefore, the peace we want should not be based on one group of people's decision. It should be based on the purpose of the well-being of the whole nation and equality. This will be [result in] everlasting peace.

What is the ceasefire situation in your community?

The situation in our community is just trying to ensure that the ceasefire is not broken. We do not actually feel that people are working on this. The ceasefire can be broken or become worse if they [Tatmadaw and KNLA] do not get along with each other due to misunderstanding. We worry about this. We cannot feel that we have the taste of the peace.

How is Tatmadaw activity in your community?

The military activity is decreased in our community, compared to the past. However, they [governments] discussed and negotiated in a meeting to improve the situation but the solution has never been achieved. They could not implement any action plan that they discussed but they held discussion meetings for months and years. So I am curious about what they are

discussing in meetings. As I am a civilian, I think that nothing is implemented because of a lack of trust. We cannot build the peace if we doubt each other. As we are civilians, we do not think that it is possible to have real peace.

As you talked about a lack of trust, does it mean villagers have a lack of trust in Tatmadaw and KNLA or a lack of trust between Tatmadaw and KNLA?

Yes. There's a lack of trust between Tatmadaw and KNLA. Villagers also do not trust any party. If three parties [civilians, Tatmadaw and KNLA] can work together, we will achieve real peace.

Not only Tatmadaw and KNLA but also villagers will work together. Then, we will get peace. Is that right?

Yes. They should build trust between the Tatmadaw and the KNLA. Villagers need to participate in the peace process. When the Tatmadaw and the KNLA have a meeting, they do not let villagers know about what they are discussing. We will only achieve peace if villagers, the Tatmadaw and the KNLA work together, because the Tatmadaw and the KNLA said that they work for villagers, so they should consider villagers' voices when they have a meeting. If these three parties can work together in order to find the solution, we will be able to build everlasting peace. This is what I believe.

What do you want to suggest in order to be able to make the sustainable peace?

The representatives of the Tatmadaw and the KNU need to continue to collect information and ideas from the meetings reported by the Tatmadaw and KNU. Then, they need to discuss and review those kinds of information and ideas. Villagers also need to participate in the peace process in order to change what should be changed and they need to take roles and responsibilities in the peace process. If they do that, then we will be able to build sustainable peace.

What are the challenges to build the sustainable peace?

There are a lot of challenges to building sustainable peace. To be frank, there are many issues from the past that people cannot forget. Because of the bad past, it is difficult [to participate in the peace process]. Sometimes, people are very selfish. They only want to do things as they like. So it is difficult to discuss peace when it comes to the meeting because they only want to talk about what they want to be and they do not want to consider other people's opinions. This becomes a challenge. In addition, they just want to stop discussing when they reach the controversial topics in the meeting. They do not want to go further in the discussion. Sometimes, they have an attitude like Burmanization. They think that the law they propose is the best. The way they implement is the best. The worst thing they think is that they can get peace if they have power and weapons. Fighting can never be a solution for peace. It is not possible to achieve peace using weapons even though they are used for self-protection.

Which armed actor is making barriers to the peace process? KNU or Tatmadaw?

The challenges to the peace process depend on the both the KNU and the Tatmadaw because the demands from both sides have not met. As long as the demands from both sides are not met, there will always be challenges to the peace process. There are only two parties [KNU and Tatmadaw] trying to solve the barriers to the peace process. If they do not agree with each other's demands, it will be a challenge for the peace negotiations.

What changes did you see in your community after the ceasefire? For example, you said that people are able to travel freely after the ceasefire.

We were afraid to talk about politics in the past. Two or three people could not speak about politics in the past. Now we can speak about it freely. We are not afraid to talk about politics or economic and social issues. We also are able to travel freely. We can sleep in our plantations and farms. We do not need to be afraid to say anything. These are the changes that I have seen.

What do you want to suggest for the KNU and the Myanmar government in order to make peace in the community?

Using weapons [for violence] can never make peace in the community. There should be a promise that we have to use weapons to protect our people and country but please stop fighting with each other. Both sides [KNLA and Tatmadw] should use their weapons to protect the people and the country. In the peace negotiations, do not try to think for only yourselves, but think also for others' consideration. Try to discuss things together in order to solve the problems. Try to discuss things together in order to improve the community. This is what I want to urge the KNU and the Myanmar government to do.

What guarantees do you want to have from the peace process?

I have never seen signs of guarantees from the peace process. That is why it is hard to say what peace with guarantees would look like. They already signed the ceasefire agreement at the national level. I think there will be a guarantee of peace if everyone gets involved in the peace process such as civilians, CSOs, departments from the Myanmar government, EAOs, representatives from international communities, and educated people in the country. Even poor people should be involved in the peace process, and be able to raise their ideas and suggestions. If everyone gets involved in the peace process, I think that will give us a sustainable peace. We should not only involve educated people in the peace process. If people like trishaw drivers in the streets, farmers and plantation workers do not have the right to get involved in the peace process, we will never be able to achieve sustainable peace. Soldiers, captains, presidents, ethnic leaders, doctors or nurses should all be involved in the peace process. If everyone, regardless of their position, can get involved in the peace process, we can achieve the sustainable peace.

What kind of human rights abuses happened in your community after the NCA was signed in 2015?

Land confiscation is one of the human rights violations that happened in our community after the NCA. The confiscated lands have never been returned to their owners. None of the land issues has been solved. The military still confiscates people's lands. Villagers have been living on their lands for 30 or 40 years but they become trespassers when their lands are confiscated. We feel like our rights have been violated. Besides, there is a lack of rule of law in the community. Even though they talk about democracy, they just rule the country with the old system. They just do whatever it takes to get money. The poor people cannot do anything. They [the Myanmar government] just construct roads as they like [they do not consider its quality], as they do with school buildings. In rural communities like our village, there is no clinic. If we go to clinics in town, we cannot get medical treatments as we do not have money. Even if we only go to clinics in town, we cannot go because the road is bad. People find it difficult to support their livelihoods because the price of the commodities is higher. Therefore, crimes and thefts are increased in the community. For example, stealing motorcycles, stealing vegetables from plantations, stealing things from houses, rape, sexual violence against young girls and other crimes happen often in community.

Can you please tell me more about land confiscation by the military? Has it increased or decreased after the NCA?

As far as I know, villagers have been working on their lands since their great grandfathers, but when the military ruled the country, the villagers' lands were confiscated for military lands. I feel something strange about it, especially when I see military buildings in villagers' lands.

Did the military confiscate villagers' lands in your village?

Yes. As for us, we will say that they confiscated our lands. As for them, they will say that the lands are their lands. As you know of the situation in Karen State, they [Tatmadaw] do not remove any of their army camps from Karen State.

How did the land confiscation affect the community's livelihood?

The villagers, whose lands were confiscated, find it difficult to support their livelihoods.

As you said that the military did not return lands to villagers in your community, did the military increase its army base's area by confiscating villagers' lands?

I do not know much about it as I did not go to see the situation by myself.

Since the NCA, do you feel that your rights are respected in your community? For example, does the military respect villagers' rights?

No. I do not feel that our rights are respected. We cannot believe any armed actors from any armed organization or the military.

What do you know about the justice in your community? How do you define the term of justice?

Everyone wants justice. What justice means to me is the basic and equal rights that everyone deserves.

Which justice system is used in your community: KNU justice system or the Myanmar government's justice system? Is there any customary justice system in your village?

We do not have the KNU's justice system or the Myanmar government's justice system in our village because we do not have the rule of law in our community. However, the crimes do not happen often in our village. When crimes happen, we just solve the problem at the village level. If the case should be solved in court, we just go to the court that is accessible in our area.

Is that the KNU court?

Yes.

Do you have trust in the KNU justice system? Do you feel that the KNU justice system is a fair and just system?

The justice is never fair around the country. It does not matter whichever justice [system] is run by which government. It does not matter what kind of issues [the case deals with], such as land confiscation. We can never have fair justice. Even if we have laws for the justice system, there is always corruption. As long as corruption exists, we can never feel like we have a fair justice system.

What kind of issue involves corruptions most often?

It is more related to crimes, I think. In some crimes, the case is small but they make it bigger. In some crimes, you will get the justice [get away with it] if you have more money.

What kind of justice system do you want to have?

As long as everyone, regardless of position in the country, cannot achieve the basic rights that they deserve, there will never be justice in our country. If everyone achieves their basic rights and takes responsibility, we will get real justice.

Do you think that the KNU and the Myanmar government have a responsibility to do something regarding justice? What do you think they should do regarding justice issues?

They should have responsibility to do [improve] the justice system because the Myanmar government and the KNU are obliged to work for their people and country. This should be because they are the only people who talk about [run] politics. They are the only people who use weapons to protect the country. They are the only people who have power. The power is in their hands. That is why they should take more responsibility for justice. As a civilian, we also have the responsibility to participate in the justice process.

What suggestions do you want to give in order to stop human rights abuses?

Human rights violations have been committed in our community for years. What we have to do is to solve the small cases first. We have to make sure that the rule of law is applied in our community. The law should be accepted by the majority of the people. The law should be beneficial to the people. The law should be equal for everyone. Then, we can go forward if this kind law is enacted.

Okay. Now you can tell me everything that you want to talk about and everything that you want to share.

First of all, I would like to thank you for coming to conduct an interview with me because I can openly tell you about what I feel. I think you are asking me to get the information about the justice system. I want to suggest to you to ask not only me but also other people around the country [regarding the justice system], because the more you ask many people, the more the voices of the people will be raised. Then, the administration authorities will be able to know what they should do [regarding the justice system]. I think they will be able to improve [the justice system]. Even when you ask me about that, I have seen that I have some feelings about the justice system. If we can get more ideas and feelings from other people, we will likely be able to find the best solution to improve the justice system. Whether the Myanmar government or organizations, if they love their people and country, they should find what their people talk about, what their people are feeling and what their people are suffering from. Only then can we fulfill each other's needs. Then, we can build a new society where we can live together peacefully. This is what I want to suggest.

Thank you for sharing this information.

Yes.

Do you allow KHRG to use the information that you provided?

Yes.

I would like to ask you for your picture. So I want to tell you about security procedure for interviewees. We, KHRG, censor your face and name and where you live, such as your village's name. So do you allow me to take a picture of you?

Yes. You can take it.

Thank you very much.

Source #20

Source doc #	Source # 20
Log #	18-117-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Naw La--- (female, 44), Lb--- village, Lc--- village tract, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

What about your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What about your religion?

I am a Christian.

Do you have a family [Are you married]?

Yes. I have two daughters.

What do you do for your livelihood?

I am just working with church.

Have you experienced conflict?

Before the ceasefire, we experienced lots of conflicts. We had one incident here before. A KNLA soldier was coming back to the village and Tatmadaw soldiers shot him. After they shot him, they dragged that dead body on the ground like an animal.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

There was a villager here, and Tatmadaw soldiers looked for him and they tortured him brutally.

Do you remember when it happened?

No.

Were there any other human rights abuses in your area?

Yes. I will talk about myself. In August 2007, my husband was a village head. Whenever Karen village leaders came to our village, we usually cooked for them and prepared the meals for them. We had two villages at that time. I lived in Ld---village when I newly got married. Those two villages always had conflict between each other. The old village is a little poorer than the new village. As my husband was a village head, we had to welcome the guests whenever they came to my house. When the Tatmadaw heard about my husband, they started looking for him since he was a village head from the Karen side. My husband used to go out to attend meetings

outside and left my children and me at home. My children were too small during that time. He was a very kind man who was willing to help villagers. On August 2nd 2007, Tatmadaw came and surrounded our house. My husband was not there and I was lulling my baby to sleep inside the house. When I heard someone was shouting outside, I came up to look, and then I found lots of Tatmadaw right in front of my house. I was shaken. They asked me "where is Le--- [the husband's name]?" I told them "Le--- is not here because he went back to Lf--- village." They asked me "how many days he has gone there for?" Then I answered "he went back for a week already to help his brother work." Then they left to a Burmese village head's house. When they went on the way, they encountered Th'Nay Paw who was a KNLA former soldier though later he left KNLA and became a DKBA soldier again. He lost his one leg and he said his life is already hopeless so he will just end up like that. So he told Tatmadaw soldiers that he Saw Le--- had come back from working in the other village. Therefore, the Tatmadaw ordered a sentry guard to look for my husband. As soon as he came back and washed up, they arrested him and tied his hands behind his back. My husband and his friend, they were tied together and were interrogated by Tatmadaw. A moment later, we heard the sound of a launch in the river and we knew that the Tatmadaw had brought my husband to Lh--- with them. As I stayed behind, I had to work quickly [make money] to follow that case in order to free my husband. I gave money to a village head from the Burmese side to follow the case but he was just corrupt and did nothing. Even though I gave him money to process the case, the money did not reach the responsible people. It got lost in his hands. My husband was tortured and beaten with a bamboo stick every night. Blood would come out of his mouth whenever the Tatmadaw hit him. One morning, they were sent to Taungoo and kept there. Later, one of the village leaders called Li--- told me that he will go to my husband and bring him back so he needs money. I just gave him 10000 or 20000 kyat to go to my husband. My son was asked to play football in Kyaukkyi town. He came back and told me that "uncle Li--- went to Kyaukkyi together with me and he did not go to my father. The money you gave him, he used it to buy food and then came back." One day, a Tatmadaw commander named Bo Kyein Lone brought a bamboo stump with him and asked the wives of arrested husbands to come to meet him. He said that he wants to ask us some questions. We could not do anything so I left my children with their aunts and then I went there. When we reached him, he told us to get inside a nursery school. He said "I will ask you questions and you all have to answer them honestly". We were all shaken and worried at that time. He asked us "why was Le--- arrested?" then one of our customary leaders told me to tell him honestly. Then I answered him, "my husband was a village head and P'Doh Lj--- came back and asked him to look for buffalos and buy some for him. So my husband did not look for other buffalos but he sold his own buffalos to P'Doh Lj--- and he thought that he will buy cows instead." Then that Tatmadaw commander told me to give him all the money for the buffaloes' fees that my husband got from P'Doh Lj---. I told him I do not have any of the money that my husband got. I did not know how my husband had used that money. I also told him "I do not have any money to give you." That Tatmadaw commander, Bo Kyein Lone, already knew who my husband sold his buffalos to and how much he got and what was his job. So, after I told him everything and he realized that I was telling the truth, he said "you can go home now since you told me the truth honestly". Even though we came back we worried that he will keep calling us again and again. When I asked people to follow up with the process of my husband's case, they kept telling us that the process had not started yet because people were looking for a lawyer for them. I kept asking them but the response was [always] the same. Later, a village leader informed us that the wives of the people who had been arrested should come and meet their husbands for the last time. When we asked why, they told us that our husbands would be in prison soon. We faced a lot of problems when we went there. It was our first time to Taungoo so we did not know where is the prison, so we asked a motorbike driver to drop us there. He knew

that we are new people to this place so instead of going there directly and quickly, he carried us around the town and lied to us and increased the fees for the motorbike. It should have cost 10000 kyat, but he asked us to pay 50000 kyat. Later, we found out that from the place we rode the motorbike to prison, it only costs 1500 kyat. We could not directly enter into the building. We had to get a ticket to enter. When I met him, he told me that he will be put in a prison so he asked me to pray for him. He said if the NLD has a good arrangement for them, he will only be in prison for a few years. If not, he will be in prison for 40 years. The authorities let us meet for only 5 minutes to talk to each other. When we went outside, they told us that they will go somewhere they called the yellow office for an official decree. When we reached to that office, we were really terrified and my babies were also crying. A moment later, a car carrying prisoners reached that place. We could only see their eyes because everything was enclosed. After that, they were put inside a place that looks like a pig pen. We waited there to hear how many years he will be in prison. There were five or six people tied with the same rope. When it reached each person's turn, they each went up and the judge called out their crime. It seemed like the people who reported the case are very good people. After that, my husband and his friends were charged with detonation so the judge declared a decree that they will be in prison for 8 years. So, I thought that if it is 8 years and we are fortunate, we can meet again. During that time, there were a lot of landmine explosions in the area or nearby area we were living. So, they thought that my husband and his friends were doing that. When he was in prison, I was alone at home and faced lots of difficulties because I did not know how to continue to finish the work that he had started. I faced livelihood hardships with my small children. I also had to bring him food once a month. I could not bring him a good meal. Once when I brought him food, he told me that his case became heavier so he will need to attend the court again. So he wanted me to go as well. Therefore, I needed money again so I asked some money from people because I did not have any money. Even when we went there, no one dared to let us stay there because we had a case. So we did not even sleep there and came back the same day. Some of my friends went to sleep in the monastery. When we reached the court, my husband told me to look for a lawyer for him. I was in trouble because I have never seen a lawyer before. When I asked for suggestions from others, we all agreed that we will ask for a lawyer for our husbands. That lawyer was a lady and each of us had to pay her 100,000 kyat. I think we asked her and paid her 700,000 kyat because there were seven of us. When they attend the court that time, they declared a decree that my husband's group would be in prison for 40 years again. Then I thought if they are going to live in prison for 40 years, I will stop going to prison or sending food to my husband. Started from that time, I did not usually go there anymore. I was not able to go there for five years. I went there again after a while and saw they ate very bad, smelly food. It smelled like goat. I think that eating like that all the time caused him gastric problems. When we went there, he said he had had a stomach ache for a long time ago and he was sent to a hospital but with handcuffs. Then he said to the authorities "if you handcuff me like this even while in the hospital, I better not come to the hospital because it makes no difference. I came to the hospital to cure myself because I was in pain already and if you still handcuff me like this, it is even worse." So he went back to prison again. He said whenever someone felt sick or does not matter what kind of sickness, they would only be given paracetamol, so he asked me to buy medicine for him. I bought it and told him to look after himself. A few months later, I got a phone call. At that time, we did not have much phone access. We only had one or two in the whole village. So people called the village phone and they passed me a message that my husband had died in the prison. At first, I was not sure whether it was true or not. They told me that I should go to see it, so I carried my older daughter and the younger one was carried by her uncle and then we went there. But when I went on the way and stopped by my husband's relatives' place, they told me not to go there. They said "don't go there. If you go, you will be in trouble

because they will ask you for the fee for the land where your husband is going to be buried.” Then, I started to think that I am would not go anymore because even if I went, I could not do anything. My husband was already dead and I did not want to get myself in trouble again. His body was sent to a church and church members were waiting for us to go but we did not show up. We realized later that they could not wait for us anymore because the body became bloated, so they buried him. We told them we had so many difficulties so we could not go. I think a week after he died, his friends were released from the prison. I saw them going insane after being released from prison. They talked about their experiences from when they were in prison. They said people gave electric shocks to them while interrogating them. Even when you talked to them, they would respond to you after they stared at you for a long time. They are not normal like before. They cannot work anymore now. I am also facing problems because I have to look after my children and work for my livelihood alone.

What was he charged with?

They were arrested and charged with detonation under sections 17/1 and 2.

Where did the landmines explode?

They exploded all around this area and even in other areas like Taungoo.

When was he arrested?

On August 2nd, 2007.

How many years did he live in prison before he passed away?

I think he lived in prison for five or six years. People said he died because of gastric problems, but when the doctor autopsied his dead body, he found that [his appendix] had burst.

Were you displaced during the conflict period?

No.

How has the displacement of family members affected your life and livelihood?

Since we do not have a complete family, we are sometimes faced with insufficiency and poverty. I cannot send my children to school either. So, I have to ask help from their aunts and uncles because I cannot afford it alone.

What about other displaced families from your village?

Yes, because their husbands were also imprisoned like mine.

How many of them?

Six of us altogether.

Did you say you have three children?

Yes, my oldest son did not finish his standard 10. He quit school because he was depressed that we could not afford to send him to school.

Who were the main perpetrators of human rights violations?

I think Tatmadaw soldiers led by Bo Kyain Lone.

Do you know the battalion number of the Bo Kyain Lone group?

No. But I would guess it was battalion #439.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No. Nothing has been resolved. Instead, people would like to look down on us for having experienced such things.

Was there any justice for you or other victims of human rights abuses?

No. The incident happened when I lived in another village. If I was here, I could ask help from my relatives. I did not know who to ask for help when I was there. At that time, they did not allow anyone to go out or enter the village. If I could go outside of the village, I would ask help from my brother. They closed everything so no one was allowed to go anywhere.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

No.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

I do not think we can do it by ourselves.

In your opinion, should they go to court or should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power for abusing human rights?

I think they have to know what we lost. We lost a life and our animals. So, I think they should pay for compensation because they cannot beg the dead person's forgiveness. They should pay compensation to send the children of the person they tortured to death to school.

What do you think is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause is that the Tatmadaw did not have justice and did not treat me fairly like a human. I also think that they do not have love in their hearts and the political situation is also not so good.

Do you know anything about the ceasefire?

No. I just heard from people that it is [now] the period of ceasefire and we can travel easily.

What do you think about it?

I think the situation is getting better for local villagers like us. In the past, we were not allowed to use a torch light at night. But now, we are free to use it.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

I do not know but I feel like we can work and travel better than the past. I do not know about other things since I do not get involved in politics.

Do you also know about the NCA or peace process?

No. I do not know.

What do you expect to get from this peace process? Or do you have any suggestion for that?

I do not know how to say about this. The authorities can handle what they started. We are powerless as civilians. But we really hope that it will bring a genuine peace.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

Yes, we live in peace in our village.

Do you think you have more rights now?

Yes.

How has the peace process affected your life?

We can travel easily these days, is one of the benefits.

Do you feel safer now?

No. Not yet.

Has your livelihood improved?

No. It is same from the past. My children had to go abroad to work for our livelihood. It is too hard for us. We do not have sufficient food to eat.

What does peace mean to you?

If our leaders and the Myanmar government live in peace and love, we will have peace. But it is like we are having a temporary peace now.

In your perspective, what is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

I think the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace is misunderstanding between our leaders (KNU and Myanmar government).

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

I do not know about that because what I am seeing right now is not lasting peace. It will be difficult for us to achieve lasting peace.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would like to say that we have to pray for them, that they will build understanding and love between them. They also need to develop the heart that wants peace.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

In our village, most villagers do not know how to read and write. Therefore, whenever there is a training or workshop, village leaders ask me to go and help them. That is what I contribute.

What are the main human rights challenges your community faces during this NCA period?

I do not see any human rights challenges here.

What does justice mean to you?

I do not know.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

I did not know about rules or justice system until my nephew became village head. When he is a village head, he also let us know what rules to follow are. That is when we started to know about rules. A person here before was very rude and messy. But when the rules are introduced and applied, his situation is getting better and he does not act like before.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is your area ruled by Myanmar

government or KNU?

Both.

Which side do villagers go to when something happens?

We mostly go to KNU first.

Do you trust the KNU justice system? Do you feel that it is fair?

Yes, mostly, it is fair.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

Yes. I experienced it myself. After my husband passed away, I went to the nursery school in the mountain place to earn my livelihood. That nursery school was supported by other countries. I was asked to go there and teach, so I left my children behind and then went there. We did not get anything like a salary for the whole year. We were disappointed but we could not do anything.

Where was the Nursery located?

It was in Lk--- village. And when we were about to come back, still no one was there to arrange for our travel back to our own place. No leader was there to write a permission or recommendation letter either. We had to come back by ourselves, and it was very challenging. No one picked us up either. The place is very far and we had to come back on foot. I went to a district leader while they were doing logging and told him that I need to repair my house. He responded to me and promised me that he will build one for me but until now, he has not done anything.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I do not know. They should try and fix the mistakes they did to achieve justice.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

I think both KNU and Myanmar government.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

I think you have to let them know about what you felt and suffered and tell them to stop.

Okay. The questions are finished. Thank you for your time.

Yes. Thank you.

Source #21

Source doc #	Source # 21
Log #	18-134-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
Dooplaya Interview Naw Ma--- (female, 60), Mb--- village, Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya	

District (December 2018)

Religion: Christian

Ethnicity: Karen

Family Statue: Widow

Occupation: Customary leader

I would like to conduct an interview with you about the peace process, justice and accountability. Firstly, could you share your experience of conflict?

I have experienced conflict for a long time, since I had babies. Forced portering was very prevalent during that time. The Tatmadaw frequently arrested male villagers to be porters. So, my husband had to hide often from the Tatmadaw. For us [women], we stayed at home with our babies. Sometimes, the Tatmadaw came to our house and looked for our husbands. They used to hit my children's head and treated us violently when they came to our house. Our experience in this country is so tough.

When did this happen?

It happened between 1994 and 1996. I lived in Mc--- village and then moved to Md--- village [nearby places]. Our homes and cupboards were damaged by Tatmadaw shelling. The Tatmadaw fired mortars and bullet into our homes. My husband's siblings worked as KNLA soldiers. So, the Tatmadaw examined our house every time when they came. We lived in fear during that time.

What was the worst experience you or your community had?

Oh, the worst experience I have faced is when I had the youngest baby in my womb. The Tatmadaw attacked our village and I ran immediately. I could not manage to run on the stairs. I just jumped from the back of my house. My sarong that I was wearing accidentally hung on the edge of the wood floor. So, my body was drooping at edge of the wood floor as I could not reach the ground. Again I faced a terrible experience after four days of my delivery of the youngest child. The Tatmadaw attacked us immediately in the morning. I was shocked and ran away without taking my baby with me. My husband and my baby were still in a bed when I fled. Then, my husband hurried to take my baby and ran. We did not have a hole for hiding in the ground. So some children and I sat on my husband to hide him from the Tatmadaw soldiers. Again in 1995, the Tatmadaw forced villagers to go to be porters. There were no men left, as they had run away, so they arrested women and forced them to be porters. Many women had to carry loads and go to porter.

How did authorities and local leaders take accountability for those human rights abuse?

Local leaders tried to take accountability but the situation was so risky. Men were afraid to be village heads because the Tatmadaw tortured them frequently. So women had to take the risk by being village head. Some village heads were arrested and killed by the Tatmadaw as well. It was very dangerous to be a village head at that time because we lived between two armed groups. We had to be very careful. Sometimes, armed groups blamed the village head and tortured them. In most places, women took the risk to be village heads, as men were afraid.

What were the strengths of women during that time? Why did men not want to be village heads?

Men were tortured severely. They were tied and hit by Tatmadaw soldiers. Men were afraid to

confront the Tatmadaw because they would be tortured worse if they did so. Women had more courage to confront the Tatmadaw because they were unlikely to be tortured as severely as men.

What were the barriers and challenges for your livelihood during that time?

We always had security threats. We dared not go to our plantations peacefully. We were afraid of the Tatmadaw soldiers.

Who were the main perpetrators of human rights abuses?

It was armed groups. The Tatmadaw were fighting for power and the KNLA was also fighting and protecting their people.

Why do you think such human rights abuses happened?

I think because Tatmadaw wanted to influence ethnic minorities. There is no way the fighting would happen if the Tatmadaw did not fight to influence us. They could have stayed in their own base in the town peacefully. Why did they attack our community?

What do you understand about the NCA?

I think our leaders are trying to pursue peace for our community [Karen people]. So they have made this decision to get involved in the peace process and NCA. However, it is not peaceful because we always have to wary of potential fighting.

Do you think there is real peace in the community?

I don't think so. There is less fighting happening and we do not need to flee among bullets anymore. However, there is not real peace in our heart.

What do you expect from the peace process?

I expect every community to be united and approaching for peace and development as best we can. Our government [Myanmar and KNU] also have a crucial role in developing the country and maintaining peace as well.

Do you think there is actual security in your community?

No.

How about your livelihood situation?

It is not so good. We have to struggle to earn our daily incomes. There are many ethnic groups surrounding our community. In the past we lived peacefully because there were only Karen people. Now we have Mon and Bamar ethnic people cultivating plantations near our village because some community members sold their lands to them. As a result, some people are now afraid to stay in their far plantations alone.

What are the barriers to sustainable peace?

Security concern is one of the barriers. We do not even have security in our village. Our properties such as motorbikes are stolen often. Many people have lost their motorbikes in this village.

Is there any penalty for those who commit such crime?

We do not even know who stole it.

How will you suggest and recommend the government to build a sustainable peace?

I would like to recommend them to do their best in developing the country and pursuing peace. Now, we do not have to flee from war anymore but there are still many barriers. The government should take full responsibility for the security of civilians such as protecting against drug dealers and drug users. I think both governments lack responsibility when it comes to drug issues. Being able to protect against drugs would probably bring peace to the local community.

Do you think women have equal rights with men?

Gender equality is improving. Women participate more in their community.

What is justice?

Justice is honesty and equality regardless of race and property. Justice is often violated by authorities, especially those who deal with the court and punishment.

How do local leaders solve the problems in the community?

They take responsibility for general issues that arise in the local area. However, they submit bigger crimes or issues that they cannot solve to upper authorities such as Township level or regional level.

Do you think the local problem solving mechanism depends on KNU or Myanmar governments?

We mostly depend on KNU.

Do you think local problem solving mechanisms are just?

Yes, I think so.

Do you think the past human rights abuses should be compensated or handled in court?

It has to be handled in court first. Sometimes, compensation can cause corruption between the authorities and the victims. So, a court judgment is more transparent and appropriate. This will be more just.

Which government is more responsible for handling judgment?

The Myanmar government is responsible but they do not handle cases carefully. The KNU government also has responsibility to handle issues according to the [their] legal principles.

What would be the best way to eliminate human rights abuses?

According to my perspective, the governments have legal principles that prohibit drug dealers or users. However, this law was violated by authorities' families and relatives. Police arrest drug dealers and users everywhere but they are the main drug dealers. How should we do [handle] this? The government should be stricter on this. Our country cannot have peace with such a situation.

Thank you so much for sharing your information. Would you allow me to use this information in publication?

Yes. I also thank you so much for letting me share the information. I have learnt a lot as well.

Source #24

Source doc #

Source #24

Log #	18-127-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Tanninthari Township, Myeik-Dawei District
Full Text	

Myeik-Dawei Interview | Saw Ec--- (male, 34), Ed--- village, Ma Naw Raw area, Tanninthari Township, Myeik-Dawei District. (December 2018)

Are you married?
Yes, I am. I got married in 2010.

How many years have you been living here?
I have been living here for eight years.

Why did you come here?
We were displaced.

Why you were displaced?
We were displaced because of the fighting.

Which places were you displaced to? And what difficult situation have you experienced?
Villagers faced difficulties in their livelihood situation. They were finding and using ways to get food to survive for their lives. In addition, some people were being raped, beaten, and shot by the Tatmadaw soldiers.

Have you witnessed it or you were told by someone?
I have witnessed it personally.

Where did you witness these conditions?
People who live in every part of the KNU-controlled area experienced these critical conditions. These KNU controlled area includes Ee---, Ef---, Eg---, Eh--- and Ei---.

When did this happen?
It happened throughout the years of 2001 and 2002. In F---, a mother and her daughter were raped (Ej---).

Do you know the name of them?
The name of the mother is Naw Ek--- and her daughter's name is Naw Ei---.

Do you know the name of the battalion?
It was battalion (101).

Do you know the name of the commander?
I don't know.

How long were you displaced?
We were displaced for 11 years in the forest.

During that conflict period, were you displaced to the Thai-Burma border side?

No.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

During the conflict period, we faced various kinds of difficulties such as livelihoods, housing and for our safety as well. We had to be alert in every single minute in the conflict period.

After the displacement, where have you been living? Were you living in other places or in your own village?

I am living in Ed--- village, Ma Naw Raw area now.

Do you feel safe living here?

We don't have any difficulty concerning our safety living here.

Have you dared to return to your village during the time you've been displaced?

Yes, I have. I have returned to my village three times already since the NCA.

Was it safe for you to return?

There was no interrogation along my way the three times I returned to my village.

Why were you returning to your village?

I was returning to my village to see my parents for the first time [since he was displaced]. After that, I returned to participate in my brother's wedding. And then, I returned to my village for my mother's funeral.

Do you have land to work if you go back to live in your village?

Yes.

Are you afraid to return to your village?

No. I'm not.

Do the villagers have fear living in the village?

I don't see any harm in this current situation.

What do you think will happen in the future in your village? Do you think the situation will get better or worse?

I think the political situation and the participation of the community will become stronger if we return to live in our village. In addition to this, we would like to get educated by organisations [there].

What do you mean when you say educated by organisations?

I mean getting educated on how to protect ourselves from the dangers of violators.

In the future, do you think you are returning to live in your village or live here?

I think I will continue living in my wife's village now.

What kinds of support do you need for your family and the community?

In our village, we plan to build a church. That's why we need building materials. Now, a school in the village was built, but the students still don't have the chance to learn. I am curious

whether this school could be registered and run officially.

What was the problem?

The KNU didn't want the school to be linked with the government school. Furthermore, the school didn't receive sufficient aid. That's becoming a problem for the students' ongoing education.

Were there school teachers?

There's only a female teacher.

What are the healthcare, security and livelihood conditions in this village?

Villagers support their living by processing lead and farming.

Where did they find money to purchase food?

Some villagers sieved lead every day. With that income [they receive 200 Viss of lead], they purchased food.

Were there companies mining for the lead?

Yes.

What is the name of the company?

A group from the Maw Kee Company came to mine for the lead. The other persons were rich men named U Shwe Ta Gu, U Ka Law Tu, U Aaw Wai and U Lu Ni. There were five groups in total.

When did they come in for the lead mining?

U Aaw Wai and U Ka Law Tu came to mine the lead first in February 2017.

What about the other groups?

There also began mining the lead in February 2017.

Were there benefits for the villagers who are living here in the village?

When they first came to our area, they supported us and promised to help us.

Why don't they support the villagers at this time?

I have no idea. Before, the five groups combined together and support 1, 000, 000 kyat for the villagers. They also gave 5, 000, 000 kyat for the development of the village. Their support lasted for only three months. Later on, they didn't give any support.

Was there damage to the water and trees?

Some groups were mining lead next to the local villages' betel nut plantations and it caused damage. In addition, lead mining activities polluted the water. Not only was that harmful for the aquatic animals, it also caused difficulties for the villagers.

Where did you access water after it was polluted?

People came to donate water to us and we used that.

Was the lead mining affecting villagers' health?

I didn't see villagers face any serious health problems.

Source #22

Source doc #	Source # 22
Log #	18-119-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyauk T'Ga Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Fg--- (male, 54), Fh--- village, Hkin Inn Kyi village tract, Kyauk T'Ga Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

Have you ever experienced conflict?

Of course I experienced conflict. In 2005, someone called Saw Fi---, a businessman, visited our village. Hospitably, we welcomed him and cooked food for him. He was not a soldier when he came here but I am not sure if he was a soldier in the past. The Myanmar government controlled this area. So, some local people wanted to be on the Tatmadaw's side and betrayed their own people by accusing someone [from the village] of communicating with the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA] or being a spy. When Saw Fi--- came here, they [villagers] accused him of being involved in the explosion of a landmine in Hpyu Town. They also accused me [interviewee] and some Sunday school teachers of being accomplices of Saw Fi---.

Then, the Tatmadaw arrested me, the village head and two women who work as Sunday school teachers. The Tatmadaw accused us and questioned us a lot but we did not confess to the things that we did not do. We were innocent. They forced us to tell the truth but they did not accept what we told them. They forced us to confess what they thought of us. They accused us because we were religious [Christian] workers. There was no chance and no right for us to complain during that time.

After some time, we were sent to Toungoo-Sit Kyaw Yay Sit Hlone and N'Hsaung Pyaing areas [military working camps]. We thought they were going to release us after going to these places. However, they told us: "You are innocent but we have to imprison you guys because of the accusation." Then, they brought us to court, which sentenced us to 5 years of imprisonment under section 17(1) and 3 years under section 17(2) [of the Unlawful Associations Act]; altogether we were jailed for 8 years. They [Tatmadaw] put the prisoners in one room. [They did not have enough individual cells]. After six years in prison, a Sunday school teacher and I were released.

Were you tortured and physically abused during imprisonment?

Of course, we were brutally abused several times. When they arrested and questioned us, they tied a piece of cloth around our eyes to cover it. They pressed down on our knee with a metal block. They also hit our legs and tied our hands behind our backs. They also hanged us upside down the whole night and sometimes forced us to kneel for a long time. They did not us give food or drinks for two days. Notably, the Tatmadaw suspended my village head upside down [in the air] like a pig as they strongly hit his back. Three other villagers from the Toungoo area were also tortured and imprisoned with us. Unfortunately, they died in prison because of the torture. When we were in the prison, we even drank water from the toilet because we were very thirsty.

On a fortunate day, we were preparing to walk out and drink water from the toilet, when an officer called us and told us that we will be released because we were found to be not guilty.

Firstly, I was accused of being in possession of two landmines. They started torturing my village head and forced him to confess that I [the pastor/interviewee] had two landmines. They tortured and hit him until he confessed [falsely] according to their order even though it was not true. As soon as the village head confessed, the Tatmadaw brought him in front of me and told me: "Now your village head said you have two landmines". At that time, I was so angry at my village head because I did not know that he was tortured to say this. Then, I said [to my village head and Tatmadaw]: "I am a pastor and I will go to the hell if I lie. I am telling the truth. Everyone you accused are all innocent. You accused Say Wah Lay of having weapons but he did not. You are doing this [accusing] because you want money and power. If you really need a "criminal", I will take the risk but you have to promise me that you will release every other innocent villager you arrested. I do not mind if you jail me for a lifetime or kill me now." Then, they were quiet and stopped torturing us.

Did you know who tortured you?

It was Tatmadaw soldiers from Sit Hlone base which were accompanied by Intelligence officer Thein Myit's group under the authority of G1 [Personnel Officer].

Have you ever seen human rights abuses in your community?

Of course, we were abused by the Tatmadaw. They forced us to watch the tower during the night. If we fell asleep during the watch, they punished us in many ways such as forcing us to do forward rolls, digging the ground in the Kan Taya area, east of Kyauk T'Ga. Also, they [Tatmadaw] often ordered us to cut wood and bamboo for them.

What was the worst experience you encountered during the conflict?

The worst thing I faced was betrayal by our own ethnic people. The second thing was being accused as politicians even though I was only a religion worker. We were not able to build our house properly because we had to sell it every time. I sold the first house I built for my family. Again, when I prepared wood to build my second house, I had to sell it because of sudden armed conflicts and accusations [by the Tatmadaw]. I had four children but they could not live together. My wife and I also had to live separately. When I was in prison, my wife was jailed for 20 days in Pan Taing Kon jail, Hpyu jail and No #1-Toungoo police station. We worried about our children going to school and surviving without us. I was so stressed and even wanted to die during the time I was tortured, and when my wife was arrested and my children were in trouble. This was the worst experience in my life.

Have you or your family ever been displaced?

When I was in prison during the conflict, my wife could not flee or displace because she was also arrested [in a different jail]. During my detention period, my oldest son was attending Bible school in the town and he was also afraid to come back to the village. My two youngest sons were with their relatives' family. Only my other son stayed in the village. However, before this happened, my father Saw Fj---, who worked as a local security guard in Fk---village, experienced displacement and persecution. He displaced with six siblings of mine to Hkway K'Lote refugee camp when Baw Bi Daw (Shan U) [Tatmadaw officer] declared they were going to prosecute all the formal local leaders. When they stayed in Hkway K'Lote refugee camp, the DKBA [Buddhist] attacked them and they fled to Umphiem Camp in 2000. Now, they have resettled in the USA.

Can you tell me about your experience during the conflict period?

My experience in the Toungoo prison was so tough. I was kept in a room where many insects bit me. Those insect bites felt like bees' bites. I could not sleep well and was stressful. I was almost fell unconscious in suffering.

Then, I prayed and questioned God: "I am innocent in this case but why am I tortured? Please give me strength to tolerate this". After I prayed, my village head came to me and said: "Don't worry so much, pastor" I said: "How can put away my worry as long as my wife is in detention and my children are far apart". My village head encouraged me to forget my worries and pray to God. A few days later, we were going to be sent to Hkan Di prison. Then, we worried even more because it is further than Toungoo Prison. Our family and relatives would not be able to visit us anymore. Then, we prayed to be sent to Inn Sein prison where we expected that our relatives and friends can somehow visit us easier. Then, we fast and prayed together. In the following days, we were sent to Mandalay Prison and jailed there for 12 days. After that, the police chief told us: "Do not worry, the accusations against you guys are not true". Because of this word, we thought that we would be released. However, we were sent to Inn Sein Prison for further detention.

When I was in Inn Sein Prison, I met a political prisoner who worked as NLD vice-secretary in the Ton Tay area. He encouraged me: "Do not worry, I was imprisoned as a politician, I will share my knowledge about politics [with other people] in the prison. As you are a pastor, you should do something meaningful in the prison before you leave." Then, I organised worship programs with prisoners and prayed together. Fortunately, in December 2009, we officially got the chance to worship in a group with every prisoner and celebrate Christmas every year. During that time, there were 46 prisons in Myanmar but Inn Sein prison was the only one that allowed Christians to worship. I baptized 29 peoples when I was in the prison.

How were the past human rights abuses solved?

There was no solution at all. Abused local people only suffered under the oppression without being able to respond

Which group of people committed human rights abuses the most?

It was mostly the Myanmar government's informal intelligence and military groups such as Ya Ya Ka [Local SPDC authorities] Ya Wa Ta [local State Law and Order Restoration authorities] and Sa Ya Hpa. [Military Security Force].

How do you think human rights perpetrators should be punished?

As I am a religious worker, I do not think a life sentence is warranted because it does not align with human rights. The most appropriate penalty is the dismissal of perpetrators from politics and leadership. For human rights survivors, they should be fairly compensated based on the status, time length and impact that remain with them.

What would be the most appropriate reparation or compensation for victims of human rights abuses?

As I mentioned, the human rights survivors should be compensated fairly based on the length of time they suffered abuses and the loss of their property should be compensated fairly. Most importantly, previous governments that have committed human rights abuses should take accountability. Some survivors still struggle with lingering consequences. Especially, Saw FI--

who was just released from prison, said he had to struggle so hard to restart his livelihood again after more than ten years in detention. The current ruling government should also take accountability for this.

Do you know about the ceasefire? How do you perceive this?

I understand that fighting is the cause of violence, separation, displacement, death and damages. I assume that the current Myanmar government and our KNU try to pursue peace because they want to eliminate such bad things in the country and prevent citizens from potential violence. According to my perspective, the stumbling block of sustainable peace is the military. So I think that as long as the military holds power, peace could not be sustained because they influence the new party and government in every decision.

Do you also know about the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)?

I have heard about it on the news on the TV.

What do you expect from the peace process?

When we look at most other countries, they have only one military in a country. Similarly, the Myanmar government also proposes one Myanmar Tatmadaw comprised of many ethnic armed groups and militaries. However, we do not want one Myanmar Tatmadaw but we want federal militaries for our ethnic groups. Every ethnic group should stand with their military in their own State but the Myanmar Tatmadaw will be the main military that the Myanmar government controls. However, I think the current Myanmar military should be replaced from the top to bottom levels. A new and good government should come into power. Otherwise, the country will not be peaceful with the current military.

Do you think there is peace in your country?

I think there is no stable peace yet. We are controlled by the government and the military's law.

What is the impact of the peace process on the community's livelihoods?

If the government says that they support education and health, they should have built a school in our village already. But now, there is no proper school building in our village yet.

So, what do you think about the peace process?

Officially, the National League for Democracy led by Aung San Su Kyi is in government but actually, the military controls everything. I see that their strategy for the ceasefire is pausing the fighting. In the meantime, they are strengthening their military power to win over every ethnic group by the time they are ready. This is their purpose.

What do you think is the biggest barrier in building sustainable peace?

The Tatmadaw is the biggest barrier to building sustainable peace because they never withdraw their camps from local villages. This is a big threat for local people who live near the army camps. As a pastor, I am scared to travel for worship purposes. How can the NCA be enforced if the Tatmadaw does not withdraw their military camps from local villages?

So what changes would you like to see to build sustainable peace?

Trusting each other would be fundamental in building sustainable peace. I want to give an example of when I first arrived this village, when I was suspected of being a spy or trouble maker. That's why people accused me and finally, I went to the prison. I know the root cause only when I was in prison. Villagers did not trust me because I was an outsider, a missionary

who came from a different place. Ultimately, villagers found out that I was not a trouble maker or betrayer. Then, they accepted and trusted me and co-operated together in developing the community. Now, we plan to form a Karen Social Committee. We started forming this last month with four villages in the community. In the same vein, we should trust each other during the NCA period.. Even if we prove that we trust the government, they know that they have committed uncountable abuses. So, they would not trust that we forgive their crimes. In my idea, we should make an agreement on paper. Every ethnic group will sign the document to claim that they forgive the Myanmar military and government for all abuses they committed to us. The Myanmar government, current and former military group, as well as our political representatives [of ethnic groups] should sign this document in front of each other. This agreement will prove that we trust each other and will co-operate in the future to promote peace.

Which justice system is more reliable [KNU or Myanmar government]? What do you think of it?The way KNU is involved in politics is pure. The Myanmar government also has good politics by themselves but it was ruined since they brought in the military. So, their politics are not pure anymore. I think that it will be more peaceful if the military is excluded from the government and only Aung San Su Kyi and NLD government control the country. I can trust Aung San Su Kyi because when I was in prison, KNU and even the Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) were not able support us except by praying. During that time, Aung San Su Kyi was under house arrest but she distributed financial support which came from Japan. She offered 30,000 Kyat a month to each political prisoner. I am not biased towards Aung San Su Kyi but I see her sympathy for us. She could ignore us because we belonged to the KNU but she treated us the same. I only trust her but not the military group behind her.

What could you contribute to promote sustainable peace?

I pray with the community and also personally [by myself].

What are the main human rights abuses in your community?

The former government officials of Thein Sein's government confiscated lands together with companies before they left the throne. Land owners cannot claim back their lands from the current government anymore. The current government even blamed civilians for not properly taking care of their lands.

How have these human rights abuses impacted the community?

Due to land confiscation without compensation, local people loss their lands and incomes. So, most young people migrate to cities, states and other countries to pursue better employment. A young person from our village migrated to Kachin State for better employment opportunities but unfortunately, he got addicted to drugs. Sadly, he was affected both physically and mentally due to the effect of drugs. Some young girls were also trafficked as sex slaves for years while looking for employment opportunities and came back [to their homes] without money.

What are the human rights abuses against women?

[...] There was one case involving a girl in our village. She firstly migrated to another country [probably Thailand] but was trafficked as a sex slave. When she came back to the village, she married a man. Unfortunately, the man died in an accident when she was one month pregnant. The Myanmar police informed her about the death of her husband and gave her 100,000 Kyat for basic necessities. The police told her that the compensation for her husband would be arranged later. After a while, this lady married another man who treated her badly throughout the time they were together. The man often hit her. Now, she hates her husband so much and

aborted her child. This is the impact of human rights abuses on the woman and innocent child.

Is there any discrimination towards religious minority?

There is freedom of religion according to human rights laws but it was not applied fairly in our community. We were not allowed to build churches in the new communities where we converted some believers to Christians. Although authorities claimed that they will not allow Buddhist temples to be built, in reality, they have allowed many Buddhist temples and monk schools to be built. They are obviously prohibiting the potential construction of Christian churches and Muslim mosques.

We will move to the next question. What do you understand about justice?

Justice means equality and fairness. Our forefathers said “Karen one Kyat or Shan one Kyat and Bamar one Kyat”. This refers to every ethnic group in Myanmar obtaining one Kyat equally. It does not apply to the current situation anymore. In Karen State, natural resources like gold are extracted by companies and the Myanmar government without benefiting the host community. Only a small amount of benefit reaches associated KNU leaders, but none at all for community members. Moreover, chemicals used in mining and extraction also damaged soils. I worry that the mountain will be damaged and fall down [be destroyed].

What types of justice system apply as a problem solving mechanism? Is it the KNU or Myanmar government justice system?

The KNU justice system does not reach our community. Only Myanmar government justice systems are used as problem solving mechanisms.

What do you think about the Myanmar government justice system?

I think the Myanmar government is good but the Myanmar military and its parties are not good. The NLD party cooperates inclusively with everyone but military parties don't. The military parties even try to point out people's mistake and blame them.

Do you trust the Myanmar government justice system?

We only trust the justice system but not the people who apply it [in a wrong way]. The principles are good but people are not.

What is the barrier to accessing the justice system?

The barrier to accessing justice systems is the weak governance of the government that cannot influence the military. If the Myanmar government can influence the military, they might be able to apply human rights and justice more.

What is the best way to account for the past human rights abuse; compensation or through the court system?

The perpetrator of human rights abuses can neither compensate victims and survivors nor be brought to court. National authorities [Myanmar] could not even punish perpetrators. To be just, perpetrators of human rights violations should be brought to court for sure.

Which government would be responsible to administer justice?

The Myanmar government is the most responsible because the KNU are only stands for their ethnic group.

What would be the best way to eliminate human rights abuses in your community as well

as in Myanmar?

Both the KNU and Myanmar government should take strong action to eliminate human rights abuses in the community.

Do you still have other information to share?

I want to say that I am only a pastor and not a politician but I was imprisoned as a political prisoner. My parents and siblings have already resettled in America. I visited them once after I was released from prison. The last time I applied to visit my family in America; the Embassy did not allow me. They told me that I was not allowed to visit America again because I was a criminal. For me, I think America is a country that has justice and laws. The previous Myanmar government knows that I was wrongfully imprisoned. I feel that there is no justice with the current government because they did not allow me to visit my family. Actually, they should allow me to visit my family once a year. They should prove that I am a pastor and am not a criminal.

Thank you so much for sharing the information.

Source #23

Source doc #	Source # 23
Log #	18-119-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Fg--- (male, 58), Fh--- village, Kwee Doo Kaw Village tract, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (November 2018)

Have you ever experienced conflict?

I used to live in Myanmar in the past. I lived in Toungoo and served as a Myanmar government police officer there. Later, when I learnt about universal human rights and the struggles of ethnic minorities [in Myanmar], I realized that the governance [actions] of the military dictatorship did not align with human rights laws. I used to cooperate with the National League for Democracy (NLD). The Na Wa Ta [the State Law and Order Restoration Council] military government disliked us and attempted to torture us. Therefore, we had to flee out from the Tatmadaw's oppression and sought a shelter in the forest. When we came here, we cooperated with our people and contributed as [much as] we can.

Have you ever experienced or seen human rights abuses in your community?

As you know, the military government often commits human rights abuses on our Karen people. The Myanmar government does the same thing [oppression] to other ethnic minorities and has never build trust with them. The Tatmadaw even reached out to rural communities and oppressed our people.

Do you still remember the year you experienced this?

I cannot remember older experiences anymore but I can remember some recent experiences that I faced couples of years ago. Me and my family experienced human rights abuses in 2006

when the Tatmadaw attacked our area, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District. Many Tatmadaw military columns approached our villages until we could not live in it anymore and fled. Then, we fled to Luthaw Township, Hpa-an District and sought refuge in the Ei Tuh Hta IDP camps. During the displacement, not only my family but all the community members had to flee and faced trouble. We faced food shortages, lack of shelter and the children were ill because of the rain.

What was the hardest challenge when you were displaced?

Lack of foods was the hardest challenge when we displaced. We could not bring foods [when we fled] and [we could not] get food from anywhere.

Did you and your family displace?

We often displaced because the Tatmadaw attacked our village. We were not able to stay in the village whenever the Tatmadaw came. The displacement started since 1991.

Would you like to share any experiences about the displacement?

During the conflicts, young people were terribly killed, especially students. They could not go school to get an education. They had to work in the field to support their family. When the Tatmadaw came, they tortured and killed those young people. Also, small children died during the displacement due to a lack of healthcare and medicines.

How did the conflict impact your livelihoods?

The conflicts ruined our livelihoods because the Tatmadaw usually attacked us during the harvest period. We had to abandon our paddy fields that we invested our effort in for the whole year. This caused a food shortage for us.

How has the displacement and conflict impacted you and your family?

It ruined our livelihood and incomes. Our children could not go to school. We faced food shortage and inadequate healthcare. Such challenges risked our lives easily.

How did the community solve the problem that they faced during displacement?

Armed conflict and displacement prohibited our children from going to school. We could not go to church to worship. We had to stay and worship in the forest. We lacked opportunities to develop our community.

How did local villagers solve the challenges that they faced?

We tried to save young children from being left behind from learning by organising outdoor study sessions. We taught them basic literature and education under the shade of the trees while we were displaced in the forest. It was challenging for children as well as parents. There was no problem in worshipping because we can worship anywhere regardless of the location and place.

Who were the perpetrators of human rights abuses that you faced?

The perpetrator was the Myanmar government's military dictatorship.

Has anyone solved the challenges that the community was facing?

I believe that our government [KNU] is trying to solve the political conflicts through the ceasefire and peace dialogues with the Myanmar government. However, we do not know how effective it is.

Have any survivors of human rights abuses ever obtained justice?

Absolutely not! There has never been justice for survivors of human rights violations.

Have any human rights perpetrators been condemned?

I have never seen human rights perpetrators being condemned. Mostly, authorities from perpetrator side covered up the cases and then they disappeared.

How do you think human rights perpetrators should be condemned?

They should be brought to the national court to be condemned.

How do you think survivors of human rights victims should be compensated?

The government and authorities should arrange appropriate support or compensation for the loss of property and suffering of survivors. The government and authorities should arrange appropriate support or compensation for the lost property and the suffering of human rights survivors. Authorities should also arrange for appropriate resources and support for survivors who were displaced and had to relocate. At least they should support survivors for six months to one year in order to settle their livelihoods well. They should also create appropriate economic opportunities for survivors.

What is the main cause of human rights abuses that you face in your community?

It is the Myanmar military government's oppression on ethnic minorities.

Do you know about the ceasefire?

I do hear about it. Our leaders are trying to negotiate for peace in order to improve the political situation and civilians' lives. I hope that this ceasefire process is successful.

How does the ceasefire relate to you?

We are not related in terms of cooperation and [having] responsibility but as we are community members in Karen state, we can say that it is related to us.

Do you know about the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)?

I have seen it in newsletters and statements about the NCA between the Myanmar government and ethnic groups.

What do you expect from the NCA?

We expect to have peaceful lives and to be able to work without any barriers. We expect to travel and work freely. We also expect to enjoy justice and equal rights.

Do you think the current situation is peaceful in your community?

The political situation has improved but it is not at a satisfactory level yet.

How do you see the benefits and disadvantages of the NCA?

There is more freedom in travelling and work opportunities for civilians. However, there is no equality for ethnic minorities yet. We are somehow discriminated against and oppressed by the Myanmar government in society and in court. We usually face these discriminations when there is conflict between our ethnic armed groups and the Tatmadaw.

How do the disadvantages of conflict impact your livelihoods?

Our leaders are trying their best to promote peace for civilians so that their livelihood situation improves. However, it has not reached the expected result yet.

How do you see the peace process?

The peace process enabled us to have more freedom in travelling, working, and [in relation to our] beliefs and several other aspects.

What should be done to maintain sustainable peace?

Both sides of the government [Myanmar and KNU] should negotiate together and consider the benefits for civilians on both sides. They should make sure that they reach the expected result of the peace process.

What changes would you make if you have authority?

I would change the governance system from military dictatorship to federalism. This will greatly benefit and satisfy Myanmar civilians.

What would you recommend to the KNU and Myanmar government regarding the peace process?

Both sides of the government should maintain a peaceful relationship. Otherwise, conflict and fighting will be ongoing. As the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) is demanding the Tatmadaw to avoid trespassing [into the former's territory], the Tatmadaw should follow it accordingly. The KNLA should also respect the [territorial] limitations of the Myanmar government. The Myanmar government should also recognize Karen State for the Karen ethnic people.

Which government is more accountable for building sustainable peace?

I think the international community should pressure these two governments [KNU and Myanmar government].

What could you do to promote peace and justice in your country?

We can obey the instruction of our leaders.

What is the human rights trend in your community after the NCA?

The territory was decided for both Tatmadaw and the KNLA. They have agreed that they will not trespass into the other's territory without notification and permission. However, the Tatmadaw did trespass into KNLA-controlled areas where civilians' plantations and shelters are located. They trespassed into the territory as thieves. This is a big threat for local people. The justice systems on cases like vehicle accidents are not effective. I prefer fair compensation for victims and survivors of vehicle accidents that happen in our community.

Are there any challenges with livelihoods?

We have to restart our livelihoods since the political situation improved. Our livelihood situation has fairly improved but it has not reached our expectations yet. The remaining Tatmadaw arm camps near our villages limit our freedom and security. We are afraid to travel anywhere.

Is there any human rights abuse on women?

In rural areas, there are no issues related to abuses on women. However, we think that women might face several human rights abuses.

Is there any human rights abuse on ethnic and religious minorities?

The Myanmar military government has a strategy to convert people to their religion [Buddhism]. We have heard in the past that Tatmadaw soldiers were supposed to persuade people to convert to their religion. Regarding ethnic minorities, we can obviously see that the Myanmar government is trying to influence ethnic minority under their palms [control].

What does justice mean to you?

Justice is equality.

Which government's justice system are you using in your community?

As we live in a KNU-controlled area, we only use the KNU justice system.

How do you see the justice system applied in your community?

I see that the KNU justice system is right and good because there is no corruption in court cases. Sometimes, individual businessmen asked for permission from local authorities in order to conduct logging activities.

Have you ever experienced human rights abuses?

We have been living in poverty because of the Tatmadaw's oppression and long term conflict.

How would you like to take action against the perpetrator of human rights abuses that you face?

As a community member, we have no power to do this. However, we have our government [KNU] to take action for us through the justice system.

Which authority is responsible to get justice human rights survivors?

It is the responsibility of the person who commits human rights abuses. In our community, the KNU government is protecting us.

What would be the most effective way to eliminate human rights abuses in your community?

Our government should have empathy on civilians and they should offer relevant awareness training, as needed. They should also provide appropriate support to the civilians who are facing troubles. All these things should be monitored by the government.

What would be the best way to eliminate human rights abuses in the whole country?

It is the responsibility of the Myanmar government.

Have you ever been displaced during conflict?

Yes, I was displaced in the period between 2006 and 2017. I displaced to Ei Tuh Hta IDPs Camp, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District.

What was the main cause of displacement and refugees?

The oppression by the Tatmadaw.

What is the current situation of refugees and IDPs?

Being refugees and IDPs is challenging. We lost our properties that we left or could not take with us during the displacement. The farms and plantations that we used to work on were abandoned and damaged. Displaced community members faced illness and some died in the

forest. Two of my children died in the forest due to a lack of medical supplies.

Do you feel safe to return to your village now?

Yes, I feel safe to return. As our leaders are conducting the peace process, we, refugees and IDPs were repatriated. We believe that our government [KNU] is doing the right thing. We safely returned under our government authorities but we do not know what the Myanmar government plans us.

Do you have any challenges in education and health?

Starting over your livelihoods again is definitely challenging. We need essential resources and support.

Were any material resources offered for you to repatriate?

Some material resources were offered but it was not adequate. The government and organisations arranged for material resources for those who were to be repatriated. Our travel fees were paid under the arrangement but when we reached the destination, we were not offered further support. During the consultation, we were told that we will be supported up to two years after repatriation so that we will be able to build a foundation for our livelihoods. We do not complain about not having plantations and lands to work on because we were promised that we will be supported for a limited time. However, there was no support in reality; repatriated refugees had to struggle badly to secure their livelihoods.

How do you see the political and civilians' situation?

I perceive that the Myanmar government still has a strategy to gain power over us in every area such as in economy and governance. They do not offer equality for ethnic minorities.

What are your special needs and what kind of support does your family need?

It will seem like I am begging if I tell you what I need. We need much support to start our livelihoods again but we should also find ways to pursue it. It is difficult for us to earn an income for our family but we have to struggle for it. It will benefit us if our leaders could see the needs of repatriated civilians. A recent example that I can give is mice damaging paddies. Our paddy in the farms was ruined because of the mice. However, we are not sorry about this; we have to find more ways to secure our livelihoods.

Source #24

Source doc #	Source # 24
Log #	18-127-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Tanintharyi Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
Full Text	

Mergui-Tavoy Interview | Saw Ec--- (male, 34), Ed--- village, Ma Naw Raw area, Tanintharyi Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. (December 2018)

Are you married?

Yes, I am. I got married in 2010.

How many years have you been living here?

I have been living here for eight years.

Why did you come here?

We were displaced.

Why you were displaced?

We were displaced because of the fighting.

Which places were you displaced to? And what difficult situation have you experienced?

Villagers faced difficulties in their livelihood situation. They were finding and using ways to get food to survive for their lives. In addition, some people were being raped, beaten, and shot by the Tatmadaw soldiers.

Have you witnessed it or you were told by someone?

I have witnessed it personally.

Where did you witness these conditions?

People who live in every part of the KNU-controlled area experienced these critical conditions. These KNU controlled area includes Ee---, Ef---, Eg---, Eh--- and Ei---.

When did this happen?

It happened throughout the years of 2001 and 2002. In F---, a mother and her daughter were raped (Ej---).

Do you know the name of them?

The name of the mother is Naw Ek--- and her daughter's name is Naw Ei---.

Do you know the name of the battalion?

It was battalion (101).

Do you know the name of the commander?

I don't know.

How long were you displaced?

We were displaced for 11 years in the forest.

During that conflict period, were you displaced to the Thai-Burma border side?

No.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

During the conflict period, we faced various kinds of difficulties such as livelihoods, housing and for our safety as well. We had to be alert in every single minute in the conflict period.

After the displacement, where have you been living? Were you living in other places or in your own village?

I am living in Ed--- village, Ma Naw Raw area now.

Do you feel safe living here?

We don't have any difficulty concerning our safety living here.

Have you dared to return to your village during the time you've been displaced?

Yes, I have. I have returned to my village three times already since the NCA.

Was it safe for you to return?

There was no interrogation along my way the three times I returned to my village.

Why were you returning to your village?

I was returning to my village to see my parents for the first time [since he was displaced]. After that, I returned to participate in my brother's wedding. And then, I returned to my village for my mother's funeral.

Do you have land to work if you go back to live in your village?

Yes.

Are you afraid to return to your village?

No. I'm not.

Do the villagers have fear living in the village?

I don't see any harm in this current situation.

What do you think will happen in the future in your village? Do you think the situation will get better or worse?

I think the political situation and the participation of the community will become stronger if we return to live in our village. In addition to this, we would like to get educated by organisations [there].

What do you mean when you say educated by organisations?

I mean getting educated on how to protect ourselves from the dangers of violators.

In the future, do you think you are returning to live in your village or live here?

I think I will continue living in my wife's village now.

What kinds of support do you need for your family and the community?

In our village, we plan to build a church. That's why we need building materials. Now, a school in the village was built, but the students still don't have the chance to learn. I am curious whether this school could be registered and run officially.

What was the problem?

The KNU didn't want the school to be linked with the government school. Furthermore, the school didn't receive sufficient aid. That's becoming a problem for the students' ongoing education.

Were there school teachers?

There's only a female teacher.

What are the healthcare, security and livelihood conditions in this village?

Villagers support their living by processing lead and farming.

Where did they find money to purchase food?

Some villagers sieved lead every day. With that income [they receive 200 Viss of lead], they purchased food.

Were there companies mining for the lead?

Yes.

What is the name of the company?

A group from the Maw Kee Company came to mine for the lead. The other persons were rich men named U Shwe Ta Gu, U Ka Law Tu, U Aaw Wai and U Lu Ni. There were five groups in total.

When did they come in for the lead mining?

U Aaw Wai and U Ka Law Tu came to mine the lead first in February 2017.

What about the other groups?

There also began mining the lead in February 2017.

Were there benefits for the villagers who are living here in the village?

When they first came to our area, they supported us and promised to help us.

Why don't they support the villagers at this time?

I have no idea. Before, the five groups combined together and support 1, 000, 000 kyat for the villagers. They also gave 5, 000, 000 kyat for the development of the village. Their support lasted for only three months. Later on, they didn't give any support.

Was there damage to the water and trees?

Some groups were mining lead next to the local villages' betel nut plantations and it caused damage. In addition, lead mining activities polluted the water. Not only was that harmful for the aquatic animals, it also caused difficulties for the villagers.

Where did you access water after it was polluted?

People came to donate water to us and we used that.

Was the lead mining affecting villagers' health?

I didn't see villagers face any serious health problems.

Source #25

Source doc #	Source # 25
Log #	18-128-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
Dooplaya Interview Saw Es--- (male, 48), Et--- village, Noh Taw Plah village tract,	

Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

I would like to interview you about the situation in your community and your past experiences through human rights abuses. You can describe it for me as much as you remember. Could I interview you?

Yes, you can.

Have you experienced human rights violations and oppression in the past during the conflict period? If you have, could you please describe it for me?

Do you mean the oppression committed by the enemy [Myanmar military]?

Yes.

During the period when large numbers of Tatmadaw troops were attacking [Karen state] in 1997, there were a lot of abuses such as torture, orders, and arbitrary arrest. They [Tatmadaw] accused us of contacting our people [KNU/KNLA] when we were displaced in the forest. They also abused us by oral threats. Five villagers from each village had to follow the Tatmadaw as porters regularly for a week; they forced us to work for them the whole day and every day. In the evening, they made a roll call on us and checked whether any villager had fled from being a porter or not. We had to sweep [clean] the road for them every day until the soft soil in the road was gone down to the hard soil. The oxcarts filled with rocks went ahead, I think it was in order to clear the landmines. This was a tactic to protect them from their enemy [landmines or attack]. While we were clearing the road, they kept forcing us to work faster, harder and threatening us by pointing guns at us and said, "You are Karen people, work and work harder." We had to fence their location [army camp]. I did not know how to set up a fence, but I had to follow other people's lead. Moreover, we [villagers] did not know where they got the chickens, but we had to make baskets for the chickens they brought into the camp. Then we had to put the chickens into the baskets and brought those chickens to Seikgyi [Town] for sale and we had to bring back the full amount of the price they'd ordered us to sell them for. I will stop here one part.

One day, there was something that happened; the Tatmadaw troop that forced us to be their porters went out [patrolled] somewhere we did not know, but when we arrived [at Army camp] from working at noon, we saw two people [men] were tied. We knew them because they were from here, but we did not know for what reason they were tied. That same evening, the Tatmadaw roll called us, I forget that Tatmadaw soldier's name but he questioned us whether we were all together or not and then ordered us to make a line. All of us were present. Later on, we heard the information that they [the arrested men] had violated two old single women. We did not know how they violated those two women, but we only knew that they were killed.

Do you remember the date of those human rights violations that you saw and experienced?

I do not remember the date.

What were the human rights violation happen in your community?

The common human rights violations were committed by Tatmadaw soldiers. I think they [Tatmadaw] were far from their children and wives so they were wicked minded and committed bad things when they saw other people's treasures.

During the conflict period, what were the conflicts for you?

They conflicts were oppression against us in an unjust system. They [Tatmadaw] accepted what

we said only when they were satisfied with what they wanted from us.

How did the human rights violations you experienced consequently impact your livelihoods?

During that [conflict] period, we had to go into displacement into the forest and I hid paddy on the mountain. I had to live in the forest like that. I had to sleep in the place where my enemy [Tatmadaw] did not like and could not go. When I slept, I had to put my legs around a tree or bamboo so I would not slip down the steep mountain. I had to put our loads on our family's backs and hold a musket while sleeping. This was how we protected ourselves from the enemy. I could not be a slave for the Burmese enemy [Tatmadaw] anymore because I could not suffer their persecution and we knew that it was injustice. Therefore, we ran away to escape from them. We could not return to work on our farm for our livelihoods. The Tatmadaw tried to forcibly relocate us [villagers] and we had to go into hiding into the forest. These were how [human rights violations] impacted our livelihoods. I stayed at the river source near my farm (even if I told you the place, you might not know it). I had to move from place to place like that until the situation was improved a little bit so that I could return to the village. Nevertheless, when I arrived into the village, I felt like I could not speak much Karen because I did not see any people during that time.

How did the human rights violations affect your family livelihood?

At that time, I sent my family to Kya In [Town] and we faced family livelihood problems. And then, we moved to Meh T'Kreh without land [to farm for our livelihoods] and we had to live in difficulty. We did not have a choice.

How did the villagers in your community resolve the problem after the conflict period?

Nobody came to solve the problems that we experienced. When the situation improved, we just returned to our villages by ourselves; family by family like that. Nobody and none of these two government groups [KNU and Myanmar government] came and told us that we could return to our village.

During the conflict period, what kind of human rights violations [happened] in your community?

They [Tatmadaw] recognised us [Karen people] and revolutionaries as their enemy. They accused us of contacting rebel groups.

Which group [authority] committed those human rights violations?

They were the Myanmar government members [Tatmadaw etc.].

Have any authorities prosecuted the [human rights violation] perpetrators in the justice system?

No, there were no people who solved [the cases] for us.

Have any perpetrators been punished?

That has never happened in my community and it seems like there is no hope for that.

What kinds of punishment do you think the human rights violators should receive?

The violations that they committed, we can learn them from the news. We [villagers] do not have power to punish them. We could not even meet with them. How can we prosecute them? They [government authorities] do not punish them for us. They just talk about the abuses committed

by the Myanmar government in the news without doing anything for us.

Have you ever heard about the human rights violation perpetrators being prosecuted in court?

I do not know about the situation in other countries. I do not know whether the news researchers report them [Tatmadaw] to the court or not. Actually they could prosecute them [Tatmadaw] because the abuses are always reported in the news.

They [Tatmadaw] committed human rights violation abuses against you so how would you like to see them punished? For example, should they pay compensation to the victims, apologise, or amend their governing system.

There is no hope for us to get what we desire, for they [Tatmadaw] will do something to us [in retaliation]. We do not know where they [perpetrators] are. There are only things we can do, build and work on for ourselves.

Would you be satisfied, for example, if the human rights violation perpetrators were to lose their positions of power?

At [the conflict] period, there were plenty of them [Tatmadaw] and we do not know their names, so how can we take away their position of power?

What suggestion would you give to the judicial system on punishing the perpetrators?

We wait for our leaders [the authorities] to do something for us. We are civilians so we do not have the authority to give punishment [on the perpetrators]. We don't have any responsibility at the country [government] level. We are just civilians. They should do something to solve the problems. We cannot find or retrieve our animals such as cows and buffalos that the Tatmadaw killed for meat when they burned down our houses. The only way is for the country's leaders to do something for peace in the country, then our lives will improve through our own efforts gradually in the future. There will be some improvement in our life.

How do you think about the ceasefire? How is it relevant to you?

I have not listened to the news for a long time already. Anyway, I am happy that they [Myanmar government and KNU] signed the NCA and it is good. I do not know whether their [KNU] and our enemy [Myanmar government and the military] actions are reflective [of the NCA code of conduct] or not. According to the current situation, our enemy's [Tatmadaw's] actions have not decreased yet. The more the situation improves, the more they [Tatmadaw] strengthen their control. Do our revolutionaries [KNU/KNLA] have the same [action] like this yet?

How much do you know about the NCA?

I just know that they [KNU and Myanmar government] signed the NCA. I do not completely know the whole NCA process. I do not know whether they [Myanmar government] are cooperating with foreign countries and the United Nations or not. It is because I do not listen to the news. I was completely depressed by the news because they just kept talking without anything changing, so I do not listen to the news anymore. I will live the way I am in my life like this. It is good and peaceful that they signed the NCA so if possible, I want them to sign more [peace agreements].

What is your perspective from the NCA?

I want the sustainable peace so that there will be more peace and freedom in the future.

How has the peace process affected your life?

There are still conflicts in the country, but we can take advantage of freedom of movement for our livelihoods. When we civilians have access to freedom of movement, we feel like it is freedom for us.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

There is not peace in my community yet, but we have to live in the country according to, [quoting a Karen proverb] "Whether or not there is peace in the country, we [civilians] have to live in the country and build peace together". There is not complete peace yet.

How does the NCA impact your life?

If the NCA continues into the future as it is now, there will be no outcome like [sustainable peace]. The main impacts that we will face are various forms of justice issues, theft, and conflicts.

Do you feel more safe now?

No.

Why?

We do not trust our enemy [Tatmadaw] or the KNU. It looks good when they are working together on their relationship, but the actions of our enemy [Tatmadaw] are not trustworthy for us yet.

Do you think your livelihoods have improved?

Yes, because the fighting has been paused a little bit so our livelihoods are improved a little bit.

What does the peace process mean for you?

I understand that they [EAOs and Tatmadaw] do not want fighting so they signed the NCA so that they could work on some business during the ceasefire period.

In your perspective, what are the biggest barriers in making sustainable peace?

I think [to make] the sustainable peace is dependent on the enemy [Tatmadaw] and government side. If they do not honestly participate [in the peace process], they must restart it [peace process] from the beginning. From my own perspective, our enemy is the root cause [of every incident]. If their action is pure toward us, we will react the same way. If their action is not pure [dishonest] toward us, we cannot react to them in an honest way. Therefore, we should react to them the same way they act upon us.

To build sustainable peace, what do you want to change?

Even in my own village, I cannot change anything. Therefore, my country leaders [Myanmar government and KNU] should make a change.

If you have opportunity and power to change something, what do you want to change?

I will change the things that we should change with the positive consequences. The things that are not good, I will throw these away.

To improve the peace process, if you have an opportunity to give suggestions to the KNU and Myanmar government, what would you like to suggest?

I cannot give high level suggestions. I could give them suggestions only on subjects where I

have knowledge.

Which groups do you think will bring you peace and justice?

The only group who will bring justice for us is our people, the revolutionaries [KNU]. I cannot predict the conflicts that will happen in the future yet, but my people can bring me to the ceasefire and justice stage.

What can you do for the peace process?

I am a responsible person in the village so what I can do is to maintain unity and justice at the village level. I cannot contribute at the higher level. Even at the village level, I cannot work perfectly on it yet because there are still conflicts [in the village] so there must be even more conflict at the higher level.

What are the main root causes of the past human rights violations in your village and your community?

It was oppression against us.

What are the root causes of abuses?

They were killing, persecuting us and looting.

How did those abuses consequently impact your life?

Now, our life situation is improved a little bit.

How is justice for the women?

What do you mean justice for women? They face the same things we [men] face.

During the conflict period, men had to become displaced and women also had to become displaced, is it correct?

Yes.

When men ran away [to flee forced labour] and women were left behind, what problems were faced by the women?

They faced numerous oral threats, and were arrested to go with the enemy [Tatmadaw]. They questioned them about where their husband and sons had gone, and other difficulties that we do not know. They [Tatmadaw] ordered them to call their husbands back to the village and asked them whether their husbands were Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] – things like that. If your husband did not return by the deadline, you would be arrested and you must pay the amount of the money they demand.

Why did the human rights abuses happen in your community? For example, was it because of ethnicity or religion?

It was because we are ethnic [Karen] people.

Why?

They [Tatmadaw] viewed us as their enemy and they would like to occupy our country so they did these things against us.

What does justice mean for you?

Justice means right, and very good things, and justice, equality and harmony.

What is the justice system in your village? If anything wrong happens in your village, how do people address the case?

Cases were addressed at the village level under the village rules. There was no justice system from the country level yet.

What is the strongest [punishment] in your village?

The strongest is pillory punishment [to be locked in the stocks].

How about the major crimes?

We cannot handle major crimes like rape, killing and theft. These are the responsibility of the government. We cannot try major cases, but we can arrest the perpetrators and hand over the cases to them [higher authority].

As we are in the ceasefire process in the country, if any major abuses happen in your village, which [authority] groups [KNU/Myanmar government] will investigate the cases do you think?

We are in the Karen state so our people in the Karen state [KNU] will take the action.

Do you think the justice system in your village is justice? For example, do the leaders abuse corruption or bribery?

I do not follow them so I do not know whether they abuse corruption or not.

Have you ever heard or seen it before?

It happened in the past so it caused conflicts among them [authority] and blaming each other, things like that.

Do you think judges decide the cases fairly?

No, it is not justice all the time.

Why do you think it is not justice?

It is because of that [corruption]. There is a law which was legislated by them [KNU authorities], but there is ineffective law enforcement. They put them in prison for only two or three days so it is not an effective punishment. The perpetrators keep committing the abuses.

As you experienced the past human rights abuses, how would you like cases to be resolved in order to improve the human rights situation?

I do not dare to resolve the cases against them [perpetrators].

Do you want to do something to improve it?

I want to make a change, but I do not ever dare to go close to them [perpetrators].

If you have the opportunity and power to solve the [human rights violations] problem, what would you like to do?

If I have equal power, I can improve it [human rights situation]. I cannot do it if I do not have equal power.

How will you solve it?

If something is not good, I will tell them [perpetrators] not to repeat that abuse again. If you do

so, you will be arrested and your case will be handled by the court according to the law, with no bribery regardless of whether you're rich and powerful. If we acted this in order to improve the situation, abuses would not happen again.

Do you want justice in your village and community?

Yes, I do.

Why do you want and how?

I want love and peace. Then, there will be justice there.

How will you address the cases?

We cannot do it yet. If you bring it up [past human rights violations] now, they [authorities] might not accept and agree with us yet. We cannot solve cases like that.

Which governments, KNU or Myanmar government, are responsible for the justice do you think?

It is better if they help us. I want my people [KNU] to do it for us.

What is the best way to improve [human rights] in order to bring justice? What should they do [KNU and Myanmar government]?

They should live in love, unity and trust each other. If they do not trust each other, there will be no unity. All authorities should combine and work together and then there will be peace.

During the conflict period, you said you were displaced, so where were you displaced?

We did not want to become displaced, but they [Tatmadaw] forced us to run. If we were not displaced, we would be refugees [direct meaning of refugee in Burmese is a people in problems]. The people who fled to the other country are not refugees to me. For me, refugees are people who suffered and did not run to other places. The Tatmadaw ordered us to move to Kya In by a deadline date and we faced the livelihoods problems, so we moved to Meh T'Kreh village. When the situation was improving a little bit, I returned to my land very quietly.

How long have you been displaced?

I was displaced in Kya In for around three months and then displaced in Meh T'Kreh for around three years. After that, I returned to my place and lived here until now. When I first arrived, I did not hear the sound of any people and did not see anyone.

How did you overcome your family livelihood problem after displacement?

I just returned to my land and worked on my farm for my livelihood like this until now. Later on, the situation improved gradually and others followed [returning to the village].

What pressured you to return to your village?

There were no pressures, I just had to harvest my betel-nut for sale and I returned to my village in an insecure situation. I had done that regularly.

How would a sustainable situation look for you?

The sustainable situation has been created only when our leaders [KNU] signed the NCA.

Now you've returned to your village, how do you want people [stakeholders] to help you?

We need [help], but where can we look for them? Where are the people who will support us?

We do not know.

Do you have anything that I have not asked you yet?

I do not have anything. If I report all my experiences, it will never be finished in a day or a month, so it is okay with all of the questions you asked.

If you do not have any questions, can I give your voice to the KHRG and use your information for publication?

Yes, you can. It depends on how much you could use to write a report. A report is more work. Thank you very much for your time for me.

Source #26

Source doc #	Source # 26
Log #	18-129-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | U Fe--- (male, 48), Ff--- village, Mae K'Law village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (December 2018)

How many years have you lived here?

I have lived here for 20 years already.

In 20 years of living here, have you faced any human right violations in this area? If you had, can you give us examples?

Yes, I experienced and could also see [human rights violations] in our surrounding areas. For example, [we had to do] volunteer work, forced labor and forced portering, be a watchman for them and carry the soldiers' backpacks.

Do you still remember that experience?

We don't remember it but we can't forget it.

Were there human rights violations that happened in your village?

We [our village] had to give the Tatmadaw farm land, cut bamboo and wood for their buildings, and make [covers] for their roofs.

Did you get a payment for doing those?

We did not get [paid] and we even had to take our own food with us.

When did that happen? How many years ago?

It was 18 years ago.

What was the most difficult experience you had?

In 2000 or 2001, [all the men] in Hpapun had to flee when Khin Kyu was the Operations Commander. We were not sure whether they [Tatmadaw] wanted to do ethnic cleansing or not.

We did not know the purpose of their strategy. They forced men to serve as porters, and they arrested and killed local people. Some decided to become monks, and some fled to other places. I could not flee because I was concerned about my family's livelihood. I went to live in the mountain area and worked there. Due to the conflict between Tatmadaw and KNLA, it was difficult to secure my family's livelihood.

How many people did the Operations Commander Khin Kyu kill?

I cannot count how many people were killed. It is because he was in charge in Hpapun District. He did everything.

So there are some things that we know and there are still some things that we do not know. Did your whole family flee with you when you went to work for your livelihood?

No, we had to live as a normal villager. We had to try not look like an opponent of the nation. I did not call my family to go with me and we could not flee with the others.

Did you experience or witness [these kinds of human rights abuses]?

Yes.

How did it affect your family?

We could not do any business. Moreover, it was risky for us to work for our livelihood and our survival. It was economically difficult for us because we could not do any investments. We only had food to eat each day.

How did the human rights violations affect the local people's livelihood situation? Before, you mentioned the difficulties of your family but now I want to know about the local people who are living in your village. How did they experience and go through the difficulties?

As I told you about my family difficulties, everyone had the same experiences and difficulties like me and my family.

So you all had to live very carefully and not show bias towards the KNU or the Tatmadaw. You were just a normal citizen. You experienced many kinds of human rights violations such as forced portering and forced labour. For example, you were forced to cut bamboo and woods. You were ordered to cut t'la aw [a kind of tree]. You had to go to other places for your livelihood as you were forced to leave. You had to give your farms to the Tatmadaw [extortion]. Who were the perpetrators and caused these human rights violations?

They were the armed groups. However, the main perpetrator of these human rights violations was the Tatmadaw.

How about the KNU? Did they cause those kinds of violations?

The KNU were just doing what they had to do as they had to protect themselves from the enemy. They did not cause human rights violations.

Did the state, township and district-level leaders solve these kinds of problems?

No, never. It was not a democracy, it was dictatorship.

Were the columns or battalions that caused human rights violations punished?

No, they did not get punishments.

How should they be punished? Should they pay compensation, be brought to court or be removed from their positions?

It is difficult to say that. It is not easy to resolve or compensate for everything that happened in the past because everyone who lives in Hpapun District had to experience and face these abuses. It won't be easy to ask for compensation or go to court. Even if it is easy to ask, it will cause more work to us. The democratic [Myanmar] government has to discuss [about actions for past human rights violations] and has to do a peace process with the groups that caused human rights violations. They have to protect the civilians and have to make sure that these kinds of problems and situations do not happen again. They have to make laws that protect the civilians.

Why did the human rights violations happen in your village? There should be a reason. Was it because of the fighting and misuse the power?

The reasons include fighting. The fighting between ethnic armed groups and the Tatmadaw happened because there were some misunderstandings and different approaches [to politics]. The ethnic armed groups [people] want their rights but they [the government/Tatmadaw] don't give it to them. So if they don't give the ethnic armed groups rights, [the people] don't give up either. So, the fighting happens because you [the government/Tatmadaw] don't give me my rights and I don't give up.

So the main issue is human rights violations occurring as the consequences of civil wars that happened. Do you know anything about the ceasefire agreement [NCA]?

We just understand that both of them [Myanmar government and KNU] have ceased fighting and are talking [discuss] about the political situation for the peace process. So, they made a contract not to fight each other during the ceasefire and to hold discussions for peace.

What is the peace process?

We don't research and study that [the peace process] but we understand that the peace process is for the ethnic groups' and ethnic armed groups' rights to live in peace.

What kinds of benefits will you get if the peace process is successful? What do you hope for?

If the peace process is successful, I hope that there will be rights to education, healthcare, economic benefits and that everyone will get to live peacefully.

Do you think there is peace in your village?

I don't think there is peace in my village yet. It is just a ceasefire and there is no laws to protect the civilians yet. So we cannot say that there is peace yet. There is ceasefire and there are still some difficulties for the families' livelihood.

Does the NCA impact the local people from your village?

The peace process is good but I would like to let all the leaders to know that they should not only focus on the peace process and ignore the livelihood difficulties that the local people are facing now. I want them to focus on the local people's livelihood situation as well.

Do you think there is more safety when you are travelling? What do you think?

I think the situation is worse for us regarding the safety [...]. It is because laws are just laws [on papers] and there is no practice of laws [there is no enforcement]. For example, local people

face more livelihood difficulties due to drug-related issues and drug violence. Furthermore, businessmen are doing more business in the local areas and the government is just focusing on asking for taxes. They increased the prices of the goods so I want them not just to focus on the taxes but think for the civilians as well. They think that if they ask for more taxes, then they will be able to do more development projects for the country. However, the businessmen don't give money [taxes] from their pockets. They increase the prices of the goods for the civilians so they have to buy at a higher price. So it just affects local people who are working every day for their livelihood more. The local people are the ones who have to suffer more. That is what they don't realize.

So these are the facts that affect the local people after the NCA. Do you think your village has more peace than before? There is less safety than before. How do you understand peace?

Peace means civilians have their ethics and the government also has their ethics. All the authorities and armed groups follow their ethics and there will be peace.

That is the meaning of peace.

Moreover, even though many of ethics and laws are made on paper and there are no punishments for the perpetrators who break those ethics and laws. It is not effective. The government and authorities cannot just listen to the local people's problems, difficulties and suffering. They should go on the ground and investigate the problems and difficulties just like the American government does. They will only know and be able to solve the problems and difficulties of local people if they do that.

What are the obstacles to have sustainable peace? Why is there unsustainable peace?

There was the constitution by the Tatmadaw in 2008 made without any civilians' and ethnic armed groups' suggestions and agreement. However, I think if the constitution is changed or fixed with all civilians' [opinions], ethnic armed groups' and government's [input], then we can have sustainable peace.

So, the 2008 constitution should be changed. If you have to change anything to have sustainable peace, what would you like to change the most?

On a national or international level, I would like to tell civilians, ethnic groups and ethnic armed groups to ask for what they should have [rights/opportunities]. They should also ask for things that they will be able to get because if you ask for things that you cannot get, then it will just take a long time to get sustainable peace. It is not good for the civilians when it takes a longer time. Even though we say that there is peace now for the civilians, there are still livelihood problems and difficulties for them.

What would you like to suggest to or advice the KNU or the Myanmar government to have sustainable peace?

I think the KNU and the Myanmar government who can make the decision should meet with people and discuss about what they have to do and decide them to have sustainable peace. If they only have meetings like this and cannot make decision about anything, then it will just waste time having unfruitful meetings. They will only waste their budget and the support from other countries with these unfruitful meetings. It will only change and be fixed when they meet with the decision makers [local authorities]] who can make decisions for everything.

You said they should meet with the decision makers to make the decisions. Do you mean

that they cannot only meet with the Tatmadaw?

Yes, we will see that now the government also cannot give commands or orders to the Tatmadaw. [...] Even though we say that this is democratic government due to the 2008 constitution, we know that the Tatmadaw is on top [controlling] of the government. Everyone knows about that. So the 2008 constitution was formed during U Saw Maung and U Than Shwe governments' terms. [...]. U Saw Maung [7th Prime Minister of Burma from 1988 to 1992] is dead already but U Than Shwe [Myanmar head of state 1992 to 2011] is still alive. So they should discuss this constitution before he dies because we don't know when he will die.

So you mean that U Than Shwe also should participate in the peace process and give some suggestions.

Yes, because the Tatmadaw is under his control.

So U Than Shwe should be given a seat [at the table] to discuss the peace process. Yes, it is a good idea. How about the KNU? What advice would you like to give to the KNU?

The brigade #5 leaders are good for the local people and they do their best. However, there are some lower leaders who want to show their power. [There is] no need to talk about the upper leaders because they already know about power.

So you want the leaders to manage their ruling system.

Yes.

Which government would be able to give sustainable peace in Myanmar?

There are two types of parties in Myanmar now. One is the National League for Democracy (NLD) and another one is the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). In the past, during U Thein Sein term, laws were just made and they did not fix the wrong laws. Moreover, the laws are just on paper, they were not practiced in the real world. The government (NLD) now gets to participate in parliament. However, it is not effective because the 2008 constitution gives the Tatmadaw power over the government in the parliament and to control things. So they [NLD] cannot do anything yet but they said they are trying to fix the laws. There is no government that could change the laws [constitution] within two or three years. The NLD government is trying to change that. However, we are not satisfied because we might feel overeager. To be honest, I realize that the state government is weak in our state [Kayin State]. I just mean in my own state. So I think the state government should change.

So you mean there is nothing that the state government can guarantee and none of the governments can give guarantees.

Yes, there is no guarantee.

Do you want to participate in the peace process as a villager?

Based on my age and the way I chose to live religiously, [it does] not leading to politics. Even though there is nothing that I want, there are still important things for people who are working in this world. We can just believe in our fortune by relying on the meditation. So, we can give suggestions but we cannot do it by ourselves anymore.

Are there any human rights violations in your community since the NCA was signed in 2015 and until now? There were many human rights violations that happened in the past such as forced portering, killing and etc. Are there still those kinds of human rights violations that happen?

There are no violations happening since the NCA was signed in 2015. However, there are still concerns or tumors [trauma] of past experiences. It is because the situation is still unstable and it is not in a good condition yet. So, we cannot trust the situation now because there are still some concerns from the past. We are afraid that the past experiences will come back again to us.

If there are still human rights violations like before, will there be livelihood problems and difficulties?

Yes, it will harm our livelihood. These two are entwined.

What kinds of difficulties and challenges are women facing?

It is better for the women now if we compare it with the past. There are now rights for women and there are women in leadership roles. However, this is only on a village level. There is lesser participation by women and women in leadership roles in cities or at the township level. There are more men.

So there is no fully equality and there are still difficulties and challenges for women.

Yes.

What about the minority ethnic groups? What are the difficulties and challenges that they are facing now?

The minority ethnic groups are just trying to get their rights. For example, Shan people are trying to teach their language and practice their tradition and religion. They can try for those [rights]. However, they also went through hardship so they don't trust Karen ethnic group so much. They have a closer relationship with the Tatmadaw, so they are afraid of the KNU from the jungle. In the same way, the KNU from the jungle are also afraid of the Tatmadaw that are living in the city. They rely on the group that they have a closer relationship with and sometimes, they think that we are problem makers. What I think is that the KNU gives the rights that the ethnic groups should get but the ethnic people want more rights than they should get. That is what I understand.

Do the majority of the people [Karen people in this area] respect the other minorities' rights?

Yes, they respect minorities' rights and they don't do any harmful things. Only the minorities are worried or concerned that the majority people will do anything to them. However, the majority are just keeping to themselves.

How do you want to define the word "justice"? What is justice?

As I am Buddhist, I would like to say that justice is when you have completely virtuous conduct – as the Buddha said. Everyone should have complete virtuous conduct, including the lawyers, judges and the authorities. If they have that we don't need to say and be concerned about justice. If they don't have that, there won't be any justice. So the main thing is complete virtuous conduct.

Which kind of justice system do you use in your village? Do you follow the Myanmar government justice system or KNU justice system?

The local people in Hpapun District depend more on the KNU justice system because their justice system is fairer than the Myanmar government justice system. It is because the Myanmar government justice system is biased and partial towards employees of the Myanmar

government. Their justice system is corrupted. Their justice system is not fair and makes poor decisions.

Why is there a justice system for people?

It is because local people have less knowledge and there is a lack of discussion between us. If something happens, we just know [that we have] to report it to the judge. We don't try to negotiate and discuss it between us first. We will just report to where we feel more comfortable and closer to. As I told you, the lawyers and judges don't have virtuous conduct so they would be biased. Some perpetrators are their relatives, some perpetrators are their friends, some are because of corruption and some are for their organization. Therefore, the justice system is poor.

The justice system is poor because of their concepts. So, local people don't trust and depend on the Myanmar government justice system. Do you think there is justice in a weak justice system?

There is no justice in weak justice system.

Have you heard about corruption?

Yes.

What are some obstacles for the justice system even though there is no corruption and there is punishment for the perpetrators? However, we heard that there is corruption so we know there is no justice. What are the obstacles to the justice system?

The government or the authorities should appoint the lawyers and judges who have full virtuous conduct. They should give the responsibilities to the judges who could make the right decisions.

So the problem is there is a lack of judges who have virtuous conduct. Have you experienced human rights violations? If you have experienced human rights violations, what kind of compensation do you want from the perpetrators to have justice? Do you want compensation, apologies or for them to be removed from their position?

If we consider those who caused human rights violations, some of them are dead already, some of them are still missing and some of them probably are no longer in their positions. So, it is impossible to take them to court now. However, we don't forget about the past but we hope the NCA will bring sustainable peace for the civilians with protective laws.

So it doesn't matter what happened in the past but it is important to bring sustainable peace for the civilians through freedom of movement, freedom of religion and freedom to work. [...] If you could ask for compensation from the Myanmar government or the KNU for human rights violations that they caused, what would you like to ask for?

I would like to ask for the farms that they confiscated from our areas and in other areas or to give fair compensation to the people. Then, they should give land titles to those who don't have land form 7 [government land title].

It means that they should make laws that protect local people's properties such as lands that they get from their ancestors. That's what the Myanmar government can do for the local people. How about the KNU? What can they do for the local people?

Yes, KNU should represent the local people and protect them. It is important that they cooperate with the government and not oppress the local people. We would like to say thank you for representing and standing up for the local people in Hpapun and we would like them to do this in the future as well.

In your opinion, what is the best way to stop human rights violations?

As I told you, the government should make permanent laws and practice and follow them. If they break the laws, there should be the worthy punishment for that too. There will only be changes if they follow that. If they don't follow that, there won't be any changes.

So, that is also way to stop human rights violations for the whole country. Thank you so much for giving me time and answering all the questions that I asked. Do you have anything you would like to add?

I would like to talk about the situation in Hpapun. I would like to ask the KNU to give us permission to practice our religion, do activities and build religious buildings. We would like to ask them for the freedom to meditate.

Thank you so much for giving us information and suggestions [...]. Finally, I would like to ask for permission to take three photos from you.

Yes.

Source #27

Source doc #	Source # 27
Log #	19-6-A3-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Saw Gg--- (male, 53), Gh--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen from the Mone Phor tribe.

What is your religion?

I am Christian.

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many children do you have?

I have three children.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is 22 years old.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is 17 years old.

What is your occupation?

I work different kinds of jobs. I am preparing to work on my plantation.

Do you have a special position?

I participate in social affairs.

Where do you live?

I live in Gh--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Karen State.

Have you experienced conflict?

I have forgotten some of the past events which were not severe. There might have been some minor situations.

What do you mean by a minor issue?

It was just individual quarrels.

How did they resolve the issue?

These were quarrels which took place among the population.

Were there issues with the Tatmadaw?

No.

Was the Tatmadaw military camp located close to your village?

Yes, the location of the Tatmadaw military camp is just 1 furlong [200m / 220yds] from our village. The military camp moved away in 1991 and it became Tatmadaw military land. They practice training and do other kinds of activities. The place is now signposted as an operations command.

Do you mean the Tatmadaw military camp that was based in the village in 1991?

I don't know exactly when the Tatmadaw military camp started. But I noticed there were a lot of soldiers in the military camp. They stole villagers' fruits from their plantations. In 1991, the Tatmadaw moved their military camp and it was great happiness for us.

Do you know the name of the Tatmadaw military camp?

The Tatmadaw military camp was established in 1973 and it was known as LIB#73. So the name of the military camp is LIB#73.

Do you know where Tatmadaw LIB#73 moved to when they left your village?

It was moved to Zayat Gyi.

What happened with the military camp after they moved out?

When they first moved, they dismantled the military camp and took some of the materials with them.

Were there troop rotations?

Yes, they didn't abandon the Tatmadaw military camp. I don't know if the military training camp was set up by the SOC or not, but the military camp reopened.

When did LID #66 move into the military camp?

It was in 2006 or 2007.

Did any conflict occur between the villagers and the soldiers?

No.

Did the Tatmadaw demand labour from the villagers?

The villagers had to cut bamboo for the military camp until 2010. In addition, along with the Tatmadaw camp changes, [Sa Ka Ka #5 and LID#66 changed] the villagers had to be their laborers. When the Sa Ka Ka [Military Operations Command - MOC] #5 built a pagoda, the villagers were forced to carry sand and stones. Later, when its headquarters moved from Baw Ga Lay to Mine Na Sel, we were forced to cut bamboo for them. We also had to clean up the area for the building. Not only that but also we had to participate in their events even though we didn't want to.

Did LIB#73 provide compensation for the land they confiscated from the villagers?

I don't know about it. At that time, the responsible village administrator listed down the names of people who lost their land. After 4 or 5, they were compensated for the lands being confiscated. But I don't know the amount. Only the owners would know this.

Were landmines planted in the area? Were there any dangers for the villagers after the military camp was demolished?

Yes. They even planted landmines 3 miles away from the military camp. Two or three years after the military camp moved, a villager stepped on a landmine when searching for food and later died. They also planted landmines around the military camp. Sometimes, we heard landmines booming when branches fell down. So we can assume that landmines are still planted around in the area. It is very dangerous to go around in the area without local people who have knowledge about the situation.

Did the Tatmadaw remove the landmines?

No.

Did the Tatmadaw provide MIE training and landmines awareness?

They didn't inform us openly. We just heard about it [the landmines] from hearsay. They never conducted a meeting on the situation or the location where landmines were planted. Nowadays, the young generations do not know about the landmines and the knowledge hasn't been shared with them yet.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process? How is the ceasefire relevant to you and your community?

We have doubts about the details of the peace process because they are often just pretending. Their activities do not convince us.

What do you know about the peace process?

The word "peace" is very deep in meaning. If we take it lightly, it will become meaningless. So having knowledge about peace is extremely necessary. Besides, people should live or act in harmony with the knowledge they have on the peace process. Looking at the current peace situation, it is clear that the governments, armed groups and supreme leaders were not capable of bringing peace to the country. Anyway, it is really necessary in order to bring peace in the country to include both the governments and the civilians.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

There is no sense in saying genuine peace exists only in one particular place. That's not genuine peace. I want genuine peace in the whole country, and people have to feel peace of mind. For instance, matters should be resolved in peaceful ways when they first emerge. Currently, people are not familiar with the peace details. That's why the supreme leaders should study to have intimate knowledge [of peace]. Not respecting other people's rights is one of the factors preventing the achievement of genuine peace.

Does the Tatmadaw military participate in road construction to enhance access to the area?

Tatmadaw militarization is increasingly widespread; they are transporting their rations by vehicles and also with horses. The Tatmadaw soldiers are operating inconspicuously. We do not hear from the side of the armed groups, except when they recruit. So it can be assumed that both of them are breaking the NCA code of conduct.

Are the Tatmadaw transporting more goods than usual?

The military camp situated close to the village is transporting their ration as usual. At this time, they are transporting rations not only with military vehicles but also with horses.

Could this affect the peace process?

We really feel suspicious with the Tatmadaw transporting rations using horses. That's not giving us much trust in the peace process.

What else did the Tatmadaw do? Was there any road construction done by the Tatmadaw?

There was no road construction done by the Tatmadaw in our area before. Now, there is road construction across our village and reaching to 20-Mile village by the Tatmadaw.

Did the road construction cause damage to the land of the villagers? Did they compensate for the damage?

Some of the landowners knew the road construction pathway [so they were able to prepare]. In contrast, some people didn't know about the road construction's pathway. There were damages to the plantations but we don't know if there was compensation given. In my opinion, I would like to see them get consensus [from us] before constructing roads. I would assume that this would be genuine peace. Under the current road construction, we as villagers didn't know anything about the road construction and they only consulted between the armed groups. That's weakening the peace process instead of achieving genuine peace in the country.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

Governments are people with power. So if they give orders not to fight, the civilians will benefit from peace. The government especially has a responsibility. In addition, the civilians should be just as involved as the government in achieving peace in the country. The government rules the country unselfishly; this would be very fast in bringing peace in the country. It will be really hard to bring peace if the governments look only for their own benefit.

Is the Tatmadaw responsible for achieving genuine peace? And how should they do that?

Concerning this, we don't need to walk in their shoes as we are not involved in political affairs,

nor are we armed groups. As for civilians, we wonder about the purpose of holding arms. If they abandon arms and have consultations using only words about peace, we are in no doubt they could bring peace for the civilians. But if they use guns in ways that don't bring benefits for the people, our longing for peace will be far more difficult to achieve.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

According to my personal perspective, the government ought to examine the purpose of forming the Tatmadaw and using guns. We will never know the reality of peace if they continue to spend on weapons for the purpose of conquering one another. That's why the civilians feel that the reason they use guns is for intimidation.

If you could share your opinion with the KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

The Myanmar government should reflect on the rationale behind the conflict. As for the KNU, it is clear that they have rebelled in order to gain justice for Karen people. I do believe that both the KNU and the civilians should be equally involved in bringing peace. I believe that the armed organisations should make changes to their beliefs and attitudes as should the government.

Which kinds of changes should they make?

They should review all different kinds of laws.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

In my opinion, [the peace negotiations] should involve 50% representatives from the governments and 50% representatives of the civilians, in line with the responsibilities they have to take. If both government and the civilian side fulfill their duties, there would be genuine peace. Among the groups, there must be an allocation of responsibilities.

What suggestions would you like to give to the Tatmadaw and the KNU?

It's not a suggestion. It's our wish for both governments to create genuine peace willingly. Only if they are willing can we bring genuine peace in the country. I am really happy to hear that the KNU has the aim of bringing genuine peace in the country, even if the Myanmar government breaks their promises.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

Gaining peace comes firstly from oneself. For instance, everyone in the country should allocate or define their duties and fulfill these in striving for peace. I would also suggest to religious leaders to encourage their congregations. This should also help in peace-making.

Will you allow us to use the information you have provided?

I would like you to use it appropriately according to the situation.

Would you allow us to use take your photos and use it?

Yes.

Source #28

Source doc #	Source # 28
Log #	18-134-A2-I1

Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Fa--- (male, 46), Fb--- village, Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

Religion: Christian
Ethnicity: Karen
Family Statue: Married
Occupation: Community organizer/ a deacon in church

How many family members do you have?
Now we only have two family members because others have resettled in other countries.

What is your occupation?
I work in my plantation.

What is your village name?
My village name is Fc---village, Htee Guh Thaw village tract, Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District.

What was the human right abuse that you have faced during the conflict period?
I am only a villager but the Tatmadaw shot me three times in the past. Fortunately, I managed to flee and survived every incident. When the Tatmadaw shot me, I was only wearing normal clothes without any arms because I am only a villager. The first time the Tatmadaw shot me was when I was on the way back from the pharmacy. I bought some medicine for my son because he was sick. The Tatmadaw soldiers were drunk and shot at me with their gun. Some villagers who were arrested by Tatmadaw told me about their experience later.

When did this happen?
It happened 18 years ago.

Do you still remember the Battalion number of the Tatmadaw soldiers who shot you?
I cannot remember anymore. It was just the Tatmadaw soldiers who were temporarily based in Fd--- village.

What were other problems caused by Tatmadaw during the conflict period?
When the Tatmadaw was based in Fd--- village, they cut down villagers' coconut and jackfruit trees to build their shelters. Every day, they would order three or four villagers to carry water for them to take a bath. I also used to carry water for the soldiers. None of them would take a bath outside in the river, only in their camp.

What did you use to carry water? Did you have a machine?
No, we just walked on foot and carried water with our hands. There was no machine at all.

Did the Tatmadaw commit any human rights abuse against women?

They did not commit human rights abuses against women because women were not allowed to go out or travel [out of the village] during that time. The problem was when they [Tatmadaw] went to someone's house and forcefully took villagers' domestic animals such as chickens and [uncooked] rice.

Were you ever displaced during the conflict period?

Sometimes, the Tatmadaw called for forced labour. Sometimes, they also arbitrarily arrested villagers whom they met. They ordered villagers to be porters and work for them without being paid. They only released us when they were satisfied.

Was there anyone from your village who displaced to another country?

Yes, my parents fled because they could not tolerate the Tatmadaw's oppression anymore. The Tatmadaw restricted villagers from travelling and working. Local people have to ask for a recommendation letter in order to work or go somewhere. However, they arrested local people as they wanted even if they had recommendation letters. That's why my parents displaced to a refugee camp and I also fled to Chiang Mai for 16 years. I came back when the situation got better.

Was there any problem-solving mechanism that local community members used to deal with the human rights abuses?

During the conflict period, local leaders faced difficult situations because they were caught in between pleasing two armed groups; Tatmadaw and Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA]. However, they tried their best to protect the community and deal with the two armed groups. Being a village head during that time was so dangerous.

Were there more women or men who took the role of village head?

Most women took the village head role because men were more vulnerable during the conflict period. Many male village heads were brutally killed by the Tatmadaw. One of my cousins who served as a village head was killed. For men, they were usually accused of being KNLA spies or soldiers.

What about women who took the role of village head? What kind of experience did they face?

Women had to be more afraid of sexual violence instead of other abuses as men [had to be]. The Tatmadaw were more likely to trust and listen to women. They believed that women could not communicate easily with the KNLA because women did not usually go out far away, especially at night. Women could lie to them about this.

What were the consequences of armed conflict?

Most local people secured their livelihoods through agriculture and their plantation. Sometimes, the Tatmadaw arrested villagers during the paddy transplantation and cultivation [land clearing prior to planting] period. Our plantation process was delayed and damaged when we were arrested [by Tatmadaw] for a long period of time. This caused food shortages and damaged lands. Especially during harvest season, the Tatmadaw frequently came and arrested villagers. Many villagers lost their paddies because they were not able to harvest it. They asked for chickens and money from villagers. People who did not have chickens and money were forced to be porters. This was a big challenge for us.

Why do you think the Tatmadaw abused local people?

I think it is because they consider our area as a red area [KNU/KNLA operation area], so they treated us badly. In fact, they wanted to control Karen people with their power.

What do you understand about the ceasefire and peace process?

I see that our leader [KNU] tries to promote peace and stability. There have been several changes in our community as a result of the ceasefire. Community members are able to secure their livelihoods through their plantation and can travel freely. This has reduced a certain amount of poverty in our community. We can travel anywhere regardless of whether it is day or night time. However, we do not trust the Tatmadaw and Myanmar government completely yet because we see construction of military bases on the hills nearby villages. These constructions look strong and big. Our Karen armed group [KNLA] does not have such obvious and big military constructions in our community at all. The Tatmadaw constructs [some of] their camps with cement but the KNLA only uses bamboos to construct their camps in the jungle. We cannot see the Tatmadaw's strategy [we do not know what their strategy is].

What is the trend of Tatmadaw activity that you see in your community?

I see that they try to build their camps in the best spots [for the military to monitor the situation] near Karen villages. They set their camps on the hill. They did not halt their military activities at all. So we dare not trust them.

What do you expect from the NCA?

Not what I can do but what I expect. I expect that our leaders will stand for us and also advocate to international communities to monitor the Myanmar government's relationship with our Karen people. We cannot only rely on ourselves to pressure the Myanmar government.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

We do not have to fear sudden fighting like we did during the conflict period but we have another fear which is the widespread use of drugs. We are worried that our children and young people will be addicted to drugs because many young people in our community have that problem. We are not sure whether the military and government monitors the drug trade or not. This is a big threat for our future generation.

What is the percentage of young people in your community who are addicted to drugs?

Probably about 10% but this is only the beginning. The KNLA tries to protect us against the drug trade but they cannot control everything.

Do you know where the drugs come from?

I am not sure where they get it but it is not from our village.

Do you think there is security in your community?

No. The nature of our Karen people is being honest, transparent and calm. The Tatmadaw patrols the villages and places that they want to monitor whenever they came to our area. Due to this, they know the places where Karen people live. The [cause of] another insecurity is that many parts of our lands were bought by outsiders and strangers. Our community is no longer as secure as before.

What is a barrier to sustainable peace?

The drug trade and increasing addiction are big threats to sustainable peace. We are concerned

that the Tatmadaw turn a blind eye to the drug trade in our community to ruin our future generation [drug use among youth is prevalent].

If you have the authority, what changes would you like to make in order to promote sustainable peace?

If I have the authority, I would eliminate the drug trade because I see it as a new fighting strategy. Nowadays, the Tatmadaw do not fight us with weapons but with drugs.

What would you recommend to the Myanmar government and KNU to promote sustainable peace?

I would like to make a suggestion to my people and my leaders. Our Karen armed groups are diverse but they try to achieve peace in their own ways. I would recommend them to be in unity and peace. Above all, I would suggest to them to avoid drugs and protect [the community] against it. I also suggest cooperating with other ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar government in eliminating drugs. I think that the situation in our community will get better when drug use and addiction is eliminated. As a result, fighting and other threats will also dramatically reduce. I see the drug trade as indirect fighting because the Myanmar government does not protect [the community] against it effectively even though the KNU/KNLA does. Drug elimination should be carried out by the ethnic government and Myanmar government. Our generation is our strength; we do not want them to be in vain because they will be the future leaders of our people. If their lives are ruined since a young age, our enemy will control us easily.

Is there any other barrier to sustainable peace?

The other barrier to sustainable peace is development. Foreign companies enter the country and implement their businesses. Some people are happy with it because they got a job but some people are facing the negative impacts. Notably, the bad smell due to the livestock company in our village [Fc--- village] seriously impacts local people's health, hygiene, and the environment. Since their health and environment are not good, their livelihoods situation is also affected.

What could you do by your own to promote peace and justice?

I can only try to develop my community and organise young people to be involved in community development. Instructing young people to live godly lives is a strategy to keep them away from committing bad deeds and from being addicted to drugs. I believe that if we have good community members, our village will develop and so will our country.

How is your community's livelihood situation now?

Our community livelihoods situation is getting better for many, whether rich or poor, land owners or landless or casual workers. We do not have to be afraid when working on the land; we do not have to worry about being jobless, about lending and borrowing people's foods and money because we can work on everything by ourselves. In the past, we had to flee from Tatmadaw, become porters and leave our fields, which were later damaged.

Do women have freedom and equal rights?

As the armed conflict situation has improved, women are courageous and more active. There are human rights violations committed against women but women's organisations [such as KWO, etc...] are raising awareness through training and are advocating for abused women. We are so happy to see that community organisations protect and promote women's rights. We also hope to see women enjoying more rights in the future.

In the next section, I am going to ask you about justice and accountability. How do you understand justice?

Justice means honesty, for example, when international organisations distribute supports to civilians in Myanmar through the Myanmar government. We are not sure whether the governments are honest in distributing international aid. The distribution management is transparent on a local level but I am not sure about [what happens on a government level].

How the cases in your community are being solved?

The cases that happen in village level are handled by the village tract in which community organisations such as women's organisations also participate. This mechanism is effective and just because women's rights are protected by women's organisations on a community level.

How are bigger cases being handled? Are the KNU or Myanmar government authorities responsible?

We mostly refer bigger cases that we cannot handle to the KNU/KNLA. We have never relied on the Myanmar government justice system.

Do you think the justice system is effective and fair?

Based on my experience attending court proceedings, I see that it is quite good. Our leaders try to solve the cases and bring people into unity by calming down the tension between perpetrators and victims.

Do you see any corruption in the justice system?

No.

How do you want accountability for past human rights abuses that you faced?

The conflict period was violent. Many innocent people in the community were violently abused. However, we cannot find the perpetrator who abused us anymore as many years have passed by already. We only hope that our government will avoid violent acts [in the future]. In case if we still face those violent acts and abuses, we would like to demand our government to give penalty on the perpetrators according to the law and be transparent in deciding the penalty.

Do you think that the Myanmar government is responsible and accountable for the human rights abuses?

Yes, they have a big responsibility to promote justice and accountability for the past human rights abuses. This will strengthen the inter-dependence and trust between Myanmar government and ethnic minorities. Additionally, international organisations will also distribute more support to civilians when the government is honest. This can also lead to our community's potential development. We are also thankful to international organisations that are willingly supporting us.

What would be the best way to eliminate human rights abuses and ensure peace? It starts from one household; when each household is able to avoid doing bad things and violence, the community will be in peace and develop more efficiently. The person responsible for this will depend on the level [of organization in the community]. For example; the household leader controls the house, village head controls the village, township leaders control the township area and national government controls the country. Our national leaders have to stand strongly for their people.

What would you recommend to the national leaders to eliminate human rights abuses?

I would suggest to them to eliminate drugs.

Do you have any other information that you would like to share?

I would like suggest that junior leaders [KNU] observe how the senior leaders' operate, learn from them and make positive changes.

What do you want to suggest to our organisation?

Your organisation [KHRG] is revealing the truth. For example, an authority is doing something against the law but was not handled according to the law. Most of their illegal activities were kept secret from the public. I am glad that KHRG reports on the illegal activities committed by authorities.

Would you allow us to use this information in our publication?

Yes. I am happy to share it.

Source #29

Source doc #	Source # 29
Log #	18-123-A7-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview , Naw Ey--- (female, 38), Ez--- village, Lay Poh village tract, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many people are there in your family?

There are four people in our family.

Can you tell me about your experience working as an administrator?

I participated in the affairs of development in my village.

Have you experienced conflict? How? Do you often think about it?

There was conflict happening in the past that I will never forget. The (Na Wa Ta) SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) and (Na A Pa) SPDC (State Peace and Development Council) troops came to our village and imposed forced labor on the population.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

The human rights abuses happened in the years 1999 and 2000. When they came into the village, they forced the population to serve as porters. Those who could not or were too afraid to go, they had to give SLORC and SPDC money.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

Being forced to serve as a porter was the worst thing I've ever experienced. It was a miserable moment. The population had to pay money and go even though they were afraid to go.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I didn't witness it in person, but I heard that people in nearby villages were killed by the Military.

Have you experienced displacement?

No. It was one of the great challenges when the Tatmadaw would come and go in the village. Tatmadaw actions undermined our livelihoods. We couldn't work on our farms freely because we were afraid of them. We depend on our farms.

How does it continue to affect the lives of the population?

Displacement affects the population's lives in various ways such as livelihoods, healthcare and education.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

Local people depended on their farms. Sometimes, the population faced food shortages. Nevertheless, they survived by the produce of their farms.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

SLORC were the main perpetrators at that time.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

There were no human rights abuses that were resolved. Even if there was a case, there was no justice for the victims.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I haven't witnessed any perpetrators being punished.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

None of those things ever happened.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

As for the government, they should help the victims.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

Discrimination against the ethnicities is the root cause of human rights abuses.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

I assume that the ceasefire promotes peace, and that would benefit us a lot for working and living in our village independently.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

I have no idea.

What would you like to know about the Ceasefire or peace process?

Is the agreement they signed genuine or are there any concerns that remain? That's what I would like to know.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

The local community has big concerns with the livelihood situation and whether they could have adequate food to survive.

Do you feel safe living in your village?

No. Anyhow, KNU couldn't often come to look after us.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

The biggest barriers for the population are fighting among ethnicities, land confiscation and so forth.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

Both governments need consultation that would make the situation better through a more sustainable process. In my perspective, they should also stop confiscating land that people depend on to survive.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I don't have an idea for this.

What kind of government could guarantee justice and peace in Myanmar?

I don't think any of them could guarantee that.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

We could at least participate in community affairs such as education and healthcare, we could be strong in these sectors if the government cooperates with the villagers.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing since the NCA was signed in 2015?

I haven't seen any human rights challenges since the NCA.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

After the NCA, I haven't seen any human rights challenges.

What are the human rights challenges women currently face?

There are no recent human rights challenges women are facing.

What are the human rights challenges minorities currently face?

I would say that would be land confiscation in our region.

What does justice mean to you?

I would be so glad to live under the rule of justice.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We use the KNU justice system in our village.

What do you know about this justice system? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

I do believe it. Sometimes, I just feel like the justice system is not justice. The judiciary run by the township [government system] is not justice. Though sometimes it does provide justice.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

I haven't seen this. But I have heard people talk about the corruption and bribery around.

If you have experienced human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I would like to have justice.

If so, would you want to take a case to court? Would you want to receive compensation or reparation? Would you want an official apology? What would bring you a feeling of peace?

I want an official apology.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

I think it is official apologies.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

It is to return confiscated lands back to their owners, to eradicate forced labour, and also to have very good consultation and understanding whenever they [Tatmadaw & business men] make road construction and any kind of development.

Were you displaced in the conflict period?

As for our family, they never ran in the conflict period. They lived in the village.

Were you personally displaced?

I ran to the [Noh Poh] refugee camp in Thailand.

Why you were displaced?

I became a displaced person because of the critical period under SLORC and SPDC where there were no chances to seek education. To find a way out, I went to stay at Noh Poh refugee camp to get access to education.

What was the root cause of the refugee situation?

It was because of various crises in education, healthcare, livelihood and for the safety of my life.

If you were displaced, were you able to safely return home? What were the challenges when you came back?

I don't know that I have challenges for now. I don't really know if I have safety in the village. I am worrying about what the NCA will bring in the future.

What made you return home? Did you feel safe enough to do so?

I returned home as I thought our country would move toward genuine peace. However, I am not sure whether I am safe or not.

Would you like to add something to this conversation?

I think it is enough.

How would you want us to use your information?

I would like you to use just my interview. But please don't use my photo and my name.

Do you have suggestions for KHRG?

I would like to thank KHRG for conducting training that is very helpful for our community.

Source #30

Source doc #	Source # 30
Log #	18-129-A3-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | U Li---, male (39), Lm--- village, Lm--- village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (December 2018)

How many family members do you have? Are you married?

Yes, I am married. I have seven children.

How many years have you lived here?

I have lived here since I was born. However, I had to stay in another place temporarily.

Did you experience any conflict? Why did you stay in another place temporarily?

I stayed in Bilin for two years.

Why did you stay there?

It was during the time when the Tatmadaw controlled and had all the power. They arrested two of my brothers and killed them directly because of their suspicion.

Which battalion arrested them?

Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #19. After that, they planned to arrest people again. They said, "Kyu Pin Kote, Kyu Ngut Ma Kyan [cut the reed and leave no root]". [It means that they will kill all Karene and won't even leave one alive]. The administrator U Ln---, the former village head, said that these innocent people might face problems again [if they stayed]. Then he told us about that and we fled from the Tatmadaw military. My aunt is in Mawlamyine but I am not comfortable with my uncle so I thought I would go to another place. Then, I came back to Thaton and I decided to stay in Billin. I started driving bicycle taxi in Billin for my livelihood. After two years, my father told me that the situation was getting better so I came to live here in my

village. Our house and garden are still here so we just came back to live.

What happened next?

There was no conflict after that but three years later, we heard something will happen. In Hpapun there was an explosion [of a bomb] at the camp of Transportation and Support Unit Battalion #957 in Hpapun. They arrested and killed all the people whom they suspected in the nearby villages. Two boys from my village were arrested.

It was at the Transportation and Support Unit. Isn't it in Hpapun?

Yes, it is. They arrested two boys and killed both of them. When we heard they were killed, we asked why the village head, leaders and administrator did not do anything to help them? Then they brought the history back about those boys. Those boys' brothers were killed before, so they probably did try to get back at the Tatmadaw. Then we heard that they were going to arrest people again. If we heard that, we had to prepare ourselves to run away. It was in the rainy season. We took a boat and fled into Thailand. I stayed in Thailand for two years. After that I heard that the authorities moved from the area, so I came back. The reasons were because my parents, my family, my house and my lands were also there. So I just came back to stay with them.

When was it?

I guessed it was in 1991 after I got married in 1989. At that time, I went to stay in Bilin and came back after two years to stay with my family. I fled into Thailand in 2012 because they arrested people after the bomb explosion. Then, I heard that they were going to arrest more people who they suspected. I fled, and they killed all the people whom they arrested.

Can you forget those experiences?

How can I forget them? I cannot forget about those because I see things all the time that remind me of them.

Were there any human rights abuses that happened in your village?

There were a lot of human rights abuses that happened. We could only stay home for five or ten days a month. The rest of the time, we had to carry things [for the Tatmadaw]. When we were doing porter for this Battalion and in the same time if others divisions were coming, then you had to run [try to escape from that]. Otherwise, you would get arrested then it would be your fortune if you were arrested.

Did you get paid for being a porter?

No. Even if you died there, you won't get any compensation for that.

Did anyone die there?

Yes, there were people who died there and one of my cousins Ko Lo--- also died there. People who died there were Ko Lo---, Lp--- and Maung Lq---. There are three people that I remember. There were also some people from other villages. It would be at least ten people I think.

When was it? Can you guess?

It was a long time ago, about 22 or 23 years ago. I think it was those years ago because Lp--- came here before he went to porter when my second daughter was born. Since then he never came back to the village. So I think it was at that time.

What was the most difficult experience you had among forced portering, suspicion and volunteering?

I think the most difficult time was when you went to porter at the time when the Tatmadaw influenced and held all the power. You were called to porter from the Battalion and then you would be referred to the division. I think there were not many people in the division. If you were ill or had stepped on sharp objects, then you would be left behind. They would give you an injection when you were moaning [suffering from pain or illness] or find a way for you to die easily.

What kind of medicine? Was that a lethal injection?

Yes, it was. When you were moaning, they said, "Fine, we will give you an injection and you will be fine." 30 minutes after the injection, you would rest in peace forever.

Were you a witness? Did you see with your eyes?

I saw it with my own eyes.

Which Battalion was it?

Light Infantry Battalions #10 and #35, and Infantry Battalion #60 gave such injections.

So Light Infantry Battalion #35 was from Thayarwaddy?

Yes, I think so.

However, you did not get lethal injection, right?

Yes, it was because I was afraid as well. I had to carry things even if I could not carry them anymore. I just had to force myself to do it. Sometimes, we could not bear it anymore, so two or three of us discussed running away. But if we ran away, we had to be careful not to meet with them anymore. If we met them then we would not be able to come back alive. One thing that was good when we ran away is when we met the villagers or KNU soldiers on the way in jungle. We had to pray to meet them.

Did you meet KNU when you ran away?

Yes, I met them when we ran away, on the way beside Lr---, east of Hpapun. They saw us and said, "Who are guys? Where are you from?" Then we replied to them, we ran away from portering [work]. They took us to their army camp. We told them, "We are from Hpapun." They continued to ask us, "Do you know U Ls--- from Happun?" We said, "Of course, we know him." "Then how about Lt---?" he continued. We said, "Lt--- is U Lu---'s daughter [the trader]. We only knew him he is KNU just when we arrived there." We [five of us] followed him into the village and the food [rice] for us was ready. When we saw rice then we immediately just ate rice without curries. It was because we were starved for a week already. The rice, soup [warm] and sesame paste were so good. After we ate they communicated with each other and they sent us back to our village. On the way back they tried to avoid the Tatmadaw column. After seeing them once we were not afraid to go for portering anymore. We just ran away as far as we could into the jungle. We thought that it would be fine if we met with the KNU.

Did all your family members have to run away from the human rights abuses?

The very first time when we ran, we had no children. So both my wife and I ran away. One of my younger brothers followed us as well. Three of us stayed in Bilin for two years. But the second time when I ran into Thailand, all my children and my wife also ran with me.

Are these the experiences that you went through? Meeting the KNU, escaping from being a forced porter, and lethal injection? Is that your own experience?

Yes, it was my own experience.

What about other experiences?

If I take time and think then I will remember one of them among all the experiences.

How did fleeing or difficulties affect your family's livelihood?

The first time I ran, my parents gave me some of their property that they had saved. If [we had been] on our own then we would not have had anything. Then we just took something we had in our hands. I tried to find a job in Mawlamyine and Thaton, but it did not go well. So I finally went to Bilin, and I just thought it is not good if we keep going like this. Therefore, we decided to base ourselves in Bilin because we had to spend a lot on the way just trying to find a place and a job. Then I asked my friends and people who stay there, "Are there any random jobs that are available now? Please let me know if there is any available job." Then my friend told me, "don't worry. Just buy one bicycle taxi and drive it." It was in Bilin. Then I told them, "Fine, I will buy it but you guys have to help me." I bought one bicycle taxi but I did not know how to drive it. But they taught me how to drive it. The first day that I started driving the bicycle taxi, I only got 12 kyat for the whole day. I thought I should do any job, even [drive] a bicycle taxi. The next day I went to drive the bicycle taxi again. If other people got 100 kyat, I got 50 kyat. I thought it was not so bad, and it improved. We just had to try like that. At night if there were festivals in the city, I went there to drive bicycle taxi. There was a lookout [sentry] in front our house. I worked as a lookout and I also called my brother to work with me. I got tired because I worked both day and night. We got 15 kyat each for one night as a lookout. I mainly worked as a lookout at night and I asked my brother to sleep. Sometimes we could only eat rice with lima bean salad in the first year. The next year, we started getting to eat like other people with egg curry. Before that we had to struggle a lot to get to eat like that. There were five or six cows that we left at home, but when we came back there were only two or three were left. I don't know what happened because we just had to leave them behind.

Who was the perpetrator who caused this situation? Which Battalion?

It was just the Tatmadaw. There were a lot of Tatmadaw military camps but they were the same [part of the same group]. There was only Light Infantry Battalion #19 here before. Later on there were a lot of Battalions coming in, so we had to afraid of every Battalion.

Do you still remember the other Battalions?

They were Light Infantry Battalion #5, Infantry Battalion #5, #60, #57 and #303 Commando.

Did you know about human right abuses happening there?

No, I did not know because we just thought about escaping from the danger.

Did you fight back against them or assault them?

No, how could we dare to fight back against them? After the Tatmadaw took over all the power, they called a meeting in Hpapun Myo Thit hall. So we went to attend the meeting for three days. They told all the section leaders that if they needed help carrying rations, everyone had to help them without complaining. They just said three things and then they said "we just wanted to say these. Now you can go back." Someone called Lv--- stood up and said, "I have something to tell you." Then they [Tatmadaw leader/soldier] told him, "It is fine. Sit down. You don't need to tell anything." He [Tatmadaw] continued, "We come here just to tell you something, not to listen to

you. So now you can go back.”

Which Battalion was that? Who was the commander?

It was Light Infantry Battalion #19 Battalion and the commander was Lt. colonel U Soe Myint Gyi.

Did you solve anything?

No, nothing was solved. We wanted to run away even if only we saw him.

Were the perpetrators punished or did they apologize for what they did wrong?

No, there was no punishment or apology. No one dared to speak up [about their wrongdoing].

How do you think they should be punished? For example, should they be taken to court or given compensation or demoted in their position?

We did not think how we wanted them to be punished at that time. Rather, we thought “it will be so nice if we have weapons; it will be so good.”

How about now?

But now I think they should be punished seriously according to what they have done to be able to let them know that all people have the opportunity to talk freely. This is to show everyone has become equal and can speak to protect themselves.

What should to be done for the victims who suffered human rights abuses in the conflict? For example, you were a victim and there were other people who were injured in the conflict. So what do you want?

We can see that the situation now has changed a lot from the past. We want everyone to get good opportunities to work in freedom.

What was the source of the forced labor, suspicion, and killing that happened? Why?

It was because they thought “I am a commander and I have power”, and they didn’t give people opportunities. They don’t even think of people as human. They just asked people to do what they wanted, as much as they wanted, without any payment. They never paid people. You had to be a porter whenever it was your turn. If you were sick when you came back, you had to go to the clinic or the hospital by yourself. If you were lucky, you would get one extra leg if you had lost your leg. Prosthetic legs were given by civil society organisations in Taung Ka Lay.

According to what you were talking now is “abuse of power”.

Yes, it was. It was an abuse of power. There was no rule of law and there was no knowledge of human rights among civilians. So they just followed and did everything they were asked to do. However, even if you knew your rights in that time, you were not able to go against them. No one had the courage to oppose them.

It was because the authorities used excess top-down power. Now I am going to ask you about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Have you heard of it?

I have heard about the ceasefire process.

How do you think about it? Is it good or bad?

If we compare to the past situation, it is better after the ceasefire [the situation is more peaceful now].

Do you think the NCA/ ceasefire process is relevant to you?

Yes, of course. It is relevant to me. Before the ceasefire process started, there was a lot of fighting areas all over. So if we heard the gun firing, we did not know where to flee. We just became the innocent victims between them. They called for porters. If your husband was not at home, you had to go instead of him. So it was not easy for the wife [women] as well. It happened in the past. But after ceasefire process started, there is no asking for porters.

Do you know and understand about the peace process?

I don't know and understand that much. But we want peace and if we can live peace, it will be the best.

What do you want to know about the most?

I want to know what kind of peace will be in Myanmar. If there is no gender based bias, no religion and ethnicity discriminations, then it will be better.

What are the benefits from peace process?

There will be many benefits from peace process if there is real peace. Firstly, the transportation will be so much better. You can travel and trade in many different places if there is peace.

Do you think Lm--- village is peaceful now?

As I told you before, there is not real peace yet but there is no sound of firing guns [just silence]. But we don't get the real or full human rights yet.

What are the impacts of the peace process for your community?

It is attached to racial issues. It is just the ceasefire now, but there are some sparks of peace that we get to see. However, there is clearly discrimination against our religion, Islam. We know that we are just a minority. We don't have the right to build [mosques], worship our gods and we cannot gather together in our [mosque]. We cannot do it freely yet.

Do you think the livelihood situation has gotten better?

No, the livelihood situation hasn't gotten better yet. Most of the people here are farmers and they do plantations, farming and there are some who raise livestock. However, we don't have lands to expand for our agriculture or livestock. We have got more family members so we have to divide half for the living from the lands where we have the plantation. So before if we used to get 200 kyat, now we just get to spend 100 kyat. Most of the people from this village are just working on random jobs. However, there are no regular jobs or daily work for them.

There is no freedom of livelihood yet. How will you define "Peace"?

We say that "Peace" and they do ceasefire for peace process. If we define "Peace", it means that everyone has freedom to travel and live freely in peace. Now we just hear the word "peace" but we don't see it in reality.

Do you think this peace process has improved or not in your own opinion? How do you think?

I think this peace process is still a shadow. We cannot see its implementation [improvement] yet.

What are the obstacles for this peace process?

In my opinion, we thought the National League for Democracy would improve this peace process. However, even though it became the government now, it doesn't have any mandate to do anything. So it cannot do anything yet because the Tatmadaw is still alive [in government].

Why can NLD not improve this peace process?

It is because the Tatmadaw holds the power in the NLD government. So they cannot use their authority [power] in any department yet. They are now just going with the demands from the Tatmadaw.

So you mean that the Tatmadaw is an obstacle to the peace process by holding power.

Yes, so there is no freedom yet.

What should be done to have sustainable peace?

In my opinion, I don't have wider opinion and knowledge but if the NLD government keeps going with transparent democracy and if there are no obstacles then peace process will be sustainable.

If the peace process is not improving, it will just stay in the same place or go backward, so what do you want to change for improvement?

If the NLD government has all the power to control and to be in charge of everything in the Ministry of Home Affairs over freedom then we hope it will be changed.

So you mean if the NLD government controls all the Ministry of Home Affairs, it will be changed and improved.

Yes, it will.

How do you want to advise or suggest the KNU government and Myanmar government to share their power and improve the peace process?

I wanted to tell them [something] and I have waited for so long. There are so many conflicts that have happened since the peace process started. There are many problems and conflicts so we cannot travel freely, and everyone can see and know what the problems are. Now we see in Hpapun, Karen State, if something happens and we cannot deal with it by ourselves, we have to cooperate with the KNU. If the KNU, NLD and the Tatmadaw work together for peace then I can say there will be real peace.

So you want them to work together without any discrimination? This is what you want to suggest to the KNU and Myanmar government.

Yes, it is.

Who [which government] can guarantee peace and justice?

The NLD government is not so bad to rule the country if it has all the power to control our freedom. Then I think there will be justice. It is because of its [the NLD's] principles. Its principles are not for benefiting itself. It is for every group in the country such as Karen and Mon and others.

If the government can give or do these, how can you participate and work with them?

Yes, we cannot do huge things as we are local people. However, we can help them with small things from some areas where they need to achieve peace.

The NCA was signed in 2015. Are there any ongoing human rights abuses that are still happening? Can you please give an example?

Yes, I think so. Everyone knows that the NCA was signed, but the fighting is still ongoing. For example, in Shan State and Kachin State, the Tatmadaw goes to fight with them. There should be no fighting according to the NCA. It is kind of breaking the rule.

Are there any calls for forced labor?

No, there is no forced labor but there is no freedom to work.

How about others abuses that happen after NCA?

There is no freedom to work freely and to travel. Just a few days ago my daughter and my son-in-law went back to Myeik. At the Nga Pyaw Taw checkpoint in Dawei they were stopped, and they had to plead to be able to continue. They let them go when they saw the permission letter from my son in law. The other is related to religion. When our religious leaders came to visit us, they were checked along the way. When they arrived to us, the police or military security affairs [Sa Ra Ka] came and asked "who are you? Where you from? Why are you coming here?" They came to ask many questions. So when we planned to do meditation, we could not do well. So we had to cut our plan short instead of long days and hours. Now our mosque is now broken. When we wanted to fix it, they told us we had to write a letter to let the leaders know about that. They said they will submit that letter to the State level, Township level and District level.

Do human rights abuses have impact on your livelihood?

As we are Muslims, we don't have equal opportunities to others. There is discrimination against Muslim people. For example, if they are taxi drivers, they are checked more often than other drivers. He won't be able to drive comfortably. Then if they carry anything in the car, they will be checked. If they bring one or two goats, they will be asked to pay money. We will let you go. For example, if one goat is 2000 kyats, they will have to pay the same amount. There are less people who hire taxis now because there is a bus called "Shwe Myanmar" which runs for the passengers. So some taxi drivers take anything that they can, such as goats or cows, for trading. For one cow they have to give 3000 kyats to the police, 1000 kyats, and you also have to pay at the checkpoints on the way. After selling one cow, if you get 20000 kyats for profit, there will be only 10000 kyats left. There is a lot to pay on the way.

It is called exploitation. So you don't get the amount that you should. So it affects the livelihood situation.

Yes.

What are the problems that women are facing now? Do they have to go for pottering or volunteer for work?

No, they don't have to go porter or volunteer for work anymore now. The situation is now better than before.

Are there any problems that people have?

The main issue is just livelihood difficulties.

There are kinds of exploitation so you don't get the amount that you should get. So it became a problem for the family livelihood. According to that, what are the difficulties for the women?

There are more jobless people in the village, so there is less income for the family. It means that

only a husband's income is not enough for the family. So the women have to find a job outside to support the family as well. The women are working on the road and bridge development projects from the company. However, some higher leaders from the company extort payment from the women and they don't pay them monthly. They just pay them once every three or four months. There are still some women who didn't get the payment for six months or a year yet from Min Ma Kan Company. The other day, they added their payment and it is over 1500000 or 1600000 kyat. They said they will give it today or tomorrow. However, we didn't hear anything yet until now.

Do men and women get equal pay from the company?

According to their conversations, they don't get equal pay. If women get 5000 kyat, men get 6000 kyat. If women get 5500 kyat then men get 6500 kyat. There is 1000 kyat different between men and women.

So there is discrimination between men and women.

Yes.

How about minority people?

It will be a religious problem. If we [minority people] go to do some activities that belong to the religion such as building or rebuilding mosques, travelling for religious activities, and religious celebration, we cannot do them independently and according to our tradition. We cannot do a big celebration. For example, we do activities such as reviewing whether the number of believers has increased or decreased, or there are more or less people addicted to drugs. So we do it monthly by going mosque to mosque. When it is our mosque's turn, then the religious leaders from other mosques cannot come as much as they want. There is a limited numbers who can come so we have to arrange for that. If twenty people for one mosque from one village can come then it will be good. But now we have to limit the number of people coming, so only three to five people from one mosque can come. If they see more people coming to the mosque then there will be polices or some authority who come to check. They will come to question or check about anything.

Is that a prohibition from the government for your ethnic people?

It seems like the government but it is not directly from the government. It is from the Tatmadaw giving pressure to control us.

So it comes from the military that controls the ministry of home affairs. Do you think they respect your ethnic people's rights?

No, I don't think they respect our rights. They oppress us as much as they want. I will give you one example. We have 80 or 90 houses here in our village. There are around 200 or 300 adults and they should get the citizenship cards from the government. However, there will be fewer than 50 people who can hold the citizenship cards. They tried to apply for the citizenship cards, but they didn't get them. So they just got tired and came back to wait for them.

Why were they upset ?

You will only get citizenship if you have a relatives who are citizens, such as your grandparent, aunty or uncle. You will get it only if you have close relatives who are with ethnic groups. So they got upset and came back. There are some people who really need the citizenship cards. For example there is Ko Lw---'s daughter, who passed grade 10. She needs a citizenship card to continue her study, to improve her life. They had to spend over 300,000 kyat just to get a

citizenship card and had to wait over 10 days. They had to try really hard and bribe to get that. Not everyone can pay that much money to get the citizenship cards. But some people said if you give it to us then we will give you money.

So that is one type of discrimination that your ethnic people have to face. How will you define justice and accountability? What does justice mean to you? If there is justice or no justice from the Ministry of Home Affairs and NLD government, what will justice mean to you?

Justice means there should be transparency and equality for everyone. There is no transparency and equality now so it means that there is no justice yet.

So you define justice as transparency and equality for everyone. What kind of justice system is used in your village? Do they use the Myanmar government or KNU justice system?

They use the Myanmar government justice system in the village now.

How do you think about their justice system?

There will only be a correct justice system when they judge everyone equally and fairly.

You say the justice system should be fair for everyone. Do you trust their justice system?

I don't have strong faith if the cases are related to the township or the cases are brought to the township level.

Are their judgments fair for everyone who has to process the cases?

If we have to talk about that, then [I would say] people who have more money will win the case.

Have you heard about corruption in the justice system?

Of course I have heard about the corruption.

What are the obstacles to a fair justice system?

The main obstacle is just corruption. If there is corruption, even the right person who should win the case will lose it in the end.

You experienced human rights violations, torture, forced labor, and transporting the rations. So according to your experience, do you want compensation and justice?

To be honest, I want justice. If there is justice in this governing system [if they rule fairly in justice], we will be able to forget the past experience [if we have to]. Anyway there is no justice and equality in this government system.

To forget or release what you have suffered in the past, what do you want from the perpetrators?

I will be satisfied if the government participates in the NCA process.

Do you want to report the case that you have suffered to the court?

Yes, I want to.

Do you want compensation?

If there is justice and equality for our children and generations, we will be able to forget about

what we experienced.

Do you want an apology from the perpetrator to be able to forget about your experiences?

We want the former government and the present government to work together and apologise for what they have done to the people. This way, we will be able to forget our past.

KNU and Myanmar government might have committed human rights violations. What should they do to satisfy people and help them forget about the past?

If they both [KNU and Myanmar government] work together for the local people who are living in the country to have a better economic situation, they should have development projects for agriculture and industrial works. They should do the development projects for the local people.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations? What do you think the best way is?

I might have mentioned before in my talking. What I want to say is the ethnic armed groups from each state should join with the government and work together with civilians. It will stop all human rights violations.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

The peace council [KNU/KNLA-PC] should join with the government and work with the civilians. Then the Tatmadaw should not interfere with the government in controlling and ruling the country. If they don't interfere with the government, I think 90 percent of human rights violations will be gone.

Thank you so much for interviewing with me and answering all the questions that I asked. Do you have anything you want to talk about apart from the questions?

I want to tell you something. I want there to be more careers to support our livelihoods in our village tract from seven villages. There should be more improvement in Lx---, Lm---, Ly---, LZ---, Ra--- and Rb--- because we cannot compare them with other villages and cities. They are always behind other places [under development]. They only have enough food but they are not doing business. To be honest, we need more land to work for agricultural projects. We want our village to develop. The other villages have exports but we have nothing.

It means that you want lands that are enough for the population from your village. What else?

I will tell you more next time. I am happy to report this information because, as you said, people will hear our voices in the report.

Do you give me permission to take photos?

Yes, you can.

Source #31

Source doc #	Source # 31
Log #	18-134-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District

Full Text

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Me--- (male, 29), Mf--- village, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (December 2018)

Religion: Christian

Ethnicity: Karen

Family Statue: Married

Occupation: Construction monitoring leader

What are the human rights abuses you have faced?

We experienced displacement and violence. Sometimes, we did not have enough food to eat while we were running from the Tatmadaw military. The Tatmadaw forced us to be porters and carry loads. They would hit us when we were weak and refused to do as they ordered. In that case, we ran away when we could not tolerate the violence anymore. However, we could not find a place of refuge and protection. Our shortcut way to seek refuge was serving in Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA] or any [other] ethnic armed groups.

When did this happen?

It happened in 2015 in Mg--- village when I came back from Mh---. They arrested me in Mg--- where they forced me to carry loads and be a navigator to go to 19 miles [it takes around 5 to 6 hours by walking]. When we had gone 19 miles, I told the Tatmadaw to release me. However, he [a Tatmadaw commander] said, "no, you cannot go. We are not going to release you". Then, I had to carry loads and navigated them to Mi--- Town [one day by foot]. After we arrived to Mi--- Town, they released us but it was dark already. So, we had to sleep on the way back home. There was one villager from Mg--- and one other from Mj--- village. All were men.

Did the Tatmadaw physically violate you while you were a porter?

There was no physical abuse except carrying loads, but they verbally threatened and swore at us when we were weak.

What was the most difficult time you faced during armed conflict?

The most difficult and dangerous time I faced was when Light Infantry Division (LID) #22 [Tatmadaw] came into our community. We dared not stay at home and also felt insecure to hide in the forest. Therefore, I chose to enlist in the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [DKBA]. If I did not join the DKBA, I would have had to be a Tatmadaw soldier. That's why I hurried to go into the DKBA.

What did your family do when you were in DKBA?

They relocated to Mk--- Town because the Tatmadaw forced all villagers to relocate within 6 days. Otherwise, they [Tatmadaw] would burn the house and kill villagers by hitting or shooting.

When did you return to your village?

It was a long time ago already. During armed conflict, I was displaced for 2 years without seeing my family. After that, I came back and met with all family members.

How did such displacement in conflict impact your livelihood?

Our livelihoods were really hard during the conflict period. We had to get a permission letter from the military [Tatmadaw] in order to go and work in our plantation. We had to come back

from our plantation according to the limited time. If we were late, they punished us by forcing to carry loads and other volunteer works.

What are the consequences of such abuses on you and your family?

[Cannot answer]

How did your community encounter and solve the problems during conflict period?

Our customary leaders tried their best to maintain safe livelihoods for local people. Later, we were able to come back to our village but our livelihoods were not that good. We still have to struggle.

How did the customary leader solve the problem?

[Cannot answer]

Who were the main perpetrators of human rights abuse?

It was the Tatmadaw. We had to struggle for our lives under their oppression.

Was there any accountability for the human rights abuses you were facing?

I am not sure whether others took accountability or we took accountability for ourselves during the conflict time. Every villager struggles for their own lives. We could not care for each other.

Was there justice for human rights victim during that time?

No.

Do you want to share any other information?

Last week Wednesday morning at 9:00 AM, I was travelling [to the town] and crossed a Tatmadaw checkpoint on Mg--- hill. I stop there for a short time when I reached the checkpoint because my motorbike was not operating properly. There was some construction in the area so I stopped. Then, the soldier shouted at me and said, "Don't you know that you are stopping in an inappropriate place! If you know that you are human, you should not stop right in front of this." I was confused because I did not really know what was the problem to stop there. I only saw there was cement in that place.

What do you think is the appropriate penalty for those perpetrators of human rights abuses?

The leaders and authorities should instruct them to treat local people with respect. For instance, they should explain to me why this place is not appropriate to stop or say "Please move to another place".

What do you think is the appropriate penalty for perpetrators of human rights abuses in the past?

Authorities should take accountability in punishing the past human rights perpetrators according to the desire of victims and local peoples.

What kind of support, compensation and reparation should be arranged for human right victims?

Authorities should arrange according to the demands of victims.

What are the root causes of human rights abuses?

It is the oppression of the ethnic majority over minorities.

How is the situation after the ceasefire and peace process? How is the ceasefire related to you?

We can travel more easily because of the decreased threat. We can travel both day and night as needed. The situation is getting so much better for us.

Do you know about the NCA [National Ceasefire Agreement]?

I just heard about that but I do not know much about it.

How do you know the NCA?

(Cannot answer)

What do you expect from the peace process?

I expect peace and freedom in traveling and good livelihood conditions.

Why do you think there is peace in your community?

I think the situation is getting better because we do not have to go for volunteer work [for the military] or pay money in lieu of such work.

What are the consequences of the peace process? How?

(Cannot answer)

Do you think there is security for you and your community?

Not 100%. We cannot stay everywhere.

Is your livelihood going well?

Yes, it is fair enough now.

How do you understand the word peace?

I understand that peace has to be more peaceful than now, so that our livelihoods will be better.

What are the barriers to sustainable peace?

I think the Myanmar government is the biggest barrier to sustainable peace. For instance, they implemented development projects and allowed [Tatmadaw] military construction in local areas according to their will. Local people were not allowed [by the Myanmar government] to confront and prevent them from doing the things that they wanted to do. Even so, they do not allow us [ethnic minorities] to construct military bases in their area. Everything is controlled by them [Myanmar government]. We do not have the rights.

What changes would you like to see to promote sustainable changes?

(Cannot answer)

What would you like to recommend to improve the political situation and peace process?

Our leaders [KNU] and the government should negotiate and co-operate together to promote peace.

Which authorities promote peace in your community?

There is no way that the Myanmar government will make peace in our community.

What could you do to promote peace and justice?

We can inform to our leaders [KNU] to promote peace.

What are the most common human rights abuses in your local area?

(Cannot answer)

Do you think there is safety for women in your community?

Women cannot travel everywhere as they want because of security threats.

Do you think you completely have the rights?

No, we do not completely have the right to [freedom of] movement. We have to get permission from the Myanmar government.

What is the problem solving mechanism in your community?

Our community leaders such as village head and customary leaders solve the problems. For bigger issues that cannot be solved in the community, our leaders send it to the upper KNU authorities.

How do you see the problem solving mechanism? Do you think it is just?

(Cannot answer)

Is there any corruption in your local area?

Yes, there is corruption in judgments such as when someone pays bribes to authorities who arrange the judgment and their penalty will be lightened or even released. I have never experienced this by myself.

How would you suggest about the corruption?

Authorities should make sure that [any] judgment is free from corruption and bribes.

Should the victim to be given compensation, reparations, an apology or be brought to the court?

Some innocent people were treated unfairly by being wrongly sued by people [people with power].

Which authority is responsible for promoting justice in your community?

I prefer the KNU to have responsibility for promoting justice, not Myanmar government.

What is the best ways to eliminate human rights abuses in the country?

(Cannot answer)

Do you want to share other information?

No.

Thank you so much for sharing your information. Would you allow me to use it in publication?

Yes.

Source #32

Source doc #	Source # 32
Log #	18-132-A7-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Eu--- (female, 71), Ev--- Town, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (December 2018)

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

Yes, [we faced] a lot [of human rights abuses] because that was the conflict period. Therefore, whenever the Myanmar government military approached our community, they tortured and killed villagers without giving any reason. Villagers faced food shortages during their displacement in the forest, with many difficulties and a lot of fear [major security concerns]. We could not live freely. Anyway, by the grace of God we could survive. There were a lot of villagers who were murdered [by Tatmadaw] when they were suspected [of contacting KNLA or anything against the Tatmadaw]. Some villagers in rural areas were living very simple lives so they were not involved in political or religious affairs. There were a lot of innocent villagers murdered [by Tatmadaw].

When fighting happened between the armed groups [KNLA and Tatmadaw], the civilians were in the centre so some of them died in the fighting. Tatmadaw leaders [commanders] forced villagers to be their porters and carry their things [ammunition or military supplies]. They tortured villagers who were weak and old when they could not carry things for Tatmadaw very well. Some of them could not move anymore [from the torture, heavy loads, long distance and health condition] so the Tatmadaw just left them beside the road. Some of them were found like that by villagers, who rescued them.

Were you or other members of your community displaced in the conflict period?

Yes, a lot. Some of them decided not to flee anymore, but they had to go into displacement. They decided to cross the Thai border, but they were also threatened by the Thai government military so they had to hide from them too. They faced double problems, one is from the Myanmar military and another is from the Thai authorities, so they had to use many strategies to be safe. Later on, our people's soldiers [KNLA] came to them and brought them to the refugee camp so that they could live in the camp peacefully.

Was there any justice for you or other victims of human rights abuses?

No, there was none [justice]. During that period, they [KNLA] were busy defending the local civilians from Tatmadaw attack so they were not able to support villagers. After the situation improved, some leaders [KNU/KNLA] realised that fighting impacted civilians and that if they kept going like that, a lot of the civilians would die in vain, so they were considering peace for the civilians. Therefore, on January 27th 1997, Commander Thu Mu Heh made peace [with Myanmar military]; I do not want to say they were surrendering because our president of Karen people Saw Ba Oo Gyi said, "Our arms must remain in our hands "[we shall retain our arms]. He [Commander Thu Mu Heh] made peace with Myanmar government leaders [Tatmadaw] in order

to protect civilians. He protected and supported us so we civilians could live in peace. During the early peace process, the situation was still unstable and some villagers were fleeing to refugee camps, to Thailand safely with the help of our leaders [Thu Mu Heh armed group]. This is what we have seen.

Some civilians ran to refugee camps, but some of them came to me and asked, "Should we go?" I replied to them, "We are the children of God, and God might help us so we should flee." But I did not flee, so some of them did not flee either. I could not stop the other villagers who were fearful, so they fled. I told them I could not protect them, but we still had our ethnic [Karen] leaders [to protect us]. [She repeated that Thu Muh Heh group helped civilians fleeing to refugee camps so I do not translate a little bit here].

Did the Tatmadaw protect the villagers against human rights abuses?

No, they did not. During that peace process period, they took advantage of the situation to selfishly work very hard to strengthen their [military] control, and they did not have time and were not [interested] to help civilians. They measured out land near [the Thu Mu Heh group location] and divided the land for the people who did not have land to build their houses. On the other hand, landowners were defeated and lost their land because they did not receive any compensation. They [Tatmadaw/government] said, "These lands do not belong to anyone so they are the movement's land!!" It means, civilians have been working on our farms, but this is not officially recognised [by government] so we cannot own them and our lands are owned by the government. They identified those lands as "black area" [government terminology for land under opposition control/administration] and did not officially register our lands. Therefore, they confiscated the land and gave the land to other villagers. They recognised their work as helping civilians, but it was not the right way because the land owners had improved those lands for many years, but did not receive any payment so they were longing for their land back.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life?

After this second agreement [NCA], we cannot guarantee that it is sustainable peace yet because we still have to live in unstable conditions. Even though they [Myanmar government and military] have made a ceasefire and peace process [NCA], we cannot completely trust them because they always have their own objectives and organise everything according to their project plan. Therefore, we have to keep our eyes on their actions and we also want our leaders [KNU and KNLA] to be as well prepared as they are. Do not completely trust them. We are here, our blood is speaking because our blood is purely Karen. We are Karen, our blood does not mix with others. Therefore, we want our leaders [KNU/KNLA] to be prudent like the Myanmar government leaders are. They [government and Tatmadaw] have very strict discipline on their soldiers; if any of their soldiers gets drunk, they heavily punish that soldier. For example, I learned a lot about the Tatmadaw during the peace negotiations with Thu Mu Heh, because whenever Tatmadaw came to the villages, their commanders stayed in my house and I spoke to them as much as I could. They [Tatmadaw commanders] knew that I was a chairperson of the Karen Women's Organisation [KWO] at Township level once, so they asked me questions [about the management of the KNU]. I replied to them honestly and told them, "I will answer every question you ask me, but we will put God between you and me. If I tell the truth, you won't believe me. If I lie, God will punish me." Therefore, I told the truth because I fear God more than I fear any human. He asked me, "When the Nga Pway ["ringworm"; derogatory name for KNU and KNLA] were based here versus when we [Tatmadaw] were based here, which period was more peaceful for you?" I replied to him, "You call us Nga Pway like you are jeering us. You call us bad wild Karen. I don't like it. You call us Nga Pway, I don't like it either. So now, you can call

Karen Nga Pway, and I will call you AIDS, do you like that?" They did not like that. And I continued, "You are Burmese people who have decided yourselves that you have higher knowledge, education and culture [than other ethnics]. You should not insult us. When you call us "Your enemy" that's better than you jeering us." When he asked me "Which governing system, by KNU or by us, is more peaceful?" I replied to him, "I will tell you honestly, when the KNU was based [governing] here, there were no thieves and bandits. They arrested all of the bad people, but they did not kill them. They put the perpetrators into prison, but their prisons are not like yours because they allowed those perpetrators to work on farms and they could build friendships with other villagers. Nevertheless, they had to be under the [KNU] control for their full sentence according to the court charge. When you are here now, thief and bandit issues always happen. You also know of these incidents, am I correct?" Then he asked me, "So you mean my governing period is not as peaceful [as KNU governing period]?" I replied to him, "Recently, it is not peaceful. We are in fear. Maybe, if your governing system improves there will be peace in the future. But it is not peaceful now."

Did he reply to you?

He told me, "I like you A'Moh [mother] because you speak frankly." I replied to him, "I have to speak frankly and the truth. Most of you [Tatmadaw] do not believe us when we speak the truth. Like your [Burmese] proverb says, "Without false words, the speech is not beautiful", but I do not like this. We put God between us [when we speak] and your Buddha God also does not like people lying." I spoke with them in a religious way.

During 2017 and 2018, could the civilians rely on the government [and their military]?

Between 2016 and 2018, they [government] have done many good works [community development] such as the school, hospital [clinic] and road construction. Our forefathers had a proverb and told us, "No matter how much the Burma are nice to us, they always have a wicked strategy in their mind," so we always have to beware of this. So we cannot say there is genuine peace yet because we receive information about incidents here and there. Our leaders like Pu Daw Daw are based in this area, so it is helpful for the civilians. For the blessing of God, whenever civilians are in problems and come to him [Pu Daw Daw, BGF commander], he can help them and whatever he manages, God help him. Civilians in rural areas can reach out to our [KNU] leaders when they need help. In my community, Pu Daw Daw's group is very helpful for us, for our people, and also for KNU leaders. KNU leaders were able to meet with the Myanmar leaders [Tatmadaw/ Government] through the help of Pu Daw Daw. I would like to remind the KNLA officers that some of the KNLA soldiers get drunk and cause problems in the community. We worry for their security because we cannot believe the Tatmadaw. It is very easy if the Tatmadaw would like to attack them. Therefore, I want the KNU [KNLA] leaders to teach their soldiers so they won't cause conflict in the community. They should come to the village without drunkenness and guns. If they do like that, they can have food with [government] police, militia and [Tatmadaw] military in peace. We are happy to see them eating together in peace. [She repeats the same information again].

Which justice system do the civilians report to in your area?

Mostly the villages that have a school, clinic and defence unit [KNDO], we report the cases to Pu Daw Daw [BGF] because he has connections with the KNU. He allows the villagers to report cases to any authority they want and he said, "I will try my best to resolve the case for you. If you are still not satisfied, you can report the case to the other side [authorities]. If you are satisfied, then everything is okay." Pu Daw Daw is a powerful leader so he could finish the case without involving the Myanmar government authority.

So our people have access to their justice system?

Yes.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

We cannot completely trust the Myanmar government because they have evil intentions toward us [Karen]. One of their pure-minded is not even as good as one of the Karen's veil-minded. Our Karen leaders need to be aware of this and they should rely on Pu Daw Daw because he knows the whole situation in the country. I want my leaders to consider the civilians' situation and they should have strong cooperation between the group here [BGF] and the other part [KNU]. When they see Karen people [armed groups] are in unity, they [Tatmadaw] cannot do anything against us. They agreed to stop the fighting and signed the NCA. We Karen people should be in unity. Some of our leaders [KNLA soldiers] at the gate were speaking very rudely to the villagers when we were working doing things like carrying logs and bamboo for religious works. Last summer, we [Christian church members] did logging and carried logs [by truck] after we sent them a notification letter, but they [KNLA soldiers] asked us, "You are doing logging for what? " We replied to them, "For our religion". They shouted, "Pussy religion??" - like that, so we were very sad to hear it. They should not speak like that. We officially work for the real needs of our religion. So we want them to speak politely to the civilians. Some of them are not educated or knowledgeable so I want the leaders to teach their soldiers good morals. [She repeated again and again about teaching the soldiers and her logging for the church, so I do not translate some here]. I've wanted to speak out about that one for a long time already.

In the past, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army [DKBA] abused their power so our leaders, BGF leaders, spoke to them and taught them. They [DKBA] agreed to what he [BGF leader] told them, but when they returned to the gate they repeated the same things they had done. Some of them abused their authority by loading up their guns and frightening villagers. They should not do like that when they are at the gate and ask for tax. Some of them did not do anything after they received tax, but some of them asked more tax. They [Karen armed group leaders] should improve their management and teach their soldiers in order to better the situation.

Did the villagers report the cases to the commander?

No, they did not dare to report it, but they told me because I have a relationship with DKBA leaders. Like when Major Hpa Nyin assigned his soldiers at the gate on the road from here to Kya In Town and in 19-Mile area [Kyainseikgyi Township]. This group committed more violations against villagers, and now the situation has improved because we reported these issues to their leaders. There is another gate where yesterday, a Bamar woman told me that this gate taxed her 3,000 kyat, and she replied [the gate keepers], "I paid the other gates 1,000 kyat throughout my way." The gate keeper got angry with his gun and said, "We will shoot you dead!!" That woman was afraid of him so she had to give 3,000 kyat. If anyone reports these kinds of issues to me, I inform the [gate keepers] leaders because their leaders respect me as their mother. They accept my report and instruct their soldiers [in order not to abuse their power]. I want all of my leaders; DKBA, inside [BGF centre] and outside [KNU], all the same ethnicity, to instruct their soldiers on the law. If they do like that, I think there will be peace in our community, but we do not believe the government [and their military] so we always have to live united in caution. Even in this peace process period, our civilians are still in fear due to their past experiences through human rights violations.

So what do you think they [government and their military] do to for the reparation? For

example, apology, build relationship with civilians, compensation and promising civilians that they will not commit the fault.

The Myanmar government [military] leaders might not apologise to the civilians or give the land back to the owners. They will behave just like, "Cows and tigers always live according to their nature". When the tiger eats something, they stay calmly without shaking their body. Similarly, the [Myanmar government and military] leaders may control their power in quiet and are always planning to do bad things in their brain. They cannot take strong action [against civilians] because the foreign countries from all over the world will know, if not, they would do it. Anyway, we cannot exactly know their planning for us.

Can we use your information for publication? We [KHRG] will translate it into English, your name and your face will be censored.

I understand that, even though other countries know the issues, they [Myanmar government and military] ignore them and behave with power like, "This is my country, not associated with others. This is our country; we will govern it by our own law so other people cannot interfere with us." Maybe, if the United Nations members gradually approach then they will probably accept them. Nevertheless, I cannot guarantee it because I know the Myanmar's [government and military's] habits. I also want all the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] and UN countries to cooperate to solve this. They can do it, but I do not know whether Myanmar will accept it or not. Anyway, I believe that Myanmar may not agree with them because they've determined that, "This is my own country, this is my own land. Not an issue for others. We can govern our own country, the other people cannot control us. We will govern our own country." They said they used to suffer under the British and Japan fought against them once so they still have unsatisfied behaviour until now. They [Myanmar government and military] have ego and selfishness so it may not easy for the other countries to handle it. Now, the other countries help them with road, school and hospital [clinic] construction for community development. I think they will gradually approach Myanmar by this strategy. We [civilians] know that all the development is funded by foreign countries, not Myanmar [government or military] money, but they present these as their work and their strength. Therefore, if they [foreign countries] can help, it will be better.

Do you think Internally Displaced People [IDPs] and refugees who fled to the [Thai-Burma] border can return to their villages?

Now, they [Myanmar government] arrange for the repatriation and they are preparing accommodation groups in one area. I heard they've prepared three areas [repatriation areas] and constructed there with cement; Htee Th'Blu Hkee area and others. They will construct schools and hospitals, but that funding comes from foreign countries because they consider the suffering of the civilians. I heard they [foreign countries/UN] will stop supporting refugees camp so they prepare areas in the country for repatriation. If they [Myanmar government] work honestly for the refugees' repatriation and do their best, the refugees can return to their homes and work on their livelihoods. Repatriated refugees will need support and will also have to work because they may return without bringing anything with them. I think they [Myanmar government and Tatmadaw] cannot commit serious abuses against civilians because camp leaders and donors know the process. I am not sure what will happen in the future.

Thank you very much for your time and I will stop my interview here. Do you have any questions?

I do not have questions, I just want to inform all of my leaders inside [BGF/DKBA] and outside [KNU, KNLA] to instruct their soldiers about good behaviour and discipline in order not to act

violently against the civilians. Tatmadaw leaders [commanders] have strong discipline so their soldiers do not get drunk and do violence against civilians. They are cautious and well prepared [to fight against their enemy]. They are calm, but like the Karen proverb says, "The dangerous elephant is the one staying calm." Therefore, I want my leaders to instruct and teach their soldiers in order not to cause conflict in the community because we have concern for them. There are soldiers and defenders in our community. We are sad when we see our people face abuses. Our people [soldiers] are mischievous, but when we scold them, they are angry and want to react to us with their power. We do not want to face this kind of issue and when it happens, it disturbs Pu Daw [BGF leader]. He sometimes told me, "Pwahh... Naw [sister], the Tatmadaw soldiers stay calm [not cause conflict]. What to do with our soldiers?" I replied to him, "You should inform your generals to instruct and train their soldiers [in strong discipline]. Sometimes, you should meet with General Lah Shway Paw too." I want my leaders to adjust and solve this problem for me. Even though the Tatmadaw are calmly based [near the community], we always should be careful of them.

Thank you.
Thank you.

Source #33

Source doc #	Source # 33
Log #	18-123-A6-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya district
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Pa--- (male, 43), Pb--- village, Hpa Pyaut village tract, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya district (November 2018)

Before I am asking you questions, what would you like to know about the KHRG?

What is the main responsibility of the KHRG?

KHRG is an organisation that documents human rights violations that are happening in Myanmar. Along with the information we receive from the population, we feature it to the relevant authorities for them to understand villagers' situations happening on the ground. In addition, we publish newsletters every six months. KHRG was established in 1992 in a place called Maner Plaw (land of victory).

How long has this organisation been active?

It's been 27 years from now.

It's my suggestion to you (KHRG) that it would be much better to conduct IHL training to the village administrator and authorities. I am saying it because those who violated human rights were mostly governors, authorities and armed groups. It's rare to see communities violate human rights. By conducting the IHL training, they would know ways of avoiding human rights abuses. In villages, there was forced pottering. Even though villagers confronted these situations, it was ignored by the authorities. I just would like village administrators and armed

groups to know the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has (30) articles in it. Human rights violation would be less if the armed groups and village administrators collaborated. Some of these situations are ongoing.

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many people are there in your family?

We have five people in our family.

How old is your youngest child?

My youngest child is eight years old now.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is 13 years old.

What is your religion?

I am Buddhist.

What is your ethnicity?

My father is Burmese and my mother is Karen. I am mixed ethnicity.

What is your position in the village?

I used to work in the Community Driven Organisation before. I resigned recently.

Could you tell me how you experienced conflict? Do you often think about it?

We experienced weak rule of law in our villages.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened? If you can't remember the date, please estimate how long ago it was?

It happened when I was single. We had to run when the military troops came into the village. There was also forced laboring in the past. These kinds of human right violations happened in 1997. It has happened 21 years ago by now.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

Pottering was the worst experience we faced during the conflict period.

Were you or your family displaced?

At that time, I was single. So I could flee from the conflict period.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I witnessed people being arrested by the Tatmadaw' soldiers.

What did they do to the arrested people?

They just took them.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

Villagers had to leave their farm during the harvesting period anytime when the Tatmadaw came in. Some villagers died while pottering. From what we know, more than twenty people from our

village died while pottering.

How does the conflict continue to affect your life?

Sometimes we had nothing to eat in the jungle. We didn't have a pounder to pound our paddy. We solved it by pouring it in the Longi and beat it.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

At that time, armed groups were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations. Nowadays, the authorities violate human rights.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses? Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I haven't experienced perpetrators being punished because forced pottering and laboring seemed typical for the villagers in the past. At that time, people were in fear and they didn't even have knowledge about human rights.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

They deserve to be punished according to the rule of law. There have been land confiscations in the villages after 1997. There are small villages and our parents had a wide range of land. The authorities took lands from the villagers to construct clinics without giving them any compensation. Land was confiscated by the monks to construct the clinic. During the conflict period, village administrators were the nominal ruler of the villages. They didn't know how to make decisions; instead, they depended on the decision of the monk. Villagers were afraid to respond to the monks.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

When the country started to practice democracy, victims should have been given the compensation they deserve. Recently, they were constructing a road from Ta Khon Taing (Three Pagodas Pass) to Ta Nyin. Some of the roads are 150 feet wide and some are 230 feet wide. When they constructed the road, land and rubber plantations were destroyed. They didn't even provide compensation for the villagers whose lands were damaged. And we didn't even know who was responsible for this until now.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

Villagers were victims of human rights abuses because they lack knowledge of human rights.

What do you know about the ceasefire?? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

Ceasefire is indirectly relevant to us because we're just ordinary people. Now, the Karen revolution has come to its 70 years anniversary. However, there is no benefit. So, I just would like them to stop fighting and bring peace to the country. In my perspective, there is a conflict because of the different principles and different attitudes between the armed groups. Since then, the conflict happened between the armed groups. Actually, a breach of trust affected the descendants. If possible, they shouldn't stubbornly hold on to some principles and let some of them go. As the system is changing, some of the principles that they hold on to could have been wrong. They shouldn't uphold dead principles. For example, there are four principles of Saw Ba Oo Gyi. The leaders should reexamine those principles very carefully. I am not saying to them

that they need to change the principles. Besides, as an ordinary civilian, I don't have a high IQ. There are many educated persons. I would like to ask a question not only to our KNU leaders but also to the leaders who are being governors in the country. If a country has a Tatmadaw, who are we aiming to fight? If there are no armed groups such as Mon, Burma, Karen, Rakhine and, who else are we aiming to fight. Before we became independent, we fought Chinese communists, fascist Japan, and the British colonists. Those were wars which protected our country. After the independence, ethnic groups fought one another. The bullets they used to shoot their own ethnic groups killed more people than the bullets they used to fight other countries. In my perspective, if there is a republic Tatmadaw, there is no one to fight with in the country. But I am not sure why they couldn't reach an agreement. When we look at the world, there are countries that have no army. However, they stand as a developing country. I am not saying that there shouldn't be army. Comparing the advantages and disadvantages that fighting brings, intellectuals would understand better than me.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

I don't think there is peace in my village now. It is like a ticking time bomb which hasn't exploded yet. The ceasefire could explode anytime. In addition, it could break any time when there is breach against the agreement. I would say that there's only superficial peace since the NCA. Concerning the peace process, it's hard to predict what will happen.

Since the NCA, has your livelihood improved?

Concerning the livelihood situation, we cannot make a specific plan for our livelihood because the situation is insecure. Perhaps, I would set up a gas shop with and invest 200, 000, 0 kyats. It could burn to the ground at once. That is similar to the peace process though. We don't dare to set up our own work in this unstable condition.

What do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

On the one hand, there should be one army to make sustainable peace. If there is rule of law, there will be peace. Without peace, it's impossible to obtain rules of law.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

It will overlap with what I just said. In my perspective, there will be peace with the establishment of one Tatmadaw (republic army) in the country. That is the most important thing I would say. Unless there is one republic army, there will be no peace and rule of law. As for me, I would like to have rule of law. In this condition, collaboration takes on an important role. There will only be success in establishing the rules of law when there is cooperation during the peace-making process. So it is very important that the armed group collaborate when a case of crime happens. Nowadays, the situation of handling a crime is like land and water. It is handled separately. A case is forgotten or ignored when a perpetrator is protected by their connections and good association. That will not bring peace to the civilians.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve peace process?

I would either suggest them not to be arrogant and stubbornly hold on to their principles. Instead, they should make amendments to those principles that should be changed. Therefore, there shouldn't be tension between the groups. It doesn't mean that sacrifice should come from one side only. There must be appropriate consent during consultations. It would be really good

to re-instate Panglong (establishment of autonomy between ethnicities) attitude and ignore chauvinism. The young people talk about Panglong but they don't really understand it. If they are being asked to define what's written in the Panglong agreement, only a few people know about it.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

This question seems hard and deep to me because there is a proverb of "Ko Ka Kyue, Koh Du Taung Ma Yone Yah" [Assertion is not proof]. To be frank, I don't trust anyone. The lack of having trust to one another is barrier in peace-making. The ethnic groups do not fully trust each other. If possible, there should be an organisation to lead all the ethnic groups.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

If am a responsible person, I would fulfill all duties that I are assigned to me.

Since NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

There is forced laboring in some places, domestic violence, child rights [Education difficulty of migrant workers' children], and child labour. I used to question why school-age children are not being kept in school. Those who live in Tharyawaddy and Pago came to work on road construction here [in Dooplaya District]. Parents thought that while three of them work for the road construction, their standard-five daughter can stay behind to cook. For those children, their rights are being violated by their own parents. It's unavoidable for the parents even though they knew it. The situation is like the proverbs of "Ka Bar Mee Laung Thar Kaung Cha Nin" [A burn victims being stepped on]. The parents had to do it because of their livelihood problem. I witnessed there are more than 50 children working on this road. I am just talking about what I have seen in my district. On a state and country level, there are thousands of migrants' children who lost their child rights.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

At least, human rights challenges affect our livelihoods because we are surviving by working as daily worker.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

There are big-hearted persons and mean ones in this situation. A big-hearted person never counts and discriminates but treats them equally. In contrast, a mean one uses intimidating words on other people.

What does justice mean to you?

In my perspective on justice, it is equality.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

We are mostly practicing the KNU justice system here in our area. Nevertheless, I do not strongly agree on its justice system. As I studied, there's law book enacted in Myanmar law. For example, it is written that (420) section for thieving and (302) for killing. Contrast to this, I have never seen a law book enacted by the KNU. We don't know the details of imprisonment for a person who committed a crime. In my opinion, the law that is controlled by the KNU should be enacted to the civilians. Drug is the common problem that we are facing in the community now. Consequently the imprisonment years should be enacted to the civilians for the drugs cases. When I was looking on Facebook, I saw that persons who sell drugs and use drugs were

arrested. However, it's rare to see a person who is controlling being arrested. Questions about the justice system come up in this situation.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to get justice?

I haven't experienced or seen bribery personally. Thus, it's precarious for me to answer this question.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I have experienced a case. One of my cousins came to ask me for a favor concerning her divorce. We went to meet with the village administrators and she reported to the village administrator that she couldn't continue to live with her husband. It is because he's hanging out with his friends drinking and gambling since she got married. Moreover, he didn't even care for his family. That's why she didn't want to stay married to her husband. Her husband also agreed to what he's done when he was being asked by his village administrator. However, her father-in-law replied that his son was doing these kinds of things since he was single. Furthermore, her father-in-law accepted to tell his son not to do these bad habits. But she couldn't wait any month longer and asked for the divorce. Actually, I would like village administrators to ask that man to change his life. Instead of saying that, the village administrators asked compensation from the girl for not obeying to the village administrators' advice.

Who made the decision?

Village administrators from the KNU side made the decision.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

There are also administration departments in KNU side. I would like to suggest that the KNU governors not practice the habit of partiality. For instance, I would like them to make judgments equally according to the rules they set. Rules of the villages are differing from others. Moreover, rules should be set the same in KNU control areas. I would like for the judgment to go process by process. Some of the judgment in the villages has no justice. Besides, if someone asked for a transfer letter, they were not given to them. What I want is I just would like the village administrators to handle a case process by process.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

I assume that the justice system, rule of law and human right violations would become better with the cooperation of KNU and KHRG.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in Myanmar?

There're president, generals, and also different departments in the country. If these persons collaborate with the human rights commission strongly, I am in no doubt it would bring development to the country.

Were you displaced in the conflict period?

I was displaced because of the forced portering during the conflict period.

How long were you displaced for? Where did you go? Did you cross any borders?

I didn't cross any borders during the conflict period. I took shelter at the monastery.

What was the root cause of the refugee situation?

The root cause of the displacement was because of the fighting.

If you were displaced, were you able to safely return home? What about other displaced families from your village?

Our villages were not completely destroyed in the conflict period. We could return to our village depending on the movement of the military troops.

Were there any challenges to return? Were there any concerns regarding land or property?

There's not much concerning lands confiscation. However, some of the villagers' lands were damaged by the development projects.

If you are still displaced, what is preventing your from returning?

There's nothing preventing me to return. At least I could only work by my own for my livelihood.

If you are still displaced, what are the barriers to returning? What are you afraid of?

At that time of the conflict period, we were afraid of landmines and recruitment. There were also people who stepped on the landmines in the conflict period.

If there is something you would like to add more to this conversation?

The armed groups and village administrators are the most responsible persons to secure our regions.

How would you like us to use your photos and your information?

You can use the information that I have been provided appropriately.

Would you say something to suggest KHRG?

I view this as a good organisation. I would like KHRG to stay strong. I would suggest instead of interviewing, perpetrators should be given direct punishment.

Source #34

Source doc #	Source # 34
Log #	18-130-A6-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District
Full Text	

Hpa An Interview | Naw Ga--- (female, 53), Gb--- village, Ta Kreh village tract, Paingkyon Township, Hpa-an District (December 2018)

What is your religion?

I am Christian.

What about your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

Are you single or married?

I am single.

If you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life? The lives of your family?

I experienced a lot of hardships in the past such as forced labor, also our plantations were attacked by the Tatmadaw and we had to flee from the war.

Do you remember what happened?

The Tatmadaw asked us to carry their materials as porters on the mountain paths. We had to carry bullets and food for them. They did not give us enough food to eat, and they would only let us drink dirty water. Some villagers got sick and died because of that. Others died by stepping on landmines.

Do you remember when it happened?

It was in 1984 and it continued until the beginning of the 1990s.

What happened between 1990 and 2018?

I think from 1990 to now, forced portering is decreasing. Forced portering started decreasing in 1995 or 1996 because the DKBA was formed and came back in that year. We thought that they would help our Karen people but they ended up fighting back against the other side, the KNLA who used to fight alongside them in the past. I think the villagers now have a better situation to live compared to the past.

How has the peace process affected or benefited your life and that of your community?

We can see that the villagers can work for their livelihood better. I also see that our leaders know their responsibilities better, so it is an advantage for us. However, we still are not satisfied with this ceasefire yet because we still have a concern that the Tatmadaw will start the conflict again, and cause us to flee again since they are doing different things from what they say. The situation has become a lot better but we cannot be satisfied with it because some of our people are still facing the difficulties caused by the Tatmadaw.

Do you still see any forced labor or corruption committed by armed groups in your area after the NCA was signed?

No.

Do you think you should be involved in the peace process?

Yes. I think we are happy to live in peace and since this is the time of peace process, we should get involved in order to make it sustainable and to lift up our people in the future.

Are you hopeful that there will be peace in the future?

Yes.

What do you expect to get from this peace process? Or do you have any suggestions?

I just want to see my people live in peace without any conflict.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Was there any justice for victims of

human rights abuses? Do you think it is fair?

I have never been to court but I have seen people that went to court to solve their cases. It is usually the KNU justice system and I think it is fair enough. It does not cause any harm to anyone.

Should the Myanmar government go to court?

I have never experienced the Myanmar government justice system but I heard from people that their justice system is not fair. Like people say, the more money you have, the more likely you are to win in court.

Which government do you prefer?

I will choose KNU government.

Have you witnessed any conflict or problems between both governments related to education and healthcare?

Yes.

Can you explain what happened?

When the Myanmar government teachers came to teach in our villages, they wanted us to provide rice for them. But the villagers think that they already get enough salary so they did not want to provide them with rice. That is one of the problems.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I do not know what to say.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

Source #35

Source doc #	Source # 35
Log #	18-122-A13-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Taungoo Interview | Naw Qf--- (female, 35), Thandaung Myo Thit Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

No. I am single.

May I ask you about the situation in your community?

Yes. You can.

Have you ever heard about land confiscation and other human rights abuses and the armed conflict in your community?

In the past, during the period between 1988 and 2006, the armed conflict occurred in the community. Local villagers were forced to be porters. They were told that they had to be porters for a while. After a month, some villagers [who were forced to be porters] came back home and some villagers could not come back.

What about killings? Have you heard about it [during the conflict]?

As far as I know, I never heard about the killing case in our community [during the conflict]. But if villagers could not go to serve as porters when they were called, they had to pay a porter fee. Villagers were told to stop walking [when they travel] but if they did not stop walking, they would be shot. They did not care about villagers getting hurt. If they were caught, they would be beaten.

Who did that to villagers?

During that time, our minds were full of fear. In the firefight, sometimes they [Tatmadaw] did not use local soldiers [to fight]. Mostly, they used soldiers who are from Rakhine State. I do not remember which battalions.

I think they are from Northwestern Command Headquarters (Na Ma Ka). Have you ever heard about cases like burning villagers' houses and killing villagers by the Tatmadaw?

I heard about it happening in the east of Thouk Yay Ket Chaung area. Before I moved to live in Thandaung Myo Thit town, I used to live in Leik Tho Town. When I lived in Leik Tho Town, I heard that they [Tatmadaw] did not usually called [the Myanmar government] staff to be porters. Sometimes they called staff to be porters for them but they did not usually take them away from where the staff lived. Some staff who had a good relationship with local authorities tried to negotiate with the operations commander [from Tatmadaw] in order to release them. So the Tatmadaw let them go.

As you said before, some villagers [who were forced to be porters] could come back home [after serving with the Tatmadaw as porters] but some villagers could not come back. Why could they not come back? Did they run away? Did they die?

Actually, there were two types of porters. The Tatmadaw launched a military operation in Shwegyi-Kyaukgyi area in Brigade #3 at the time so they called villagers here [from Toungoo District] to be porters for them. And the Tatmadaw [from Toungoo District] used villagers from Brigade #3 to be porters for them. Therefore, some villagers escaped and came back home. Some villagers tried to escape but they were caught [so they could not come back]. Sometimes, when villagers had to carry heavy weapons they exploded and killed those villagers.

As the Tatmadaw committed human rights abuses, what kind of punishment do you think should be given to them? What kind of action should be taken for what they have done?

As villagers have the right to life, I want them to get the punishment that they deserve [according to the law]. In the past, we could not go out at night time because of martial law. We could not say anything [against Tatmadaw]. We had to live in fear.

You said that Tatmadaw should get the punishment that they deserve according to the

law. As they are soldiers, they will be punished according to the military law. So do you trust the justice system they practice in the military court?

It would be fine if they practiced the justice system in their military court according to the Geneva Convention because cases such as crimes against humanity and genocide would be handled in the military court. However, if a soldier committed rape against a woman and made her disappear, we cannot know the process clearly how he will be punished because there's a lack of transparency in the court process.

You mean the court process in Myanmar?

Yes. As you know already how they punished their soldiers [in the court], you will not see those soldiers the next day if you go to see them. Maybe they were ordered to move to stay in other place.

So you mean you cannot trust the court system in Myanmar?

The court system in Myanmar is like saying something now, doing different thing later because, for example, they [Tatmadaw] practiced martial law in the military operation area but they do whatever they want to do. If the situation is getting better, they will show a system like a civilian government system, but the military controlling the power behind it. That is why the civilian government's law cannot do anything against the military law. If we look at the overall situation in Myanmar regarding the rule of law, we can say that there's no rule of law.

Since the ceasefire agreement was signed by the KNU and the Myanmar government in 2012, do you feel that it is peaceful in your community?

I do not feel anything special about whether it is peaceful or not because a lot of things need to be in the 2012 ceasefire in order to build the trust with each other. Therefore, whenever armed actors entered our community, we had to live in fear and we always had to be alert because the fighting can occur at any time because of misunderstanding. We worry that the fighting will occur as before. As we are villagers, we started to have a limited freedom to travel around since the 2012 ceasefire.

What do you mean by you have a limited freedom to travel around?

In the past, when we traveled to Lay Mine area, they stopped cars and motorcycles and they searched everything. Even if they saw electricity wire and battery from villagers, they arrested villagers and punished villagers. Now that kind of case does not happen anymore. The porter demands do not happen anymore as before. So we can say that the situation is slightly improved but we do not feel that our mentality is getting better because in our mind we still cannot trust anyone.

What do you think should be done in order to achieve sustainable peace?

In the past, the peace negotiation was made by only two armed organizations. The people did not have the right to know what had happened. They said that they exchanged weapons with the peace. So they have authority to do it. Then, they worked together with military intelligence to do mining such as gold mining in Par Khat area. They said they tried to improve the communities. Yes they did it but I do not see that these kinds of development projects are sustainable for the community. I think the community development is one of their strategies [to do mining].

You mean the current peace process is not the sustainable peace for the community?

Yes because we have many expectations from the current peace process. The administration

systems overlap in mixed control areas. I think it is better to have a clear boundary between the armed groups and the Myanmar military because currently different armed actors do not have clear areas of control.

So you mean they should make clear boundary for armed actors?

Yes. At first it is better to do this. Later, the administration departments can discuss how they would like to operate.

What do you think the Myanmar government should do in order to achieve sustainable peace?

Firstly, the Myanmar government should understand [other armed groups]. If they really want peace, they should fulfill what ethnic armed groups need and what the people need. They should not ignore people's needs. They should observe what the people want basically. Then, they should discuss what they should do in order to work for the people. In reality, they do not observe what the people want basically but instead, they just tried to build trust with top leaders. That is why the people cannot trust them even though the people hope for many things from the peace process.

What has changed in your community after the NCA?

During the period between 2012 and 2015, I did not see any big change regarding the Tatmadaw's military activities. After the NCA, during the period between 2015 and 2018, the community's concerns are increased regarding the military activities because they just signed the ceasefire agreement and they made a set of rules in the paper. In reality, they built more army camps and renovated old ones. They also transported more rations to their army camps so they tried to build better roads. The local populations are so worried about these kinds of military activities because there are no clear boundaries between areas [controlled by the KNLA or the Tatmadaw]. Fighting can happen at any time if they misunderstand each other. The peace process is just the first step toward [peace and unity]. So we worry that the first step toward the peace will be a step backward.

After the NCA, when the military operates in the area, have you heard about them violating the NCA code of conduct? If so, what kind of rules do they break in the NCA?

We tried to read the NCA code of conduct as we want to know about it. But sometimes when they are in the field, out of three times, they just follow the NCA code of conduct one time and do not follow the NCA two times. We can only build trust if we abide by the NCA code of conduct. We do not know how they discuss things in the NCA. We just learned about the NCA when CSOs and the KNU gave us awareness about it, only after it was signed, but the Myanmar government did not give the local community awareness about the NCA at the local level. So when we read a book about the NCA, we feel like it is incomplete and weak. I think we need to have a strategy in order to control this kind of issue.

Let me ask you something that I do not understand about what you said. You said that they break the NCA code of conduct. Which armed actors break the NCA?

Actually, the Tatmadaw breaks the NCA code of conduct. For Myanmar government authorities, they do not come to the community because they do not usually come if the situation is not good.

Are some articles from the NCA in line with customary rules in the community? I mean do you think some articles from the NCA are not acceptable in your community?

According to the 17 articles under section #3 from the NCA regarding the protection of civilians, I think there are two different meanings we can take. The articles state “no harm to civilians”. What do they mean by “no harm to civilians”? They need to explain its meaning clearly. Sometimes, both CSOs and villagers understand different meanings when they read it.

What suggestions do you want to give the KNU and Myanmar government in order to make sustainable peace?

As we are villagers, we think about it simply. Even though it is fine when they [KNU and Myanmar government] work closely in the round table discussion, it is not suitable when armed groups stay close as they both have weapons. Mostly, the Tatmadaw violates the NCA code of conduct. So it will be problematic if the situation continues like this. As a civilian, we want them both to analyze and discuss the NCA code of conduct before they continue to go forward. If the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed actors really want peace, they should set up clear boundaries in order to build trust. If they can divide administrative areas clearly, the peace process could move forward smoothly.

What kind of justice system is practiced in your community? The KNU justice system or the Myanmar government system?

There are two types of justice system in our community. The people who live near the main road [near the town] just practice the Myanmar government’s justice system. The people who live far from the main road just practice the KNU’s justice system.

Have you ever experienced or heard about a case solved according to the Myanmar government’s justice system?

Last month, something happened in Qg--- village. The husband and wife had been divorced for a long time but they did not have an official letter saying that they got divorced. When the village head reported the case to the Leik Tho police station, the police came to arrest the defendant but he escaped. When the case was sent to the police office, they [police] said that this is just a personal affair between husband and wife. So this is not a crime. The village head got angry with what they said because we can say that this is domestic violence because the husband beat his wife and took her money away. Even though it is clear that this case is domestic violence, they [police] said that this is just a personal issue between husband and wife and this is not a crime. Therefore, it is challenging for the people to demand justice. For motorbike accident cases, they went to police station. As you know, they [polices] always say, “May I help you”, but they just gave a fine to the court and give some money to police. Then, the case is solved, just like that.

You mean there’s corruption in the Myanmar government’s justice system?

Sometimes we do not know why because they [government authority] can solve the case according to the law book but they do not accept what the people report to them in order to solve cases. They just ignore people’s reports. In some cases that people report, they accept it and solve the cases but the process usually takes very long. It costs money and time such as transportation fee and court fee.

How much do the people trust the Myanmar government’s justice system?

If we look at the whole community, the people only have 50 percent trust in the Myanmar government’s justice system because mostly the people who have money try to go to Myanmar government court in cases of land confiscation and legacy issue because they have money. They just go to the Myanmar government court because they want to compete with each other

as they want to have a good reputation. Only a few people go to the court because they want to get the right justice.

What kind of justice system should be practiced in order to get the people's trust?

Only the police have responsibilities to bring criminal cases to the court. The criminal cases mostly go to the court. In our community, cases such as motorbike accidents often happen. So sometimes that kind of case does not go to the court. They just try to finish the case with the police. Sometimes they do not go to the court even though it is a crime. Sometimes even though the people [plaintiff and defendant] go to the court, they just have to admit that they both are guilty in the court and they just have to pay a fine because they already negotiated with the police.

Okay. Now you can tell me what you would like to say and what you want to share.

I want to say that the Myanmar government's justice system is not in line with our community [does not protect the people] because 95 percent of the people in the community do not want to go to the police station. They do not have a willingness to go and solve the case in the court. Even though they go to the court, they have challenges such as a language barrier and a lack of knowledge about the law and court system. We do not know whether or not we can solve the case in the court. For example, let's talk about a weapons case. It is related to article E under section #19. People bring a knife with them in the street where many people go [for self-protection]. Then, the police question them as they want to find drugs. Then, they see the knife. Then, they asked villagers, "Why are you carrying this knife?" Then they said that this is a weapon case [considered as a crime]. Actually, as we are local villagers, and we just carry a knife when we go to our plantations and gardens. So sometimes the police do not understand our situation. Actually they just question people in terms of searching a drug case. But when they saw villagers carrying knives, they brought villagers to the court. Actually, this kind of case should be done if we go to the court three times. There are only two options that villagers have when they go to the court. They have to pay a fine or go to jail for months. However, they just take a lot of time to solve the case [as they try to make it delayed]. Actually, we prefer the KNU's justice system because the KNU authorities apply two steps; first they investigate the case in order to determine who the actual victims are and who are only opportunists or attackers. They call two people [defendant and plaintiff] to make sure that they know what actually happened. Moreover, they also call village authorities and villagers in order to come and listen to the case [as witnesses], which means more transparency in the court process. There are three judges in a panel, KNU police who investigate the case in the field, defendant and plaintiff, and villagers and village authorities. Then, the three judges try to investigate the case in a clear way by asking questions. So we feel like we can have more justice in the KNU court.

Thank you so much for sharing information.

Yes.

Do you allow KHRG to use the information you provided?

Yes. You can.

I would like to tell you something about photo documentation. We want to take a picture of you but we censor your face for security purposes. We also censor your name and village name but we just mention the Township's name. We try to censor your face in order for people not to remember you. So do you allow me to take a picture of you?

Yes. You can.

Thank you very much.

Source #36

Source doc #	Source #36
Log #	18-133-A2-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Pe--- (female, 49), Pf--- (Pg---) village, Wa Lu village tract, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District. (November 2018)

I am working at Karen Human Right Group. We don't give rice or money or any supports to the local people. We are collecting the information from the villagers.

Will you give us the permission to record your voice?

Yes.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

What is your religious?

I am a Christian.

Do you have a family?

I don't have a family.

Will you give me permission to interview you?

Yes, I give you permission. I will tell you and answer you as much as I can.

Have you experienced conflict? Do you often think about it?

I remember two of my experiences. One is in 1997 but I don't remember the month. We had to flee one time and we forced to porter. It was also in 1997 and it was the first time. Many women had to go. Ph--- and Naw Pi---'s mother, Naw Pj---, Pk---and my sister and I were included in the forced porter group. I will never forget about that. I took a note and recorded it. However, when I was on a mission trip away from home, all my note books were thrown away. So I could not do anything because I cannot stay at my house.

Where did you have to go for forced portering?

It was at Po---village in Saw Pm---'s rubber plantation farms from Pp--- to Pq---.

How many days and nights or hours did it take to reach to Yaw Doe?

It was on Sunday and I had a responsibility in the church for Children's Day at church. However, I could not do anything. We were called to be forced porters so we had to go. It took hours and we had to sleep one night there.

How much was the weight and how heavy was it?

We could not carry it by ourselves, so we had to help each other to put them on our backs.

Were there only women?

There were only women. They could not find any men in the village.

Did they help you too carry it on your back?

They did not help us. We just had to help each other.

Did they give you any payment?

They did not give us anything.

Did they torture you?

They threatened us many times and they said they would kill us. It was after the fighting happened. They came to force us to porter after that.

What was the worst thing that you experienced in the conflict period?

It was when they threatened us. Some people were afraid of them so they got clammy hands. It was the worst when something happened in our village but I don't remember the date. They [Tatmadaw military] asked local people to take their things [ammunitions and weapons] without them following but those got all burnt . It was the worst time. I went to stay in Pg---and when I went back to my village, people told me that there was no one living in the village anymore. Everyone fled to other places. Those things were burned in front of the school. It was too quiet when I went back to my village. But I told them not to worry and come to my home. We will do a chain prayer. So we did a chain prayer for the whole night. Everyone was afraid of them because if something happened people had to go to see them in the mountain area. No one knew who burned their things. They said that if it happens again, they will ask us to stay on the road. However, we prayed a lot and the whole night. Then when people came back after seeing them, they said they won't forgive us next time. So we had to be careful. Then we had a chain prayer and a prayer group in our village. The convention sent us the prayer book every month.

What did they burn? Did they burn the school or church or the houses?

It was other people who burned their ammunitions. They asked those people to take the ammunitions back for them without any of them going. But those people burned those things.

Who burned them?

I don't know.

Did they come to ask you?

No, they did not come. However, it was a problem for those who were afraid..

Were you or your family displaced?

We cannot count how many times we had to flee. I lived in Pn--- and then I had to flee to my hut in 1997. We could not stay in my hut anymore so we went back to Po--- village. Then we fled to Pr--- village in October 1997 and again to Ps--- village. We had to flee again and again. It was a huge problem for me.

Did you flee because they followed you?

We did not know. We just fled from place to place because we were afraid.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I left with my father and three of my younger siblings. The others were already married so we did not meet each other. We were going to stay with our uncle and our father already let him know about that. So he said come. He had a rice barn and he let us stay there. It was during the rainy season. There was a great thing for us, when our uncle bought one piece of pork for his family; he also bought one for us. I was making snacks at home and selling them; however, I did not need to go out to sell. They were just gone right after I made it at home [it means that people came to buy them at her house]. It was just by the grace of God because the bible said he is always watching over us. So it was amazing to witness.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood? Did it affect you?

Yes, of course. When we were fleeing and if you could not carry rice with you, you would have nothing to eat. So we just carried as much as we could. When we came back [to our village] to take more from the rice we saved, there would be nothing left.

What happened?

We did not understand. We just saw the rice pots were broken into pieces. We did not find out what happened.

If you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life or the lives of your family before?

My father was sick and when he heard that the fighting would break out or that the Tatmadaw would come, he took his milk cans and went to the valley. He just had to cook there and eat there. I felt bad for him but I could not help him. Later, he went back to the village and died there.

Did he die because of sickness or torture?

He just died of sickness and he was sick until he died.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of people in your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

I did not know how to solve it but we just overcame the problems calmly. There was no one who would solve the problems for us.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They were the Tatmadaw military.

Have any of the human rights abuses been solved?

I remember one time when I was in Pt---; the soldier took my gold earrings and my sister's wedding ring. It was great that they did not cut my ears.

Did they give you any money?

No, they did not give us anything. They took it when I came back from collecting fire wood. They also took my sister's wedding ring because she just took it off and kept it in the house. She did not wear it usually because she did not like to wear it all the time.

Did they torture or harm you when they took your ear rings from your ears?

No, he did not torture or frighten me. He did not even let me look my face. He just left after he took it.

Do you know their Battalion?

No, I don't remember anymore.

When was it?

It was when I was almost grown up. But I don't remember the exact date.

How many years ago in the past?

It was many years ago. I did not study at Hta [it means somewhere else away from the village] yet.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

I don't remember.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I don't know any [examples]. There are no rules in the village as well. There was one man who stole the monk's chicken. We still cannot solve it and that man doesn't want to see the monk as well.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? What do you think?

I would like to tell them to not do that again and living in peace and unity is the best. Will they feel good if we do that to them?

What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

The transportation is getting a lot better and we can now travel easier. In the past, when we traveled at night, it was not good. Then we could not go anywhere after 6PM in the evening. But now we can travel easily and in peace no matter if it is 6 or 7PM. It is a lot better.

Do you know about National Wide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

I read one book about that but I don't remember much about it.

How much do you know about the peace process?

I don't know. I heard about that in the meeting but I don't remember talking about that.

How do you know about NCA in what way?

I don't know.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

There is no full and pure peace yet.

What do you mean by that?

It will be best when we can live in peace and unity.

What are the harmful things?

There are no harmful things. There are only the misunderstandings between our own people.

What are the advantages or disadvantages of the NCA during the ceasefire period from

the KNU or the Myanmar government?

There are no affects for me but I am not sure about others.

How about the villagers in this village?

I don't know.

Do you feel safer now that the NCA was signed?

It is safe for me. I can travel during the day and night. I am not afraid to sleep alone at night now but I did not dare to sleep alone at night before.

What does peace mean to you?

I don't know.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

I don't know what to say.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve peace process?

If you work together without abusing and violating human rights, it will be the best. That is what I want to suggest.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

We cannot do much but we can travel more and easier. So it is better.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing after ceasefire?

We faced many problems in the past. But since the NCA was signed, we did not face any human rights challenges.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

No, there are no challenges for our livelihood situation.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

No, I don't hear anything now, only in the past.

What about religion?

I didn't hear anything.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

I think our rights are not respected yet because they still don't listen to our voice. If they respect our rights, they will listen to us.

What does justice mean to you?

If we do the right things, then good things will follow you. If you do bad things, then bad things will follow you.

If you have experience with past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I just want to say that they have to resolve it themselves because it is their responsibility. If it was our job, we would resolve it by ourselves. But now they ask us to resolve it for them, but we can't

do it.

What do you need to have peace?

Everything just needs justice.

What do want to suggest to the KNU or the Myanmar government?

I just want them to work honestly. It will be the best for them.

Do you want to add anything more?

No.

Can we use this information and take your photos?

Yes, you can.

Thank you so much. We will consider for your security first.

Source #37

Source doc #	Source # 37
Log #	18-132-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Oi--- (female, 33), Oj---, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. (November 2018)

What is your religion and Ethnicity?

I am Karen, Christian.

What is your marital status?

I am married.

During the conflict period before the ceasefire around 1995 and 1997, did you and villagers in your community experience any human rights violations?

Yes, we did. Our village was destroyed. Mostly, villagers fled [were displaced] to other places so only around four houses of my uncles were left in the village because they were old and they did not flee even they would be killed or forced to serve [the Tatmadaw]. Later on, my family moved to this village and we suffered a lot of problems caused by the Myanmar military; [forced to be] porters, [forced to be] navigators, and torture. The Tatmadaw beat and punched villagers including my husband. Villagers did not know the way through the mountain [forest], but they [Tatmadaw] forced the villagers to go and if villagers could not show them the way, they kicked villagers [with boots]. They faced many problems.

When was that, do you think?

It was in 2001 when I was recently married and there were 30 households in Oj--- village.

What was the worst [human rights] violation you experienced?

We have experienced many types of human rights violations. Once, they took porters with children with them to the battlefield for around one week. When mortars exploded around them, they started crying but they could not do anything. Fortunately, they were able to come back home. Villagers had to be Tatmadaw porters in turn, by rotation.

What would happen if you did not go?

Nobody dared to refuse because we all feared the Tatmadaw military.

Did any of your family members have to be porters?

Yes, Ok--- [interviewee's family member] had to be a porter for the Tatmadaw from our village to other villages and then other villagers from that village had to replace him, [and so on] like that. The worst time was when he and his friend had to go to the mountain area in the darkness, and the Tatmadaw slapped his face and kicked him. His friend was tortured worse than him.

Do you remember the Tatmadaw Battalion number?

No, I do not remember because their troops were rotated regularly.

Were you and other civilians in your community displaced to other places and [Thai/Myanmar] border?

Yes, even after that year [2001], a lot of civilians had to flee to the border because it was not safe to stay in their villages.

Did they return to the village yet?

No, some of them resettled to a third country. At that time, my family almost fled, but then we just stayed [in a life-risking situation].

For the villagers who did not flee, how did you overcome the horrible problems?

At that time, each Tatmadaw troop was different from each other; some troops were horribly wicked and some troops were a little flexible. Nevertheless, they were only nice to us only when there was no conflict and could access meals from us, but if anything happened [against them], none of Tatmadaw soldiers knew [were friendly with] you.

What did you do when they were committed violations against you?

When Ok--- [and his friend] were injured from the Tatmadaw's torture, the village head reported it to them [Tatmadaw] about their torturing his villagers, but they replied to him, "We did not do that." In reality, they committed it but they did not admit their fault and they were simply lying.

Did the Tatmadaw give anything to the villagers as reparations?

No, they did not. I have never seen the Tatmadaw admitting guilt, and they might never admit that they are wrong.

Are you [villagers] satisfied from these sufferings?

No, we are not. We never get satisfaction, but at that time we regularly faced those abuses, so we stayed like that [dealt with it] day by day. We could not handle the suffering anymore, but we had to still suffer it.

Did you go to the Myanmar government or Karen National Union [KNU] [for justice]?

No, we did not know where or how to approach to them.

Can you describe your experiences after the ceasefire situation?

The situation has improved compared to the in the past because we do not have to be afraid [of Tatmadaw military attacks] and we can travel freely.

Does the Tatmadaw military still use villagers as porters?

Yes, they ordered villagers to work for them sometimes after the ceasefire, but not now. Sometimes, they filled the vehicles with petrol for the drivers.

Did they force the villagers to drive them [to other places]?

Villagers were always in fear so whenever people [authorities] ordered them [to do anything], they had to comply. Even though the villagers were busy, nobody dared to refuse or respond [to the authorities].

Why? Did the villagers voluntarily drive the Tatmadaw to other places?

No, they may never have wanted to do it. It is because they were afraid of the Tatmadaw. Villagers could not complain [for their rights], as they always had to be afraid [of authorities].

Did the village head speak on behalf of villagers?

I think they could not do it.

What village agency [method] did the villagers practice?

We did not have any village agency [method] to protect ourselves.

How do the villagers solve the cases; rape, thief and violation against villagers?

Village leaders and the KNU Karen Woman Organisation [KWO] handle the cases.

Were the cases solved in justice?

Yes, these were fair.

If the cases are not fair, what do the villagers do?

For example, a woman was raped by other villagers and she got pregnant. She has one child. She [the woman] is an orphan, she has a father and she did not receive any compensation. The authorities [village leaders] closed the case so she could not do anything. At that time, KWO did not have access to my village yet. In my opinion, it was not justice for the victim as she is a woman.

Was the victim satisfied? What were the consequences?

She could not get any help [legal support] for her to access justice and she did not have knowledge about the law so she could not do anything. Her step mother and father cannot do anything for her. She had to look after her child alone. Later on, she came and stays close to us and we look after her a little bit and then she got married. The current man loves her and looks after her well.

After the NCA, do you think there will be sustainable peace for you?

Hummm I think we cannot rely on the NCA yet. It is just the ceasefire, not peace yet.

What suggestions do you want to give [to leaders] to build sustainable peace?

It is very high position and I have knowledge only in the village level so I do not know how to

give suggestions about the NCA.

What do you think the Myanmar government should do for the civilians as reparation? For example, apology, court, compensation. Which one do you want the Myanmar government military to do?

It is not easy to punish the Tatmadaw. To put them into prison, maybe it is too high punishment. The apology, hmmm. If the Myanmar military apologises to us they may just do it without any change [to their habit] like Bamar people, so to put them into the prison is better to change their behaviour.

Do you think the government should govern the country in order to build trust among the civilians and govern the country by law?

Yes.

Do you know any refugees who returned and want their land?

Yes, some of them want to return, but some of them do not have land [to farm].

What is the most important support that should be provided for them for their repatriation?

The need support such as land and money for their livelihoods. If they have only money, it is not easy for them, so they may need land also.

How many acres do you think they need for each family?

I do not know about the acres.

I mean how many big tins of paddy seed they can plant on the land?

If they can plant one big tin of paddy seed on the land, that will be enough for them.

How much [money] do you think they should receive?

They should receive around 200,000 baht per person.

So you want the KWO to improve its management system, correct?

Yes,

You provided very important information for us [KHRG] so I would like to thank you very much. Can we use it [for publication] and take your picture? We will keep your information secure.

Yes, you can because it is for the village's development.

[He explain the purpose of the interview, it is not for sale and it is for the documentation of human rights abuses and the voice of villagers.] Thank you very much for your time and information.

Thank you.

Source #38

Source doc #	Source # 38
Log #	18-132-A3-I1
Type of report	Interview

Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview Naw MI--- (female, 38), Mm---, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

What is your religion?
I am a Buddhist.

What is your marital status and ethnicity?
I am married. I am Karen.

During the conflict period around 1997 to 1999, what did you experience?
I experienced fighting and we did not dare to stay in our village.

Can you explain the fighting and which armed groups were they?
The fighting was, people fought against each other because the dictator Myanmar military approached our village so fighting broke out with the Karen National Liberation Army.

During the fighting, did you witness any violations against civilians?
There were a lot of violations against villagers in all the villages in the whole of Kaw T'Ree and Noh T'Kaw Townships. When the Myanmar military entered into my village, they arrested villagers and forced them to go ahead of them to the frontline. They killed the villagers who refused to go. They were Infantry Battalion #44 and they were a very brutal group. At first, they arrested all the single and married men to use them as human shields on the battlefield. Around five villagers died, so they arrested women and children to use them as human shields. Therefore, there were full sounds of the children crying and sobbing. Because of that, the other armed group [KNLA] stopped fighting and ran to another place because they knew that, if they shot, the bullets would hit the villagers. The Tatmadaw came back to the village, killed villagers, and ate our pigs, chickens and cows as they wanted.

When do you think it was?
It must have been around 1997 or 1998, when I left my village for the refugee camp.

What are the worst human rights violations you experienced?
It was when my old father had to be a porter and I had to be Loh Ah Pay [forced labourer] when I was 13 years old. At that time, they [Tatmadaw] based their army camp in Mn--- village and forced us to carry bricks. We could not carry them [easily] [because they were so heavy], but we had to do it and it was a very dangerous situation for us. They arrested our fathers to be porters and they forced us to work as Loh Ah Pay for them like that. There were 13 girls and 10 boys, so in total 23 young people. We who had to work as Loh Ah Pay for the Tatmadaw were all underage. They ordered our village head, "whoever works as Loh Ah Pay, they have to bring their own rice [food]. We will not provide rice [food] for them." We had to work in the hot sun far from the place where we could access water for drinking. It was almost 12:00 pm [the hottest time] but they did not allow us to take a rest and have lunch. During that time, if anyone went out for water, they arrested us and accused us of running away. As we were girls, we did not dare to go outside because we were afraid of Tatmadaw soldiers committing rape against us.

We had to suffer in the hot sun and even though we were so thirsty, we did not go out to access drinking water. Then, they allowed us to rest [for lunch] at noon. While we were having lunch, they took their [permanent] porters with chains around their ankles walked on the ground and the sound of the chain went kray kray. They could not work anymore, but they had to do it. One of them tried to run away, and the Tatmadaw soldier shot him dead in front of us.

Did you see it?

Yes, I really saw it.

Was it at Mn--- village?

Yes, it was. It was at the place where they produce bricks and they had a building. They tied their [permanent] porters with the big chain that we [use to] tie the elephant. They shot that porter, but they did not unlock the chain and they ordered our friends who are boys to carry the dead porter and bury the body. It was hot season so the soil was too hard and 23 of us had to dig the grave to bury that dead body in fear. They ordered us, "Dig the ground until it can cover the whole dead body. If not, I will shoot you dead [and bury you] together with that dead porter." While we were digging the grave, they ordered the girls and boys to work in separate places, so we were crying because we worried that they would rape us. [When they saw our boy friends, they said, "Aren't you guys men?" They were men, but they were worried about the girls. Then I told the Tatmadaw soldiers to call a man who was the villager in charge of Tatmadaw and village head. When he arrived to us and saw the children were sobbing. He could speak Burmese better than us. He saw the dead body and he was worried that we would cause problems with Tatmadaw [and would be in trouble] so he asked us, "Did you guys kill him?" We replied, "No". He asked, "Who killed him?" We replied, "The Tatmadaw killed him by itself." He then asked, "Why [are you guys crying]?" We replied, "They [Tatmadaw] want to separate the girls from the boys; girls to carry bricks and boys to stay here [to bury the dead body]. Boys also worry for the security of the girls." He said, "Five girls stay and five girls go with five boys." So then we felt more courage [secure]. We had to carry the bricks from [the brick production area] to the very far top of the hill where their military post was based. I experienced a lot of violations so whenever I talk about it, I do not want to return to Myanmar. It [this story] will never end. Even though I talk about my real experiences, I suspect that maybe foreign countries [people] might not believe me [and] instead they might believe the Burmese [Myanmar government and their military] version. I truly experienced it and saw them so I do not feel sorry for them [Myanmar government and military]. Some foreign countries will only believe [listen to] whatever they say.

Have you heard about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement?

Yes, I have heard about it.

What do you know about it?

I know that, some countries [ethnic states] have not signed the NCA.

Are there any positive consequences of NCA for the Karen people?

The benefit is we can travel freely during the ceasefire. They [Myanmar government and Military] made business investments, but I think these were too much [impacting local civilians]. We can access only freedom to travel. I do not believe in them; I suspect that they might have a secret strategy to plot against us during the ceasefire. They might laugh at us when we are enjoying the freedom of travelling and we think it is peace for us. I think they might have a wicked strategy in their mind [plan to do something bad against civilians]. Even though they

report to the assembly in front of foreign countries [about they reform the Myanmar as a democracy country], I do not trust them. Now, they allow us to live in peace, but we cannot see into their minds.

After the NCA was signed, did any human rights abuses like you mentioned above still happen in your area?

We still have concerns for our security and are afraid of the Tatmadaw because we have to do whatever they order us to do for them. If they order us to meet with them, they speak to us in a proper way, but we do not see what's in their mind. We know that "Seven Hoods" are always in them [Karen proverb: however kind the Burmese pretend to be to us, they always have seven kinds of wicked things planned against us] because we heard that fighting is on-going in District #5 [Hpapun District] [despite] the NCA. Why do they do that? They stop fighting here [Doooplaya District], they should also stop the fighting there [Hpapun District]. If they keep going like this, I do not believe that it is peace.

Do you think it is peaceful in your country, Myanmar?

No, not yet. There is no peace and we are in an insecure situation.

For civilians to access and enjoy their human rights as humans in peace, what do you think people should do?

I would like to request my leaders [KNU] to ask for peace when they talk to foreign countries' leaders. Karen people have four demands: give the Karen a state at once; show Burma one kyat, Karen one kyat; we do not want communal strife; we do not want civil war. They do not agree with any of these four slogans because they are making the Karen people fight each other and they cause the conflicts in many places [in the country].

Thank you for sharing with us your opinion that you want the leaders to work for the genuine and real peace. What is the most important thing to live in justice and peace?

I want peace and love [no fighting]. I urge foreign countries to help us in order to enjoy the sustainable freedom of movement like other countries. The other countries have their good leaders, but we have a dictator government and they [only] love their own people [Burman]. They protect the people who are in their side like people in the Town who have access to them, and we [villagers in rural areas] do not enjoy their love [protection].

Do you mean, you urge foreign countries to pressure the Myanmar government and advocate for your rights in peace and justice?

Yes, I want my leaders [any authorities] to do as I said. I always want the interpreters/translators to truly interpret/translate what I am saying and my words because sometimes, they do not dare [secure, shy] to directly interpret what we are talking about so they interpret with a different message [to the foreign authorities]. I do not want to be like this and I want them to interpret my voice in honesty. I want the leaders to speak for us, freedom of movement, community development, genuine peace for no more conflict facing our children, and equality as in other [peaceful] countries.

Do you want the Myanmar government to accept those requests?

We [Karen] have been willing for it for a long time ago, we [Karen civilians and leaders] have been urging for it and do it [follow the ceasefire agreement] many times but we have not completely achieved it yet. Do the leaders [KNU] believe in them [Government and their military]? Whenever the Karen leaders meet with them [ceasefire agreement] for peace, they

never accept our requests. Therefore, all of the Myanmar government and military must be punished into the prison.

Do you have anything else that you want to report?

I am happy that you came to my village and are doing an interview with me because I gain more knowledge from you. I want you to come to my village in the future. Today, I do not have much time for you because I have to go to work for my livelihood. I want to report to you [KHRG] that I want to enjoy the freedom of movement and we have desired it for a long time. Therefore, I want the leaders to ask for us [to the government]. The fighting is not a game, but it destroys the village and causes a lack of development in the community's education and health situation. We heard [from Saw Ba Oo Kyi's words] that the fighting will end on the table and we want to see it end [on the table], but we never saw it yet.

Do you have any questions?

I do not have much time because I have to go somewhere, so you can come and conduct [another] interview next time. Thank you.

Thank you for sharing your real experiences before and after the NCA. Can we [KHRG] use the information?

I give you permission, but you should not publish my name and my village's name.

We will censor information for your security. Thank you very much.

Source #39

Source doc #	Source # 39
Log #	19-3-A4-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Gc--- (male, 53), Gd--- village, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

What do you do for your livelihood?

I am just a farmer.

What position do you have in your area?

I am a Kheh Kah Hkoh village tract [position censored for security].

How many villages are in Kheh Kah Hkoh village tract?

There are three villages in this village tract.

Is Gd--- part of this village tract?

No. Gd--- is just recognized as its own area so it includes the whole area in Gd---. This area has been divided into village tracts such as Kheh Der village tract or Kheh Kah Hkoh village tract.

Have you experienced conflict?

Do you mean the period of the Four Cuts strategy³ until 2012?

Yes.

We went through a lot in those times. In 1997 or 1998, we were even pointed at with guns.

Who pointed their guns at you?

They were the same people with this current military group.

Were they Tatmadaw soldiers?

Yes. At that time, I was a village head once for a month. When I left the village head position, Bo⁴ [captain] Zaw Lin from Battalion #264 pointed his gun right beside my ear to shoot me. I told him "shoot me if you want to shoot" but he did not shoot me. When I went there, the Battalion Commander asked me whether I am okay with Bo Zaw Lin or not, then I answered, I am okay. If I did not say that I am fine, Bo Zaw Lin would have been deposed from his position. He is a captain I did not tell anyone about that. I just hid it for him. But I do not know whether he is still alive or not. I do not see him anymore.

Do you often think about it?

I just think that I saved his life even though he gave me trouble when he was on duty. However, I remember the events sometimes too.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

There were lots of human rights abuses before the ceasefire, like the killing of villagers. We had two villagers that were killed in this Kheh Kah Hkoh village tract.

What happened to them?

They were shot when both KNLA and Tatmadaw were in serious tension and conflict. Kyaw Zin Oo was Operations Commander at that time.

Do you remember when it happened?

No. I cannot remember it. The one who killed the two villagers was from Battalion #20 led by Kyaw Zin Oo. I think it was in 2002. The villages here always faced problems since the conflict period.

Do you remember when you moved?

I think it was in 1975 or 1976 during the Four Cuts strategy.

Did you experience human rights abuses at that time?

Yes, when we had to go as porters, we got injured and some people stepped on the landmines and died.

When did you start being a [position censored for security]?

³ In Burma/Myanmar, the scorched earth policy of '*pyat lay pyat*', literally 'cut the four cuts', was a counter-insurgency strategy employed by the Tatmadaw as early as the 1950's, and officially adopted in the mid-1960's, aiming to destroy links between insurgents and sources of funding, supplies, intelligence, and recruits from local villages. See Martin Smith. *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999 pp. 258-262.

⁴ *Bo* is a Burmese title meaning 'officer.'

I was 27 or 28 years old when I first became a [position censored for security].

Did you experience the forced labour of portering at that time?

Yes, almost all the time.

Were women the victims of rape in your area?

No. I have never seen it in this area.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

We always faced difficulties from 1975 to 2012. We were forced by the Tatmadaw to look for, step on, and clear landmines that had been planted by the KNLA. It was compulsory so we had to go. We told them that we dare not to go because we were afraid to die, but they wouldn't accept it. They responded: "You should clean all the landmines that were planted by your own people. You have no chance to say anything even if you die". All the things that we experienced during that time were the worst things for us.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

Like I said, the worst experiences were when we had to clear the landmines for the Tatmadaw and when I was pointed at with a gun.

Did he shoot you?

No. He just loaded the gun but did not shoot me.

Were you displaced?

Yes.

Where did you live before?

I lived in Say Baw Lu village.

Did your community experience human rights abuses during the conflict time?

As a village head, I always helped the villagers when they were attacked or tortured.

Did you witness villagers being tortured?

Yes, I witnessed the Tatmadaw soldiers stomping on the villagers with their feet.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

It really affected our livelihood because they did not let us go to our farms so our paddy was destroyed by animals. They ordered us not to go outside of the village.

When did this happen?

It was between 1975 and 2012.

How did you provide for yourself and your family?

We are always farmers so that was the only thing we did for our livelihood. When they banned us [from going to their farms] then it was harmful to our family and our livelihood.

Who provided you food? Was it the Tatmadaw or KNLA?

No one provided us food. We sometimes asked for food from the Tatmadaw. They gave it sometimes.

What about the KNU?

For the KNU, we just help them instead.

As you experienced human rights abuses and displacement, how does it continue to affect your life? Did you have a good life in your previous village?

Everything was fine when I lived in Say Baw Lu village. But our life became harder when the conflict started. We had to live between our people [KNLA] and Tatmadaw. They gave us troubles and made us suffer a lot.

Who were they?

They were Myanmar government and Tatmadaw.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of those in your community?

It affected lives and livelihoods, such as getting food or travelling by our community here in Mu Thel.

Does this include education?

Yes. It includes everything.

How have the local people in your village overcome this?

The conflict started in 1974 or 1975 and we always solved the problems by ourselves even though we are not educated. The lack of education is our weakness.

What about healthcare?

We have done it the same way. If we cannot cure it in our village, we go to town.

Do you need to ask permission to go outside?

Yes. We were supposed to ask permission if we went outside in the past but we do not need to do that anymore now. In the past, if there was any emergency, like if a villager was injured by landmines, we had to report it here first before leaving to hospital.

Who do you think were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

Both KNLA and Tatmadaw violated human rights but the Tatmadaw violated them more. I even witnessed my nephew's father being beaten brutally and being pointed at with a gun. I saw it and I said I would report the case to the Township, but he [the victim] did not want me to report it. The perpetrator was Karen but I do not care whether he is Karen or not when it comes to human rights violations. But he did not let me report; instead he said the one who beat him was Karen so he will just remain silent. He spoke to me like that so I did not report anything about that. He was also kicked, tied and beaten by the Tatmadaw. He was put in the truck and kicked out of the truck to the ground. I experienced things a lot better if I compare myself to him. He could not bear it so he left to the Karen side after that.

Was he tortured because he lived in a small village?

No. He was a village head at that time. He was a village head from Myanmar side and I was in Karen [controlled] side. He was tortured because he lived between the two groups. He was misunderstood by both sides since he is a Karen but being a Myanmar [government] village head.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

In the past, we resolved the human rights abuses especially with our own people [KNLA] by reaching understanding between each other. But we cannot resolve things with the Myanmar side like that. It is more of one-sided suffering from them.

In your nephew's father's case, did the KNU try to resolve things with him?

Yes.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

No. There was no justice at that time.

Have you seen perpetrators being punished?

No.

What about the KNU?

No. I have not seen that either. There was no justice from either side at that time.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

They should be punished according to the desire of the civilians.

Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

I think they should make things right again.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

There should not be any conflict for them and they should have their own livelihood and have enough food for their daily life.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

I think the root cause of human rights abuses was the politics of Myanmar which caused both armed groups to fight against each other, and the civilians suffered.

Do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it and how is it relevant to you?

Yes, I have heard about the ceasefire and I think the best thing is that both groups should be in peace and work for improvements in the future.

How is it relevant to you?

I think it is relevant to us because we hope to live in peace.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

Yes.

How much do you know about the peace process?

We heard about it from our leaders and some villagers. I do not remember everything about it. I just know that it is not moving forward.

What would you like to know about it? What do you expect to get from this peace

process?

We would like to live in peace, so we would just like to see peace.

Has the Tatmadaw army camp next to the village been here for a long time?

I think they've been based here for 20 years already.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

No. Even though this is the peace process period, I do not think there is peace now.

How has the peace process affected your life?

I think from 2012 until early 2019, education and healthcare have been improving. We can also travel more easily.

Is there still an army base present in your village?

Yes. They are always here.

How has the peace process affected the lives of people in your community?

I do not see anything terrible affecting the lives of people here now.

Do you feel safer now?

Personally, I do not feel safe yet.

Has your livelihood improved?

Yes. I feel like our livelihood has improved but it still needs to improve.

In your own perspective, what does peace mean to you?

I personally think that peace is something prosperous that everyone needs.

What do you think about it?

I think this not a genuine peace so the situation is not stable yet.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

The biggest barrier to making sustainable peace is the political situation, because the government wants to lead the nation by themselves without giving a chance to other ethnic groups.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

I want to see the Tatmadaw army camps that are based near our villages being sent back to their own place. They should not stay here anymore. They should stay in peace with the KNU too.

Do you feel insecure because their army camp is close by?

Yes. We sometimes feel unsafe when their army base is close to our workplace too. We still have concerns for that.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I just would like to suggest to them that they should be in agreement and stay in peace within a

nation. They should improve the situation of education, healthcare and most importantly, they should create the true peace that every civilian needs.

Which government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

Both KNU and Myanmar government are responsible to guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I think we civilians in village or village tract level and our leaders, we should cooperate among each other.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing after the NCA?

I do not see any horrible human rights challenges so far after the NCA.

What are the land issues in this area?

We do not have so many land issues in our area here. The KNU has measured our lands and gave us our land grants [titles] already but it is not enough yet. We hope they will do their best to protect our land.

What does justice mean to you?

I think justice is what everyone wants.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We use both Myanmar government and KNU justice systems.

Which system is taking more accountability for cases that happen?

Both are taking accountability for what happens because either of them can handle the cases.

What do you know about those two justice systems? Do you trust them?

No. I cannot trust either systems. There should be only one justice system in our area.

So do you also feel that it is fair?

No. I still feel that it is not fair. The leaders should implement a justice system that respects the law and follow it step by step.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

Yes, I think there is still corruption and bribery in the justice system but I've never experienced it myself.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system?

Yes. Because when some villagers here faced an unjust situation, we had to go and help them. I couldn't do anything but just guaranteed them [vouched for their innocence and character].

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? And what is the responsibility of the KNU?

In the current situation, both governments have the responsibility to give access to justice. They should amend some laws for both groups to follow together.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

I think we should improve human rights.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

I think there should be better laws to improve human rights in Myanmar.

How old were you when you were displaced?

When I was 8 years old.

Have you sometimes thought about going back to your own village?

Yes, I think about it sometimes.

What do you know of the current services available in the area for your potential return?

I do not know about that.

If you could, would you return to your village?

I think it depends on how many people would like to return. I cannot go back alone.

What do you want for your future?

I think we need education, healthcare and everything for our local development if we have a chance.

Okay. Thank you so much for giving me your time for this interview. Can we use this information for our report?

Yes.

Source #40

Source doc #	Source # 40
Log #	19-5-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | Naw Ge--- (female, 50), Gf--- village, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (November 2018)

Have you experienced human rights abuses in the past?

Whenever the Tatmadaw came to the villages, they were too brutal and horrible in their actions so we had to be in fear. Even if we hid in the houses, they came into the houses to check.

Do you remember the Saw Zs--- and Saw Zt--- issues?

Yes, I heard about the Tatmadaw forcing their heads into the river. The Tatmadaw beat them and locked their legs with bamboo. They were released after the village head gave a recommendation for them. I do not remember the year. I think it must be around 20 years ago.

What was the worst human rights violation you experienced?

It was when Tatmadaw army trucks came. The Tatmadaw fired a gun beside Naw Zu---'s ears

to frighten the villagers.

Did you ever face displacement?

Yes, they fled to the mountain and in the forest.

All?

Only men fled and women were left in the villages. So when the men were gone, they arrested women.

What do you want to explain as a witness of those human rights violations during the conflict period?

As I mentioned to you before, when the Tatmadaw trucks came, whenever Tatmadaw came, if they did not see men, they would arrest women to clear the road of landmines for them. Whenever their trucks would come, we had to go ahead of them on bullock carts to the Khaw Kay Kaw area. The carts were full of women and we knew that if the landmines exploded, we would all die. We were so afraid that landmines would explode sooner or later. We just had to pray to God a lot.

Did any landmine explode?

Yes, one landmine exploded at Khaw Kay Kaw, but it did not destroy the truck. Maybe the branch fell on it, I do not remember well how it exploded.

Which Tatmadaw troop was it?

I think it was Light Infantry Division [LID] #55, you can ask Naw Zu--- [mother].

How did it impact your livelihoods?

It impacted our family livelihoods because we could not work on our farms such as our sugar cane plantations. We had already prepared land for our sugar cane plantation, but we could not work on it anymore. The Tatmadaw shot villagers' cows for meat. They might have shot other villagers' cows too, that I did not know about.

How did local civilians overcome those problems?

We did not do anything.

Have any of those human rights abuses been resolved?

No, I do not see any resolution.

Source #41

Source doc #	Source # 41
Log #	18-122-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Toungoo Township, Bago Division
Full Text	

Bago Interview | Naw Ku--- (female, 55), Kv--- village, Shauk Pin Chaung village tract, Toungoo Township, Bago Division (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Do you have a family?

Yes.

Have you experienced conflict in your village? Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

First of all, I would like to say that our lands have been confiscated since the construction of Pa Thit dam started. There were five different parties that confiscated our lands. The first one is the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. The second one is the Pa Thit Myo Thet Rubber Plantation, the manager Aung Kyaw Oo [who runs Pa Thit Myo Thet Rubber Plantation] confiscated our lands. I don't know who the third party is. The fourth one, Five Star Company, confiscated our garden lands., we thought we would be able to work on the remaining land but Ba Yin Naung army camp [Tatmadaw] confiscated the rest of our land to use as a military practice target area. We cannot work on our land anymore. We faced a lot of difficulties regarding military practice activities because we had to flee or relocate when Tatmadaw came to our village. It is not safe for us to stay in our village when they conduct military activity. We were afraid that we would get shot hit [by guns] military activity. When they came to conduct their military activity, they cut the trees in our gardens and they destroyed our plantations when they practiced shooting guns. The bullets also hit our houses. Although we knew it happened, we couldn't work on our lands because they confiscated our lands for military practice target area.

You said that many different actors including companies and the Myanmar government confiscated your land. So can you please tell me what kinds of human rights abuses you have experienced the most?

Although we see our lands, we cannot work on it. Even though, our grand grandparents {cleaned vegetation and} build the village on these lands, the Ministry of Industry #1 constructed their buildings on our lands and said that these lands are confiscated by Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. They came to stay on our lands with their group. We just worked on our grandparents' lands but they sued us claiming it was now their land.

Which company [perpetrators] committed the most human rights abuses?

We were sued by Ministry of Industry #1 and the Pa Thit Myo Thet Rubber Plantation.

Who runs the Pa Thit Myo Thet Rubber Plantation?

Kyaw Kyaw Oo of Ministry of Industry #1 is the manager and runs Pa Thit Myo Thet Rubber Plantation. They confiscated our lands and he also sued us.

When did they confiscate your lands?

They started to confiscate our lands in 1993. In 1997, they destroyed our dog fruit, betel nut, durian, banana and bamboo plantations. They used machines to destroy our plantations and then they turned them into rubber plantations. We lost our plantations and we did not have lands left to stay on. We did not get our lands back . Now we are just able to work on a small plot of our land but they sue us for working on it. I will tell you the worst thing about the manager Aung Kyaw Oo. He confiscated our lands and also sued us. Our villagers suffered a lot from this land confiscation case because we struggled during the court process {such as transportation}. We

faced livelihood challenges. {We faced difficulties going to the court}.

Have you experienced forced relocation following the land confiscations?

Yes. The whole village had to relocate.

Where did you relocated to?

Our old village was located on the eastern side of the Loikaw road but we could not stay there anymore because our lands were confiscated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Therefore, we had to relocate but The Myanmar government did not provide us with new lands. However, three villagers had mercy on us and gave us lands to stay on. We now stay in west of the [Loikaw] vehicle road. So it is like the village on the east side of the street is our old village and the village on the west side of the street is our new village.

So you mean the place you live now is the village's land or these lands are provided by the Myanmar government?

The Myanmar government did not provide us with lands to stay on. Three villagers worked together and helped us. Those three villagers are the pastor, Saw Kw--- and the other one is an older villager. We couldn't take land and stay on it, we had to report it to the Township officer. Then, the Township officer came to assign the land we could stay on. However, the Township officer did not provide any land for us, the other villagers provided their lands for us.

What difficulties did you face when you relocated?

We faced a lot of difficulties when we were displaced. We lost our homes and the plantations we had relied upon for our livelihoods. We could not find other ways to get food. Some people relocated to Mon Lite and Dawei Towns to work as tree cutters and mahouts for their livelihoods. We do not have any savings in case one of our family members gets sick. We cannot send our children to school because of financial challenges.

Can you remember the names of the human rights abusers??

The Manager Aung Kyaw Oo from Ministry of Industry #1 confiscated our lands and he also sued us. These lands belong to our grandparents. Also, our old generation has been working on these lands for a long time. Even though these are our lands, we cannot work on our lands. We feel like our rights have been violated.

How did you respond to human rights abuses? I mean how were the human rights abuses solved? For example, how did you try to reclaim your confiscated lands? Was there any protection for human rights victims?

Our lands were first confiscated during the dictatorship. So we did not dare to talk about anything. I will tell you how bad it was. We had to get off of our lands. Also, five villagers were called for forced labour per day. Forced labour means we were called to destroy our own plantations such as dog-fruit trees, coconut trees and durian trees. We were crying when we cut off our own trees. My mother passed away because of the trauma of this land confiscation. We were just able to get durians for two years but we had been planting them for ten years. I mean we do not have big durian trees anymore [as they were cut off]. We had to give our lands and also our lands have been confiscated. Because of the dictatorship system, we had to cut off our own trees. If we look at human rights perspectives, our rights have been seriously violated. I just feel we were not able to enjoy our rights.

Who asked you to destroy your own trees and plantations?

They said that these lands are used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation for irrigation evergreen project. They said that the trees on these lands had to be cut down but they had nobody to help them. Therefore, they forced us to cut down our own trees. Actually those dictators ordered us to cut down the trees.

Do you remember the names of the people who ordered you to cut down your own trees?

I do not remember and I also do not know their names.

How many years has it been already?

Our lands were confiscated in 1993.

How was the land issue solved? Did you write complaint letters? Did you meet with other people whose lands have been confiscated?

The land law was enacted in 2012. The land law said that people can report the land issues that happened after 1988 to the Myanmar government. On August 18th 2012 I wrote a complaint letter [about the land issue] and reported it. Actually, I started to work on the land issues on July 22nd 2012. I looked into which department we should send complaint letters to [regarding land issues] and which department we should report to.

What difficulties did you face?

The elder people and village head have to approve I want to send a complaint letter to the Myanmar government, but they cannot do it for me. That is why I went to meet with general township administrator Thein Zaw Oo for help. I asked him if I could report the complaint letter without the signature of the village head. He replied me, "You can report it [to authorities] on your own. This is the transparency period. You do not need anyone's stamp in order to report your letter". Then, I asked Saya Kx--- to send our complaint letter.

Where did you report it to?

We reported it to different Myanmar departments in Nay Pyi Taw.

What letter did you report?

A complaint letter.

So what did they [Myanmar departments] respond to you? Did they take any responsibilities for what happened? Did they take action in this land confiscation case?

It was during the period that the State Peace and Development Council [SPDC] ruled the country. I called U Aung Thein, the chairman of the Land Committee. Then, I asked him to investigate the cases of land confiscation in the field. He told me that he would do it. It cost 1,000,000 kyat on that period [to pay for the investigation fee]. Until now, I have not been able to give back the money to the people who lend me money. I was in debt. The debt is with a 10 percent interest. He told me that he would do the investigation in the field but nothing happened when he went back. Then, he disappeared. When the National League of Democracy [NLD] came to power, we still tried to report the land cases to the NLD government. That's one thing that we get as a benefit. Let me tell you. On March 27th 2016 on Sunday we went to meet with U Sein Win, the chairman of Land Committee in order to get back our agricultural lands. I explained him, "Uncle, nobody works on these lands but our farmers did not have the rights to work on these lands. So we would like to work on these lands. What should we do?" He replied, "If nobody work or cultivate on those lands, you can use and work on those lands but you have to submit the letter". Then, I came back to my village and I discussed the letter with Saya Ky---

and Saya U Kz---. Then, I submitted the letter [to local authorities]. After we submitted the letter, we, the villagers, altogether went to prepare the lands. Finally, villagers can work on the lands but those who get the lands did not refund any of the money that we had used during the process. I mean they did not support us.

Do you think that there was justice when you tried to claim your land rights? I mean was there justice for land victims?

Some of our lands were flooded after the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation confiscated them. We claimed the rights to be able to work on the rest of our lands and although we can work on our agricultural lands, we do not have the proper document for these lands. However, there are five different departments that confiscated our lands but the Ministry of Industry #1, U Than Myint from Five Star Company, Ba Yin Naung army camp [Tatmadaw] and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation did not return the confiscated lands to us. There are four different departments who did not return our lands to us yet.

Villagers' lands were flooded after the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation confiscated them. So did the villagers get the compensation?

We did not receive any compensation. We did not receive anything.

Does the Ministry of Industry #1 still confiscate villagers' lands or did they return the lands to villagers?

They did not return the lands to villagers.

Who returned the lands to the villagers?

In 2016 I called representatives of parliaments to come to investigate in the field. They [representatives] are Daw Christ Tun from Karen State, Moe Ma Kha, the NLD member from Toungoo Township, authority at Division level and Dr. Tin Tin Win from Amyo Thar Hluttaw. They came to do an investigation in the field [regarding the land issues]. Our administrator said, "The Myanmar government already conducted auctions on these lands. The auction was organized by Aung Kyaw Oo". In our mind, we thought that this man [Aung Kyaw Oo] tried to own these lands. As we are villagers, we want to work on our own lands. These lands are not the Myanmar government's lands but our lands.

Is the administrator attached to the village, Township, or District?

The administrator is from our village. He is U Kaa---, a formal [position censored for security] of Shauk Pin Chaung village tract. The current chairman [of Shauk Pin Chaung village tract] is Shwe Thein. They both are [village tract] administrators do not feel confident to sign the paper [to support us].

As you said before, the administrator said that the Myanmar government conducted auctions on villagers' lands as Aung Kyaw Oo confiscated these lands. Was your administrator village, village tract, Township or District level?

He is a village tract administrator.

As you said, many authorities such as NLD members came to do an investigation in the field. How did they handle the land issue? Your administrator said that Aung Kyaw Oo can own the lands as the Myanmar government conducted auctions. So how did authorities at Division level solve this case? Did they solve the case according to the law?

They did not do anything for us. The land issue is ongoing. All we know is that we were sued. They just came to do an investigation in the field but they did not take any action.

So what should the Myanmar government authorities do regarding the land issue? For example, should they take legal action?

We called the representatives of parliament to come to do an investigation in the field because we wanted them to reveal the truth and solve the case in order to get justice. We had to pay money [such as food cost and transportation fee] but they did not do anything for us. They just said that they will solve the case but they did nothing and they just left.

Did Aung Kyaw Oo get the any punishment? For example, did he get fired from his job at Ministry of Industry #1?

He did not get fired from his job. He did not get any punishment. We, villagers, were told not to work on the lands. We were told not to continue to move forward during the conflict [between villagers and Aung Kyaw Oo]. We just understand both sides do not have to continue to work on lands during the conflict. However, they [Ministry of Industry #1] can work on the lands but we cannot work on the lands. We fenced our lands but they destroyed our fences. They dismantled our tents.

Do you put a fence around the lands that had been confiscated or the lands that had not been confiscated?

We fenced the lands that had been confiscated and we cultivated our confiscated lands.

How did you respond after they destroyed the fences?

We have to reveal the truth. They confiscated our lands. So if we stopped trying to get our lands, they and the people will think that these lands are not our lands. So we fenced the lands but he sued us because he said that we trespassed on their lands.

How did he sue you?

They sued us at Township Court.

How many villagers did they sue?

The first time, he [Aung Kyaw Oo] sued two villagers [Saw Kab--- and Naw Kac---] but he won the case because he cheated on the villagers. The second time, he sued three villagers including me [Naw Kac---, Naw Kad--- and Saw Kae--] Again, he sued five villagers who are Naw Kae---, Saw Kaf---, Saw Kae---, Naw Kac--- and me. He sued villagers three times. In 2007, he sued seven villagers, including me, who live on these lands but only six villagers went to court. However, that time we won the case because he did not have any evidence to prove that these lands are his lands but we can prove that we have been working on these lands since our great grandfather. But now he wins the case because he cheated on the villagers. We cannot have justice [even though these lands are our lands]. We do not know why he cheated on the villagers. We feel like our rights are violated.

Can you please tell me how they cheated on the villagers?

He [Aung Kyaw Oo] came to live here in 2007 but we were born in this area [before he came here]. We have lived here for generations. When he came here, he said that these lands are his lands and these lands belong to the Myanmar government. So somebody [villager] submitted a complain letter [to Myanmar authorities]. The letter said that he [Aung Kyaw Oo] had been giving the villagers trouble. Then, the authorities from Department of Agriculture came to

investigate the case in the field. But the person who sent a compliant letter did not let us know about what he did. So we did not know it. When authorities from Department of Agriculture came to investigate the case in the field, they asked us, "Did you send a complaint letter about Aung Kyaw Oo?". We replied that we did not send a complaint letter. They said that we have to sign agreement paper if we did not send a complain letter about Aung Kyaw Oo. Then, We signed the paper because we wanted to stay away from him. We just did not want to argue with him because when we were first sued in 2007, the judge asked us, "After the case is finished, will you ask the money for the cost for this case?". Our ten household leader and hundred household leader said that villagers will not ask for money. Villagers said in the court, "We want to work on our lands freely. We do not want to give trouble to him. He also do not give trouble to us". That's why we signed the agreement paper. Therefore, they [authorities from Department of Agriculture] asked us to sign the agreement paper stating we did not send a complaint letter about Aung Kyaw Oo. Then, he [Aung Kyaw Oo] used that paper and he stated that villagers supported the fake 30 years land grant so they signed agreement paper. That's how he cheated on villagers. So he won the case later in the court. That's how we went from land owners to land losers. Even though we are the owners of the land, we have been accused of being trespassers. We feel like our human rights are violated.

Which authorities asked you to sign the paper?

They are from Department of Agriculture.

Is it at Township level or District level?

Aung Kyaw Oo called them to investigate the case in the field. We do not know where they are from [at Township level or District level]. We just know that they are from Department of Agriculture. As far as I know, they are from Set Thone Mile area.

Are they from Myanmar government's department?

Yes.

What should be done to get justice for the villagers whose rights are violated? For example, Aung Kyaw Oo and authorities asked you to sign the paper but they did not let you know what it is exactly. It is like they asked you to sign the paper in a wrong way. Then, they cheated on villagers. So what action should be taken for this?

In order to get justice, they should be investigated according to the law. We are land owners but we were sued. They cheated on villagers to own the lands because they abused authorities' power. [I want those people whether or not they see it [cheating] as the truth]. I also want to see effective action being taken for those people. If action is not taken, other people will abuse the authorities' power. That's why I demand that action be taken effectively for this case.

How many times did you have to go to trial in court?

In 2007, we were sued. The investigation process took one year and ended in 2008. In July 2007, he [Aung Kyaw Oo] started to sue us. The decision was made in court on October 2008. We won the case but we did not receive a letter to proof that we won the case as evidence. I tried to follow up with the court authorities in order to get the decision letter from the court. It cost more than 200,000 kyat of my money when I followed up. It costs 5,000 or 6,000 kyat for every time I go to court but I have been going to court for more than a year. They asked me to come to meet them the next week. I went to meet them [next week]. They asked to go meet them at other court. I went to meet them at other court but I did not receive the decision letter. Even though we won the case in the court in 2007, we did not get the decision letter because

they tried to make it disappeared. In 2016, we were sued again. Until 2018, we still have to go to court.

When you talk about the decision letter, who made it disappear?

Somebody had the decision letter. Actually, he did not go to court but one of his family members went in his place. When he sold his garden lands to other people he gave them decision letter. However, we cannot get the decision letter back even though we asked them to give it to us. I tried to go to court many times in order to get the decision letter but I cannot get it. The case processor in the court told me, "Sister, we cannot find the letter in the court. So you can do whatever you want to do". Then, I went to talk to the judge of [Toungoo] District court. I said, "A Ba [uncle], the case processor told they cannot find the letter in the court. So I can do whatever I want to do." He replied, "Oh, it would be problematic if we did whatever we want to do". Therefore, he wrote a remark on the paper for me and I can use it for evidence. The remark included information such as what year the case was finished and the number of the case. I received that letter [from the judge] as evidence. However, we cannot get the real decision letter as they said they cannot find it in the court, but I'm sure somebody has this letter. Saya [researcher], tell me how should we try to get it?

You told me you went to ask about the decision letter in court. Which court did you go to?

I went to ask the case processor at the District court.

Should this letter be kept in the court? Or should the people keep it?

Villagers should have one decision letter if they won the case. The court also has the other similar letter. There should actually be two letters but there is no letter at all in the hands of the people nor in the court. Even though we won the case, we did not even have a copy of the decision letter. When we face a similar case of land issue now, we have difficulties proving and solving the case. I already spent a lot of money on trying to get the letter.

You mean there is a lack of transparency in the justice system?

Yes. There's a lack of transparency.

You told me somebody has the letter. Did that somebody take the letter from the court? Is he/she a person who works for the Myanmar government? Is he/she a person from a Business Company?

Actually, this somebody is the person who owns this plot of the land. He is a former village head. When we were facing trial, he was responsible for this [land] case as he is a village head. He guided us in how to deal with the court. Then, he took the decision letter after the decision was made in the court. However, he did not face trial due to land issue but his brother in law faced trial due to land confiscation. However, his brother in law does not have the letter.

Did you confront him with it?

Currently, many people know the truth [that the villagers' lands are confiscated]. The judge is also aware of this. The judge told him [land confiscator], "If you want these lands, you need to give compensation to villagers. If you do not want to give compensation, you have to return the lands to them." Therefore, he did not have his eyewitnesses [to prove that the land is his land]. In the last week, he tried to find the eyewitnesses to bring them in the court. He cannot find them so he had to pay them to be eyewitnesses. Still, he cannot find people to be his eyewitnesses. That's why we had to wait for it in the court so it's just wasted money if we go to

court because we have to spend money on transportation.

Who is he?

He is Aung Kyaw Oo.

Did confiscate villagers' lands?

Yes. He is the manager of Pa Thit Myo Thet Rubber Plantation from Ministry of Industry #1.

After the judge told him to pay compensation and return the confiscated lands, what did he do ?

He didn't do anything. **Have you heard from him after he was told by the judge?**

I heard people say that he cannot return the lands to villagers because he spent a lot of money on these lands. However, we are the owners of these lands as we have been working on the lands since our great grandparents. We only want our lands. We cannot do anything to support our livelihood so we just ask for our lands but we have to go to court for that. We just want our lands back. We do not need money. If we have lands, we can work on it to support our livelihoods.

So the land issue has not been solved yet. So how should the case be solved?

I already went to meet with the Minister of Bago Division. I also sent a complaint letter to the Minister of Bago Division. This letter is the second letter that we submitted [by showing researcher]. This letter is the latest letter that we submitted.

Did anything change after you sent the letters?

The Minister informed us that he will come to investigate the case in the field. I'll show you something. This is the decision letter from the court that proved why we won the case. This is the land grant. I also have this. I spent a lot of money on trying to get this.

Will the Minister come to the villages?

Yes. The Minister of Bago Division and the Minister of Ethnic Affairs will come to do an investigation in the villages. He [the minister] wants to encourage villagers. I also came back to talk to the villagers about this but the village head does not do anything. So I go house by house and tell the villagers everything I know. .

Do you know when they will come to the villages?

I can tell you only after he lets us know. We cannot call him to come whenever we want because he might be busy as he is the minister. So we can give you the date that he will come after he lets us know.

OK. Thank you so much for your answer. Now I am going to ask you questions about another issue.

Yes.

What do you understand or know about the peace process? Are villagers satisfied with the current peace process?

In order for us to be able to understand the peace process, we should get information in a transparent way. If we are aware of what is happening, we will understand the current peace process. Now they talk about the peace process but the problems [conflicts] are still happening. For us, we do not clearly understand the current peace process as we live in villages but we

really want genuine peace. We want peace in our community, in our society, in our town and in our country. We wish we can work on our lands freely.

What do you know about the peace process or peace transition? How can the peace process and the peace transition go together? Tell me as much as you understand.

Let's say we do not talk about the system that goes with the peace process. If we talk about the system [], I will tell you what I understand. It is impossible to get peace if the people do not give up their weapons. I mean we should use the weapons in the appropriate way in order to protect our country but it should be open and transparent to the civilians. If there's transparency, it is likely we will see the beginning of peace. I am not sure whether my views are true or not. This is just how I understand.

What do you expect from the peace process?

I want my people to be united. I want to see my people live freely and achieve full human rights.

What should be done to get genuine peace? What should both the Myanmar government and the KNU do to achieve genuine peace?

I heard that some armed groups signed the NCA but some armed groups didn't. Even though the leaders signed the NCA, they should be responsible for managing their soldiers. For example, in a family, parents hug each other and they work together for the family. But if the children do not get along with each other, they are responsible for teaching their children. So if the leaders signed the NCA, they should clearly explain what the NCA is to their lower officers and soldiers. If then, the peace process will become active.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

We have to go to court because there's no peace in our community. We were sued even though we stay on our lands.

Were villagers' lands confiscated after the NCA?

Actually, our lands have been confiscated since 1993. After the 2012 ceasefire, the Myanmar government said that they will consider the land issue cases that happened after 1988. So we can submit a compliant letter to the Myanmar government.

Has the land confiscation issue increased or decreased after 2012?

The land confiscation issue has increased after 2012.

Do you feel that you are safe when you work in your village?

If we talk about safety in the kitchen's [street] language, we have to deal with the problem regarding the safety based on the situation. So we cannot feel like we are safe.

What do you want peace look like? I mean in your opinion what do you think that peace should be like? How do you want the peace process to be carried out?

As I am not a politician, I do not know much about the peace process. I think the peace process should be carried out in a transparent way because there're a lot of natural resources in ethnic areas but we cannot have the rights to [manage] our natural resources. We are poor because we do not have the freedom to do something. That's why our living standard is different from others. Even though we have our lands to stay on, we have to leave it if we are forced or asked to leave because they said that these lands are the Myanmar government's lands.

As we said before, the peace process should be transparent and sustainable. What do you think are the barriers to a transparent and sustainable peace process? Can you please tell me what you know about it?

In politics, in the community, in a family, if you want to have your rights, you have to take your rights by yourself. This attitude is a kind of barrier to the peace process. If both [Myanmar government and KNU] work together and discuss and negotiate in the peace process, I believe there will be the peace.

What do you mean by working together [for discussion] in the peace process? What kind of the peace process do you mean?

For example, there are a father and mother in family. As they are parents, they should know how to teach their children in order to make them a good person. There are ten-house leaders, hundred house leader and village head in the village. So they should work together in order to improve the community. The villagers will follow them if they can manage things in the village. The community will be improved if the villagers follow their leadership. Similarly, Township leaders and District leaders should work together with the civilians [to improve the society]. If they have an enormous ego, they will not be able to work together.

What suggestion do you want to give to the KNU and Myanmar government in order to implement transparent and sustainable peace process?

Not only top leaders should talk with each other but also lower officers from both sides should work together. If you have a family, you know best how to draw a family plan. So if they can manage the work in each [armed actors] organization, they can work together for the sake of peace. Because, for example, in one's family, it does not matter how good the father is because things will not be fine if the mother is not good. Even though the father and mother are good, things will not be fine if the children are not good. If all the people in a family are good, there will be peace in the family. In the peace process, people from one side always think that they are right. I feel like ethnic people are oppressed. That is why we should be united. So the top leaders should show their people [about the hope of the peace]. Then, everything will be fine. For example, the people who are 18 years old in Korea have to join the military in order to serve for their country. This plan is run by their government. That's why even Korean actors and actresses know their responsibilities [to be a good citizen of their country]. If the government can take a good leadership role, their people will follow them. This is what I think about. Now you came to meet with us. You asked us about the community's situation. As for us, we only know you [who talk about human rights]. So we only know what you talk about [regarding human rights]. If you and other people come to talk to us [about human rights], we will get a better understanding [of human rights] as we will be able to listen to many people talking about it. This would be good because people in a family can share what they learned with each other.

What can the Myanmar government do to guarantee justice and peace in Myanmar?

I did not see any guarantees regarding justice and peace when I went to the court because we were sued [for trespassing on the lands] even though we live on our lands. So I do not know what to say about who is right or wrong.

Can you tell me about what kind of guarantees are given for peace and justice in Myanmar?

I think if everyone does not worry about their livelihood, there will be peace in Myanmar. If the people cannot get food to eat and place to live, I do not think there will be justice.

Can you tell me what kind of human rights happened in your community after the NCA was signed?

After 2015, the situation is getting better in terms of the road construction and freedom of movement. The people can travel freely in the area.

What are the main human rights abuses in your community?

Even though the situation is getting better in terms of transparency, local farmers lack knowledge [about land rights]. Educated people know about land laws, so they know how to deal with land-related issues. Therefore, our lands became their lands. We feel like our land rights are violated. We are sued although we live in our own lands. After 2015, the confiscation of lands in our village has increased. On the other hands, after the NCA, villagers gained the opportunity to meet with local KNU authorities and their leaders. We had the chance to attend a meeting [on land issues]. We attended the workshop to learn [about land right]. I am very satisfied with this situation because we can have a meeting freely. We can travel freely.

Do the human rights abuses that happened in your village affect the community's livelihood?

Yes. It affected the community's livelihood.

Can you tell me how?

As I am working on land issues, I will just tell you about the land cases. We were sued even though we live in our own lands. So we had to go to court. If we go to court, we need money for transportation fees. Therefore, we must not only find money for transportation fees but we also need to find money for food because our family needs food to eat. We are just delaying truth [justice]. I feel like our lives are tortured.

What challenges do women face after the NCA? What are their main concerns regarding their work and responsibilities?

After the NCA, I think women got an opportunity because in the past, people said that "the sun will not rise if the hen crows". Now many women can work. Many women can participate in working in [government or company] departments but they still do not have equal rights. For example, women do not get a raise so they held demonstrations to claim the equal rights.

Do you mean women do not feel like there is gender equality? Is there any other challenge that women face?

In our community, the people see that women cannot work as equal as men. We feel like women do not have equal rights. I do not know what to say. However, we have women union's leaders who take a stand for women's rights.

What challenges do minorities (eg. Muslims and other minority ethnic groups) face after the NCA?

I cannot talk about Muslims. We, Karen people, feel that we are being put down because of who we are. We are just a minority. So it will be worse if we talk about Muslims because they have fewer people than us. Sometimes we feel like our Karen values are not respected. I know some Karen people are bad but when people talk about them, it seems as if all the Karen people are bad.

I mean, for example, Karen people want to learn their Karen language but they are not allowed. Another example is, you would like to build a church but you are not allowed.

Similarly, Muslims are not allowed to build their religious buildings and they are not allowed to practice their religious beliefs. Is there such a thing like this?

We are blessed, I think, because we can build our church. But Rohingya cannot build their religious buildings. I would like to say a little thing about what I said before. After the NCA, we had more opportunities because ethnic people are now allowed to learn about their mother language. For example, in my community, Karen and Bamar including Muslims can learn about Karen people. I can say openly that we can now learn the Karen language freely.

How do you teach Karen language in school? I mean, are you allowed to teach Karen language during school hours or after?

We teach Karen language from 7 to 8 AM. We only have one hour to teach Karen, but not during school time. There are six subjects in school plus Karen language. The school teacher has to teach one subject for over one hour a day but the Karen teacher only gets 30,000 kyat as salary per month, even though she or he teaches Karen language for one hour per day. They have to stay in school for the whole day because they are from villages. However, the amount of salary between Karen teachers and subject teachers is different. When the Minister of Ethnic Affairs came to the meeting in the office in October, I reported it to him. I told him that we want equal paid.

Was there any change after you reported it to him?

Nothing is changing right now but the minister said that he submitted our requests to congress. Things will be fine.

OK. Thank you so much. I would like to ask you about accountability and justice. OK?

Okay.

What do you understand about justice?

What I understand about the justice is, we should help people when they fall down. This action shows your willingness to help. So there will be fairness among the people. Am I right? I am not sure.

What justice system is practiced in your community? Is it the KNU justice system, the Myanmar government justice system or customary practice

I do not know actually. I think higher leaders just solve the problem by agreeing something they like.

What do you mean by higher leaders solving the problem with each other?

What I mean is, among higher leaders. If one person says "it is black", then everyone agrees that "it is black". If one person says, "it is white", then everyone agrees that "it is white". They do not care about whether villagers agree or not. They just do it the way they like. For example, in our village, we do not have a person or village head that can speak to villagers until they understand the issue.

When you went to court, what kind of justice system did they practice?

In 2017, Naw Kac--- and Saw Kab--- were sued. The manager, Aung Kyaw Oo, from Ministry of Industry #1 can hire a lawyer but as villagers, we cannot hire lawyer. In court, we told the truth that these lands are our lands as we have been working on it for a long time. Also, we said that this place is our birth place. We have the evidence that we work and were born in the area but we have been accused of being the trespassers on these lands. So we lost our lands. I feel like

we do not have justice. The more money you can pay, the more justice you will get. We did not win the case in court because we do not have money.

Can you explain what you mean with “the more money you can pay, the more justice you will get”?

Aung Kyaw Oo can hire a lawyer. He can pay the lawyer and judge but as for us, we could not hire a lawyer and we could not pay off the judge. That’s why we did not win the case.

Do you think this justice system in court is reliable and fair?

No. It is not fair because of corruption in court.

What kind of justice system would you like to have?

I only want [to say] the truth, however we do not get the truth even though many people know the truth. Many people thought that we would win the case but we did not. We feel very bad about it. Actually, the judge should have be honest when he takes a decision in the court. In reality, we did not know anything from the judge but the decision was already made in the court. Then, each villager had to give 10,000 kyat to the court as a fine.

What kind of improvement would you like to see in the court system?

The Myanmar government always says, “corruption is our enemy” as a motto but we cannot bribe them so I feel like we become their enemies. They should stand with the truth in order to get justice because they are educated people. As a judge, they take a vow and take an oath in court. That’s why I demand they should try to solve the case by looking for the truth. I want them to be transparent in the court.

What are the best solutions to stop or reduce human rights abuses in your community?

We only want our lands back. We can work on it to support livelihood if we have lands. As P’doh Eh Wah [KNU leader] said: “you do not have a country if you do not have lands.’ Where are we going to live? We cannot live in water. We cannot live in the trees.” When we tried to get back our lands, we were sued.

Yes. This is a human rights abuse in your community. How can the human rights abuses be reduced? Should they return lands? Should they apologize? What do you think?

Yes. We want our lands back. They should return lands to us. If they cannot return lands, they should pay compensation equal to the land’s value. However, we only want our lands back. That’s why we are trying to claim our rights. They have never come [to the village] to do a consultation meeting with us. They have never discussed it with us. They just sued us but we did not know what was going on.

What should be done to stop or reduce human rights violations?

We have a village head and administrator who run our village. They should come to meet with village authorities for discussion. They should talk to them about what they should do. They cannot make decisions with just village authorities but they should also talk to villagers in order for villagers to understand what is going on. I think the land confiscation issues will be reduced because they do not keep a grudge and we also do not hate them. We want this kind of process but we cannot get it. They sued us. If possible, they want us all to go to jail. That’s why I want to know what they can do for us and what they help us to understand.

Okay. Do you have anything else to say?

I want to say something. Our community is Karen Christian. We go to church in our village. I want my people to maintain their religion and nationality. Another thing is, we need to be loyal with each other. I work for my community [regarding land issue] but I heard other people say, "Just let her do it alone when she can. When she cannot do it, we will do it as a group". So if I cannot do it alone one day, they will do it as a group [for land issue]. I am not stupid at all. I won't be a person who is useless. I have been working on this issue since 2012. Now it is 2018, it's already been seven years. It has cost me a lot of my money. After 2015, I had to work alone while also securing my livelihood. Previously, I went to Bago Division. I submitted the complaint letters [to the authorities]. Printing out the complaint letters cost a lot of money. Nobody support me when I do this. When I came back from Bago, I had to sell one of my pigs because I had to pay the debt collector. Nobody knows about my situation. Even if I tell them, they will think I am an advertiser. People who hate me will be happy if they know this. People who have mercy will be feeling sad and bad if they know this. I fully trust God so I got baptized. When humans cannot do the work, God can do that. That's why I work and fight against [this land confiscation issue] as God will be with me. My neighbours said many different things. They said, "Do not do it. Leave it. You have to leave your family when you do it". Sometimes I came back from work but there was no rice left in my house. It was getting dark when I got home. At that time there was no local shop in the village. Since there was no shop in Ngwe Taung K'lay village, I went to buy rice in Kyaik Taing village. I just bought one bowl of rice from Kyaik Taing village. It was already late when I came back home. We started eating rice at 11:00 PM. If I would borrow rice from someone, I know they will gossip about me. I know that many people want to see me getting in trouble. I know that some people feel sad and bad when I get in trouble. Don't feel sad or happy because of me. This is my attitude. With this attitude, I keep working [on this land issue] but my work is almost finished. I want to see that villagers work together in unity. There are two rich companies in this village, Tee Tee Lite Company and Sulain Sit Company. They are the companies who set up electricity poles in our village. The people from these companies came to my house to eat rice. They love my children like their own children. They encouraged me and they said, "A Moe, if we get these electricity supplies, you will be the first priority to get electricity for free in Kv--- village. You only need to buy bulbs and electricity wires." I asked them for help. I told them, "Our village is Christian village. Our village is poor. Our village's land is confiscated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Can you help me with something?" They said, "What do you want us to do?" I said, "I want electricity for our Church. Even though I do not have access to electricity in my house, I want to have it in our church because we want to give first priority to our church as we are the Christian".

Do you allow KHRG to use this interview for publication?

Yes.

Can I take a picture of you?

Yes.

Okay. Thank you very much.

Source #42

Source doc #	Source # 42
Log #	18-122-A7-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished

Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	<p>Taungoo Interview Saw Qa--- (male, 66), Thandaunggyi Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (November 2018)</p> <p>Have you ever experienced conflict? Which conflict are you referring to; political conflicts or social conflicts?</p> <p>I mean political conflicts and power abuses? Myanmar gained their independence in 1948 but the independence ideas of ethnic groups in Myanmar caused civil conflicts. Since 1949, our Karen people rebelled against the Myanmar Tatmadaw and started fighting for their independence, freedom and justice. Ultimately, the KNU agreed on a ceasefire with the Myanmar government in 2015. After the ceasefire, there has been a dramatic change in our community; we can travel freely, no more forced portering and no more four-cut strategy is applied to our community. Anyway, there are still some social conflicts such as land confiscation and the peace process deadlock. Our KNU declared that they are temporary suspending the political negotiation on the peace process. Some people believe that the peace process deadlock is wrong but I believe that it should be this way. It is the best choice to review and measure the good and bad results or impacts of the work progress. So that, necessary resolution and restoration can be undertaken further. What I expect from the ceasefire process is that national governments and ethnic arm groups should ensure the peace process in political agreement, and then negotiate a ceasefire agreement with every ethnic group in Myanmar. Now, only 10 percent of the ethnic arm groups have signed the National Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]. Our country is getting poor because of the armed conflicts. I believe that civilians don't want armed conflicts anymore in the country. Our country will only be parallel to other countries when the peace process is fully implemented in the country. Once the peace process is ensured, we will be able to apply federal democracy in our country. In addition, there are land confiscations happening in our community. The Myanmar government and Tatmadaw cooperate in national government. They also have a procedure that the Tatmadaw is the strength of the nations. Therefore, they implemented the necessary military training fields, reinforced the Tatmadaw army and military infrastructures. In our Township, the Tatmadaw have already carried out some military infrastructures such as Ba Yint Naung military training fields. The Tatmadaw also enhanced their military strength with Battalion #124 in Thandaunggyi Town and Battalion #603 in Leik Tho Town. The Tatmadaw military training units confiscated numerous lands in local areas and have not released it since then. However, local people are trying claim their lands that have not been used yet by the Tatmadaw. But the Tatmadaw still keeps local people's lands even if they have not yet implemented any military operation projects.</p> <p>The Tatmadaw declared that local people can work on their plantations but should avoid it when there is military training.</p> <p>Could you tell me when the Ba Yin Naung military training started? I cannot remember the year exactly but I believe it was around 2000.</p> <p>How many lands did the Ba Yint Naung military training unit and other Tatmadaw battalions confiscate?</p>

I believe that the Ba Yint Naung camp confiscated more than 5,000 acres, Battalion #124 confiscated more than 200 acres, Battalion #603 confiscated more than 300 acres and Number #7 military training unit in Thandaungyi Township also confiscated more than 3,000 acres of local people's lands.

Do all the confiscated lands belong to local people?

Our community members secure their livelihoods from working in agriculture and plantations. Therefore, the land confiscation of the Ba Yin Naung training unit and other Tatmadaw units impacted local agriculture such as tea leave, cardamom and coffee plantations.

Did the Tatmadaw take responsibility for the damaged lands of local people?

They provided a small amount of compensation in accordance with the procedure of the Myanmar government. The compensation amount was completely different from [lower than] the economic value [of the property]. Some local people in Leik Tho Town whose lands were confiscated by the Tatmadaw Battalion #603 have two perceptions. Some of them want compensation but some of them claim back their lands that were not yet used by the Tatmadaw. Some people do not want the compensation no matter how much it is, they only want their lands back because their livelihoods depend on their lands. We can benefit from our plantations our whole life but compensation will not last long if we do not know how to develop it.

Do local people who accept the compensation accept it satisfactorily or under pressure?

They were neither forced to accept nor satisfied with the compensation. They accepted it because they had no option. They chose to accept the compensation instead of losing their lands with no benefit. All of them want their lands back rather than receive compensation.

Do you only mean the land confiscation by Tatmadaw Battalion #603?

Yes, this case only refers to the land confiscation case by Tatmadaw Battalion #603.

How would you describe the peace situation in your community?

As I mentioned before, we saw dramatic changes in our community, such as the ability to travel and transport cash crops or materials freely. However, there is one weak point in our community regarding the legislation. We can say that the law and legislation have less influence. I am not intending to criticize the government but I just describe the real situation. I see that the government is less decisive in applying the legal framework in the community. For instance, common crimes that happen in our community such as stealing of households' properties, shops and motorbikes are unacceptably common. The majority of thieves and robbers are young people, some are under 18. When we analyze the root cause, we find out one significant point. In the past, we used to describe our community as a "drug free zone". We felt proud of our community. However, there are some people who took advantage of this and violated this ethical practice. They traffic drugs and use it apparently. Local authorities did not monitor this because it used to be a complete drug free zone. Consequently, many young people are addicted to drugs and their lives were destroyed. Some drug abusers became thieves and stole people's properties such as motorbikes. Many motorbikes were stolen but the thieves were not arrested. Survivors referred the case to the local police but only a few bikes were recovered. Most bikes were recovered through the effort of the survivors who tried to investigate on their own. Only a few stolen bikes were recovered by the police. In one case, a survivor discovered that his bike was stolen by a specific group of young people who are under 18. He referred the case to the police but the police released those perpetrators because they were under 18. What I prefer is, child perpetrators should also be taken to child court in order to instruct them to live a

good life in the future. Those child perpetrators used to burn all the personal documents such as the ID card and driver license of the owner which they found in the bikes,. They also took the money that they found in the wallet of the bike owners. They burned other documents that they didn't take because they were afraid that investigators would find them. It is true that they are young but their mindsets are so bad. Those are not teenage actions. They should have been instructed and be taken to court or detained in child prison. Discharging them is not the best choice because, they will take advantage of this and repeat their crimes again in the future. It can lead to them being adult [elder] thieves and make their lives worse. This is such a deplorable thing.

You mentioned that the police released teenage thieves, when did this happen?

It happened last month [October 2018] in the section that I live. In this particular case, I noticed that the police are not taking action in line with the national laws even though there is a specific law for such cases. The police investigation is weak.

Is it a recurring issue in Thandaunggyi Township?

Such cases prevalent in other Townships; there is stealing, robbing, killing and other kinds of abuses all over the country. As a community member and an elder, I do not want to see such cases in my community.

You mentioned that the legal frame work and investigation is weak. Would you like to share why it is weak?

I think the police officers do not want to take action. They receive salaries from the Myanmar government every month whether they do what they were supposed to do or not. No one will monitor if they are active or not, and no one will deduct their salary for not being active. They might consider it as a burden to investigate a reported case. They would allocate a travel expense and per-diem fee if they go around for investigation. Therefore, I assume they are not taking responsibility and don't expect a case to be referred to them.

Do you mean that the government does not provide a travel expense reimbursement for investigators?

There might be some financial reimbursement but it is probably limited because the government or police cannot predict how many cases they will have to investigate. Therefore, they cannot foresee a certain budget for the upcoming cases. I do not know what the financial system of the police is like but from my experience I guess it is in other department.

How much can you trust and rely on the legal framework of the government?

In my opinion as well as many people's opinion, the national legal framework of the Myanmar government is almost unreliable. We can see civilians' perspectives on social media and news. In one specific case, a lawyer was unsatisfied with the judgment of the judge but he could not sue him. Actually, both lawyer and judge were people who know the laws but they cannot trust each other or agree on the same idea. The national principle said, there should be no one above the laws. In reality, there are still people who are above the law. It seems like there is a barrier to follow the law accordingly. The judges and lawyers understand the laws and judgment system very well but they do not have full authority to apply it.

So do you mean the legal framework is not trust worthy and reliable for citizens?

Yes, kind of! I see that the government officers such as lawyers and judges also avoid breaking their own rice pot [putting themselves into trouble or cutting their own incomes by not following

the upper authority].

Is their justice in the legal judgment system?

As I mentioned, I want to point out that there is pressure from people [who are] above the law. Maybe they [judges] violate the law because they do not have enough salaries or they were persuaded to accept bribes. In that case, “more money, win court” is happening in the judgment system. I think there is an influencing power behind them [judges and lawyers]. This is why the civilians feel it is unreliable.

What would you recommend in building sustainable peace?

I have experience from the [Myanmar Dictatorships] Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (Pha Hsa Pa La) government, Revolutionary Council government, Burma Socialist Party, State Law & Order Restoration Council (SLORC), State Peace & Development Council (SPDC) and Myanmar National League for Democracy Party. Our country has run out of resources for military expenses because we have been facing armed conflicts for decades. Armed groups were killed by other armed groups. All of the soldiers are from ethnic groups in the country. The Tatmadaw killed other ethnic groups and other ethnic group also killed them. We fight each other. However, I believe that when there is sickness, there is also a cure. Therefore, I suggest to find a solution. When we were students we learned about colonization and now we are experiencing neo-colonization. International countries take our national resources such as green stone, diamond, wood, gas, oil, wild animals and natural herbs. Now, mountains are damaged and underground natural resources also gone. Consequently, natural disasters such as Cyclone Nargis occur. Flooding happens because of a lack of trees to absorb the water. This is colonisation by foreign countries. Myanmar governments are exporting to Russia and China whereas other ethnic groups are exporting to western countries. Then they fight each other. Anyway, civilians are the victims. According to my opinion, there won't be a need for military expenses when there is no fighting. We have to foresee for our future generation. On-going extortion of the natural resources will be harmful for our future generation. Deforestation can be saved by planting new trees but other underground natural resources such as oils and gas cannot be restored.

What should be eliminated to build sustainable peace?

If both sides of the armed groups [Tatmadaw and KNLA] are in a strained relationship, it will drag on. Therefore, they have to relieve the tension to save their relationship. What I mean is, it is time for Myanmar [the whole country] to learn from our history. Our country was occupied by the British in the past because our kings in that particular period were fighting with other ethnic groups such as Rakhine and Mon. Ethnic groups in our country were not united; therefore it was easy for the British to occupy us. We have a good example from the time Myanmar fought back against the British or Japanese and then became independent. Myanmar had come to a union with the ethnic groups [in Myanmar] and fought against the British and then the Japanese. I want to say that as long as we are fighting against each other in the country, other countries will be able to occupy us and try to tear us apart. The majority group, the Tatmadaw has to be open-minded and facilitate effective political negotiation with the ethnic groups. Actually, they [Tatmadaw] should not attack the ethnic groups that have not signed the NCA but they should further pursue peaceful negotiation. The Myanmar government and ethnic groups should rebuild the trust between each other. Our country is different from other countries because we have a lot of ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has their own perception and culture which they stand for. Therefore, recognition of one another's perceptions and culture is essential in building peace and trust. We cannot align everyone's ideas It would be better if we establish a diverse

union by appreciating different perspectives. For example in land laws, some ethnic groups have their own land. I believe that the best way is to allow one ethnic group to operate/draw their own legislation system because they know what is best for their people. [Myanmar government] Taking into account the ethnic perspectives and recognising their culture and practices is the effective way to building peace in the country. Bamar is the majority group in Myanmar and they should acknowledge the ethnic minorities' perspective and protect them. Ethnic minorities are vulnerable to get lost if they are not protected.

So you mean the majority group should recognize and protect the rights of ethnic minorities in order to build sustainable peace.

Definitely! Recognition and protection of the rights of ethnic minorities are highly needed. In addition, the essential change that should be made is the 2008 national constitution. Further applying the constitution will not make a. There should be a main national constitution law as. In addition, to effectively apply federalism, different ethnic groups will also develop their own laws that suits them best.t. The main constitution should not be applied to every ethnic group in Myanmar without considering their situation. The central authority should hold the core power in finance, diplomacy and security but allow other states to be autonomous. This country is not one state but a union of diverse states so it has to be a federal government.

So do you mean the 2008 constitution is the barrier to building sustainable peace?

I mean the 2008 constitution needs to be reformed. Some people said, the constitution laws should be re-established. It might be a bit more challenging to re-establish than reform. For example, if we dismantle a house completely, we will have to re-build every part which will take time more than restore broken parts. In the same way, we can find a way to reform the 2008 constitution.

What do you think the government and ethnic armed groups should do in order to sustain the NCA?

I want to mention that something needs to be restored, added and deducted in the NCA process. The [Myanmar] Government and ethnic armed groups might know best because they deal with the NCA.

I have asked a lot of questions, would you like to share something else?

My perspective is, I am not an extremist politically or religiously. I appreciate ethnic culture diversity and religious groups [such as Islam, Buddhist and Christian]. According to the government [Myanmar], there are 135 ethnic groups in Myanmar and some people do not even know what their ethnicity is. Actually, our Myanmar is a wonderful country which has different seasons and natural beauty and a long coastline from Rakhine state to Tanintharyi Region. We also have ice-mountains, plains, natural heritage and resources. If we save the natural heritage in the country and are peace, we will be one of the top countries not only in Asia but in the whole world. However, because of long term civil conflicts, Myanmar citizens have to be migrant workers in small island countries such as Singapore and other neighbour countries like Thailand, Dubai, Indonesia and Malaysia. I am not saying that we cannot go but what I expect is going to other countries with a high position not as low level migrant workers. I expect Myanmar citizens to go as an educated person such as professors, engineers and doctors. These are the consequences of civil conflict which results in poverty. Myanmar citizens choose to be migrant workers abroad because working in Myanmar does not bring many economic benefits. Actually, Myanmar citizens are talented and wise despite facing civil conflicts and its consequences. We should generate our raw natural resources rather than exporting it. Now, foreign countries run

the companies and hire Myanmar citizens as low level employees. They benefits more than the host community. They run their business without considering the negative impacts for the host community. The natural resources extraction and industrial pollution has so negative effects on the host community. The NLD government also invites foreign countries for economic investment. Actually, the national community should be the main investors and develop the natural heritage that we have for tourist purposes. If this could be done, it would be great for our country's economic development. Now, the government allowed foreign investment and it caused land confiscation. Local people who fought for their lands were arrested and imprisoned. This should not happen. This is my idea to protect the natural resources in our country.

Would you allow us to use the information you have shared for publication?

Sure, you can use it. The information I shared is based on my perspective about and suggestions for the development of the country. There are two demands that the Karen people have been claiming they claim for Karen one Kyat, Bamar one Kyat which refers to equality, and they demand to be a self-governed state; to not be defined as the Myanmar government but as KNU defined territory. The territory that the Myanmar government defined as Karen State is too small for Karen people. How can it fit all Karen? We have been claiming it but Pha Hsa Pa La did not grant us our State. U Nu [the first Prime Minister of Burma under the provisions of the 1947 Constitution] rather challenged Karen people to fight for our State. There was tension between the Bamar and Karen during that time. The Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) headquarters in Yagon and In-sein were occupied [by Myanmar]. During that time Sit Min Htun was the chief of defense and Shee Sho was the chief of air force. However, they all retired. Therefore, Saw Ba U Gyi had to escape from that situation which made it look as if he was hiding in the forest. Actually, Saw Ba U Gyi was not an experienced fighter but a political negotiator because he had a law degree. Actually, he preferred to have a political negotiation. This is what I know about the Karen political situation.

Thank you so much for sharing your information.

Source #43

Source doc #	Source # 43
Log #	18-122-A10-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Toungoo Township, Bago Division
Full Text	

Bago | Qd--- Paw (female, 61), Qc--- village, Shauk Pin Chaung village tract, Toungoo Township, Bago Division (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Do you have a family?

Yes.

What problems did you face in your community?

I faced land confiscation problems. It will be even more problematic in the future. Because of land issues, I was called to go to court. There are many cases about land issues in the court. In some cases, three villagers were sued. In other cases, five villagers were sued. We thought we can work on our lands according to customary land practice but we were sued. Do you think this is fair or not?

When were villagers' lands confiscated?

When the Ministry of [Agriculture, Livestock and] Irrigation entered our village, after 1993, they started to confiscate our lands. They confiscated our lands year after year. [Tatmadaw] Ba Yint Naung military camp also confiscated our lands.

How many acres of villagers' lands did the Ba Yint Naung military camp confiscate?

They confiscated a lot of acres of villagers' lands. I don't know how many exactly.

How did the land confiscation problem affect your livelihood?

It affected our livelihood. They confiscated our farms, gardens and hill plantations. We do not have any rights to work on our lands. Our children cannot go to school anymore. One of my sons died when he went out to look for a job.. He died when he was 32 years old.

Why did your son go out to look for a job?

There are no opportunities for my son to get a job in our village. So he went out to find a job. He went to other places to work as mahout and tree cutter. That's why we face many difficulties [as my children are not here].

Can the land confiscation problem affect villagers' livelihood?

Yes. It can affect villagers' livelihood in many different ways. Not only my family but also other villagers from the whole village face livelihood challenges because of land confiscations.

So how was the land problem solved?

How can I solve this land problem? There are some people who said that they will solve the land problem for us but we only get in trouble.

How did they solve the land problem?

They told us, "Keep moving. Be active. We will support you. We will do it for you." However, finally we, the land owners, got in trouble.

You said that they will support you [for the land case]. So how did you get in trouble?

Thara Qd--- said that he would support us. We were sued and taken to court. We borrowed money from them in order to solve the case, so we were in debt. If we did not have to go to court, we would not be in debt. It happened. Why? This is the responsibility of the 'ten house' leader and the 'hundred house' leader for this case in our village. The land issue has nothing to do with police. When the police handled this issue, we faced difficulties because they came to threaten us in many different ways. That's why we got in trouble. In fact, the land problem has nothing to do with police. The role of the police is to protect the people. They have to catch bad people such as thieves and robbers. We are good people. Why did they sue us? I want to know why. We are doing the right thing. We are not criminals, thieves, robbers or land trespassers. The land issue has nothing to do with the police. They should stand with us but they don't. Instead, they pull us down. Why? I want to know why they are doing this to us.

Do you feel like there is justice?

No. There was no justice for use regarding the land issues.

Do you know how the people who confiscated villagers' lands were punished in court?

I do not know how they make a decision in court. I only know that we were sued and had to deal with the court. We speak the truth.

Has any action been taken against the people who confiscated the villagers' lands?

I do not know what kind of action has been taken for them. They confiscated our lands and they sued us. The main person who confiscated our lands is Aung Kyaw Oo.

How many people confiscated villagers' lands?

I can say that they are from the Myanmar government. The Ministry of Irrigation, U Than Myint, Ministry of Industry #1 and Tatmadaw confiscated our lands. In fact, nowadays, the Tatmadaw should not use villagers' lands for military purposes. The government should not confiscate villager's lands. The lands should be for the people, however, the confiscated lands are not owned by local villagers but by outsiders.

What do you think should happen to people who violate villagers' land rights?

The higher authorities should investigate the land cases. I really want them [authorities] to come to investigate the case because although this is our land but we cannot work on our lands because we do not have the permission letter for a 30 year loan. When they [land takers] came to stay on our lands, they had a permission This is not fair. They destroyed our plantations. Then, they asked for a permission letter for a 30 year loan.. After that, they planted rubber trees on our lands. They act like they own the lands. As for us, we do not have the right to work on our lands. This is not fair. Actually, [the Myanmar government] should give us a land loan and land tax receipt because we have been working on these lands for a long time.

What do you demand for your lands that have been confiscated?

I demand compensation for my lands. If they cannot give me compensation, they have to return the lands to me. I only want my lands back because I will not have any land to work on during the rainy season. I can only work on the plantation if I have my lands back.

Why did they confiscate the villagers' lands?

Firstly, the Ministry of Industry #1 confiscated our lands for rubber plantation. U Than Myint also planted rubber trees. The Tatmadaw confiscated our lands to hold military exercises. I think it is not appropriate to use villagers' lands for military purposes because they should not practice shooting in the village. The military training area should not be near the village, but in a remote area.. Now the lands they use are not empty. These lands are owned and used by villagers. This is not fair.

Can you tell me what you know about the peace process?

They said that they will make peace in our community. What I understand about peace is that we must be able to live peacefully as a family. If they want peace, they should not shout and threaten villagers out of their lands. I do not really like it. Since I've lived in this village, Shay Lon [a group of Myanmar government local authority] and also Nyeing Chan Yay [Peace Group] threatened to get me out of my land. Besides, Bo Kyal Ni came to me with a grenade and threatened that he would burn down my house if I did not leave. Think about it. This is not fair. This is not about unity. This is not about peace. We should be kind to each other. We should

help each other. Now it is not like that. They just want to pull villagers down. No matter which organization they are working for. Every armed actor wants to pull us down.

What do you understand about the peace process?

As I am not working for an armed organization, I don't know much about the peace process. In my opinion, the peace process is about making peace in the community and to protect the people. I think they should not cause any conflict after they started the peace process. They shouldn't harm the people.

Do you think that there is peace in your community?

I am not sure whether or not there is peace in the community but I do know that the Union Solidarity and Development Party [USDP] still harms the people.

Did any armed actor open fire and harm the people in the village?

No it has not happened anymore but our rubber plantations were destroyed because they fired mortars and small guns for training purposes. They hit our rubber plantation. Some hit our house's roof. It is not appropriate to conduct military firing practice in the village. They should do it so far from the village. Now they do it in the village so it becomes difficult for villagers to travel.

Who had a military practice??

Tatmadaw soldiers from Ba Yint Naung military camp.

Do they still hold military practices?

Yes. They did it today in the village. They just went back to their base a moment ago.

What kind of weapons do they use for the practice?

They use heavy weapons, small weapons, tanks and so on. There are many kinds of weapons but I do not know how to call them.

How many soldiers were at shooting practice at once? ?

There are more than 300 soldiers who come to practice shooting, I saw four or five military trucks full of soldiers. They came back again to transport other soldiers. I saw three or four tanks.

As they practice the shooting like this, do you think that the peace process will be better or worse?

I think that if the Tatmadaw keeps holding target practice on our lands the peace process will break down.

Why?

The land should be for local villagers. I do not want the Tatmadaw to use our lands for military purposes. I do not want our land to be used for target practice. We face a lot of difficulties and livelihood challenges because they conduct their military activities near the village. For example, I have to go to my rubber plantation in order to tap rubber trees but I can't do it today because they came to practice shooting. It is difficult for people who travel across the country. Also, this is the main road that most the people use.

So you do not think that the peace process has not reached the state of peace.

Yes. I do not think so because if we had sustainable peace, I would be able to live without any

concerns for my security in my village. Now I can't live peacefully. We don't have access to electricity in the community. In our village, we do not have any rights

What do you think of Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups? What do you want them to do [for you]?

We want to live peacefully but we never meet them [the leaders of Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups]. We just met with their soldiers.

When you met with the soldiers, did they talk to you about the peace situation?

No. They never talked about the peace situation. We want peace but they never talked to us it. .

What should they do to achieve sustainable peace?

In order to achieve sustainable peace, we should be united. If not, we will not have peace.

Who should they do in order to achieve sustainable peace?

The people should advocate for peace. We cannot do it alone.

Do you think that the Myanmar government and KNU are responsible for maintaining sustainable peace?

Both the Myanmar government and KNU are responsible in achieving sustainable peace. If they both take action, there will be peace.

What about the people?

The people are also responsible for participating in the peace process. If the people can participate, the government can govern the country.

What kind of role should the people take ?

The people should participate in the peace process. The people should cooperate with the Myanmar government and the KNU. Then, there will be peace. If the people cannot participate, we will not be able to have peace.

What do you think of the current peace process?

I do not know much about the current peace process. However, I think the current peace process is good. If they do it in the right way, it is good. If they do it in the wrong way, it is not good.

Between 2012 and now, what advantages did the peace process bring for the people?

The situation is getting better because of the peace process, we do not have to do forced labor anymore. At least we can travel freely, we have more freedom of movement. In the future, we want to have our freedom and our fundamental rights respected.

You said you do not have to do forced labor. What other things do you want?

We want other rights. We want to have the right to develop our community. Our village has been badly affected by different factors. We want to see our community develop. t. We want to see an improvement in education healthcare and social improvement in our community.

So community development [such as schools and clinics] can only happen if there is peace in your community?

Yes.

What kind of peace process do you want?

We want genuine peace. We do not want a false peace process.

What does genuine peace look like?

They have to stand with the truth. Now they are doing [the peace process] in the wrong way. They just cheat and break the rules. I don't like this, I like real peace. Now they cheat, they have many secrets.

So do you mean the current peace process has a lack of transparency?

Yes. There is a lack of transparency in the peace process. If there is transparency in the peace process, the community will improve.

So you mean the Tatmadaw are still conducting military target practice in your village despite the peace process?

Yes. If we really had peace, the Tatmadaw should not be here in our village. The lands in our village should be owned by the villagers and not by the Tatmadaw.

When did Tatmadaw confiscate the villagers' lands?

They started to confiscate the villagers' lands in 2007.

The peace process was discussed between 2011 and 2018. Did the Tatmadaw return the confiscated lands to villagers during this period?

The Tatmadaw authorities stated in their statement that they returned lands to villagers but their soldiers did not actually return the confiscated lands to villages.

What do you mean by that?

I mean they just said that they returned lands to villagers. They confiscated our lands in 2007 and they returned lands to us in 2014. They confiscated our lands again in 2016 and now we have to demand our lands back.

What did the Tatmadaw do with the confiscated lands? Did they plant plantations on them?

First, they used the villagers' lands for military practice area. Then, they planted a rubber plantation.

Who worked on the rubber plantation?

Female police officers [of the Myanmar government] worked on the rubber plantation. When the Tatmadaw confiscated the lands again, they just let villagers work on the lands [by paying money].

What do you mean by "letting villagers work on the lands"?

I mean the Tatmadaw confiscated the villagers' lands. Then, they let the villagers work on the confiscated lands but the villagers have to pay a tax to the Tatmadaw. They have to pay 200,000 to 800,000 [kyat], depending on the agreement between Tatmadaw and villagers. Just recently, I saw that two villagers from Nan Thar Kone village had to sign an agreement paper because they want to work on the confiscated lands.

Did the villagers sign the agreement paper with the Tatmadaw?

Yes.

Which battalion?

They are from the Ba Yin Naung military camp.

In your opinion, what should the Tatmadaw do with the land confiscation issue? Should they return lands to villagers? What do you think?

They should return the lands to the villagers.

Should they pay compensation?

It is not important whether or not they pay compensation. We only want our lands back because we do not have lands to stay on anymore. In my house, there are many people because my daughters got married and their family came to live in my house. We do not have more land to make a new house. If possible, I want the Tatmadaw to return our lands to us.

What improvements did you see in your community after the peace process?

I did not see any special improvements in our community. That is why I told the Tatmadaw soldiers that they should not do military practice when they talked about the peace process. They talked about peace. Why did they come to do military practice in our village? If they want to do military practice, they should do it in the helipad. They should not do it in the lands where villagers live.

Has the Tatmadaw military training increase in your village since the peace process?

Yes. They regularly do it in every four months.

Did they inform the villagers before they conducted military practice [such as what villagers should be aware of]?

They informed us in the past about what we should be aware of but this time they did not inform us. We did not know they were coming to do military practice. So we got in trouble. They did not let us know because they wanted to do it secretly. It is like they want to push us down.

You said that the Tatmadaw came to do military practice today without letting you know. So how did you know that they conducted military practice?

They came to set up their flag in the lands and we saw the soldiers entering the village. That is how I knew that they were coming to do military practice.

Do you have any suggestion for the KNU and the Myanmar government in order to improve the situation in the area?

We do not have to give them suggestion. Actually they have to give us suggestions.

When they are working on the peace process, what kind of peace process do you want?

I think it would be better if they would work on the peace process together with the people. You cannot do it alone. Am I right? They should work hand in hand with the people. Then, we will have peace. We can never have peace if they use their power to make the peace process.

Do you think the peace process can guarantee you to have the peace?

I do not know whether or not it can give us that guarantee. It's up to them because we are not the authorities. If I were the authority, I would give the people peace because I should give it to them.

Regarding the peace process, do you think there is justice?

It should be equal and fair for everyone.

How should the people participate in the peace process?

If they [the government] are doing fair things for us, we are doing fair things to them. If they are bad to us, we will be bad to them.

After the 2015 NCA, were there human rights violation in your village? Was there land confiscation [in your village]? Was there military practice [in your village]?

Yes. The lands are still being confiscated. Nothing has changed. Villagers are still suffering. Because of land confiscation, villagers still have to deal with the court. It is 2018 already but the land confiscation case is still complicated.

What livelihood challenges did you face after 2015?

The Myanmar government increased the price of the general commodities such as oil and salt but they decreased the price of villagers' vegetables. That is why our income and expensed do a not matched. We have to survive by depending on debt. Then, we have to pay the debt. The commodity's price has increased so we face livelihood challenges because there are many people in our family.

What challenges do women face in your community?

There is a women union in order to protect the women in the village.

What challenges do women face when dealing with the court case?

There are many challenges when we deal with the court case.

Is there an ethnic minority group in your village such as Muslims?

We do not have Muslims in our village but we have Gurkhas [people]. These people base in Thandaunggyi Township.

Do they have rights in the village?

They get the same rights as Karen people. They live, eat and go like Karen people. Nothing is special.

Do you know the meaning of justice? How do you understand it? What kind of justice system is practiced in your village? KNU justice system or the Myanmar government's justice system?

Both the KNU justice system and the Myanmar government [justice system] are practiced in our village. Regarding land cases, we ask for help from both sides. If we cannot get help from the KNU, we can ask the Myanmar government. If we cannot get help from the Myanmar government, we can ask the KNU. So we have to try to get justice until we get it. For example, if the Myanmar government does not give land grants to villagers, we can ask the KNU to give us land titles. That is why we can solve land problems in our village. If both sides do not give land grants, the villagers will be in trouble.

Is there only a Myanmar government's justice court?

Yes. We only have the Myanmar government's court. . We do not have the KNU court yet. There Myanmar government's court is in Thandaunggyi Township.

Do you trust the Myanmar government's court?

I do not trust anybody in the Myanmar government's court. I do not trust any judge in [the court] because they do not investigate the case in the right way.

How did they investigate the case in the court?

They investigated the case secretly [in the court]. I do not like it. The investigation process should transparent. Now they do not investigate in a transparent way. We wanted to ask some questions but they did not let us ask questions. They did not take our answers into the consideration. This is not good. They did not listen to what we want to say. I do not know what they are hiding. They should listen to our feelings in order to investigate the case. They do not listen to us. They do not agree with what we report. This is not appropriate in the court.

Is there any corruption in the court?

Yes, there is corruption in the court. That is why we lose [the case]. As we are poor villagers, we cannot pay money [to the judges]. We just want to stand with the truth.

Have your even faced corruption in the court?

Yes. We faced corruption in the court. We cannot pay money to [the judges]. It is very clear that they [judges] really want money from us but we cannot pay them. We only want the truth.

What are the barriers to access justice?

There are many barriers to access justice. I don't know what local authorities are trying to hide. The local authorities are responsible [for the corruption]. There are some authorities who tried to push us down. We don't really want this kind of action. This is not the truth that we want.

Why can't the authorities in court solve the problem?

I think they are afraid of the higher leaders in their department. Also, there is corruption in court. Finally, I want to say that the truth cannot be revealed in the court, only God can reveal the truth.

You mean that there is no justice in the court. Right?

Yes. If there is justice in the court, the problem will immediately be solved and the truth will be revealed. Now the court process takes a lot of time. This is not fair.

What do you want to suggest regarding the compensation [for the confiscated land]?

We only want our land back. If they want to give us compensation, they should give fair and adequate compensation. There were many types of plantations in our lands but they destroyed them. When we planted plantations, it took a lot of time - around 10 or 20 years. That's why they should give us fair compensation.

What makes you feel calm and steady in terms of the court process and land confiscation case?

I am not afraid to face the difficulties because I do it with God.

In order to gain justice, what should the Myanmar government and the KNU do for the land confiscation cases?

The Myanmar government is responsible for this because their military officer and people confiscated our lands.

In your opinion, what should be done to stop the injustice?

I don't know how to talk about it. I think only they know this answer because everything is in their hands. As for me, I just want to stop this kind of action [that creates injustice]. Just stand up with the truth. Give us our lands. As a leader, they should stand up with the justice and the truth. Now they do not do anything to get justice for the people.

What do you want to say? You can tell me freely.

I have many things to tell you. I faced many challenges in my life since our lands have been confiscated. We had to go to court many times until 2018. I told my children. The Myanmar police came to our village but they did not wear a police uniform. We have to do something. The police has nothing to do with land issue. They just came to us without wearing a police uniform. The people have the right to [ask] them. Because of land confiscation, we had to go to court. Since I came to live here, I faced many challenges. Because of land confiscation, my child died. It is really big problem g but I am with God. I never give up. Sin Lone [authority] came and they forced me to leave my lands. They said they are making peace for the community but they forced me to leave. I only want the truth. I want that our village leader protects us. I want that our village leader stands with us. Now they do not stand with us but they stand with the Myanmar government.

Thank you very much. Do you allow KHRG to publish the information that you shared?

Yes. I really want the truth to be revealed because the Myanmar government does not rule the country in the right way. They try to harm the people. It is ok if you publish all the information that I share with you. We really suffer a lot.

Can I take a picture of you?

Yes. You can take a picture of me. It doesn't matter if my picture is published worldwide. I went to Karreni State. They took a picture of me too. I did not have a problem with it. I just want to tell the truth.

Thank you.

Yes.

Source #44

Source doc #	Source # 44
Log #	18-122-A9-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Toungoo Township, Bago Division
Full Text	
Bago Interview Saw Qb--- (male, 55), Qc--- village, Shauk Pin Chaung village tract, Toungoo Township, Bago Division	
What is your religion?	
I am a Christian.	
Are you married?	

Yes.

I would like to ask you about the conflict in your area. Did you face any conflict in your area?

The conflict like fighting does not happen. There are no killing cases in our area. However, conflict and killing cases happened in the past. It has been a long time since the fighting happened.

What about land confiscation? Did it happen in your village?

Yes. It happened because of a dam construction project implemented by the Myanmar government. The village was flooded, so villagers had to relocate to other places. Another issue is military activity. A Tank Battalion [Tatmadaw] under Ba Yint Naung military camp came to conduct military activity in the village as a military practice target area. This put villagers in a difficult situation.

When was the dam constructed? Did the Ministry of Irrigation construct the dam?

Yes. They started to build this dam in 1993. When they finished the construction, many houses and plantations in the old village were flooded. For the rest of the lands that were not flooded, villagers could not work on them because the Myanmar government's departments came to work on the rest of the lands. I do not know how they could work on the lands. I do not know whether they reported it to the land measurement department. However, villagers cannot work on the lands but they [government] can. This caused difficulty for villagers. The Tatmadaw also came to confiscate villagers' lands in 2000 for the military practice target area. Then, they destroyed all of our plantations that our great grandparents planted. Later, they [Tatmadaw] said that they would return the lands to villagers but this was just a verbal promise. Also, they came to conduct military activity near our village every three months. This caused difficulty for villagers.

Can you tell me what difficulties did you face?

The people confiscated our lands and they cooperated with Tatmadaw officers. Then, they sold the lands to other people. Therefore, we tried to meet with the other people who bought the lands in order to have a discussion about the lands. We thought that we would be able to work on the lands but the Tatmadaw came to conduct military activity on our lands. That is why we had to move, in order to avoid them.

What kind of military activity did they come to conduct?

The Tatmadaw conducted military officer training and military shooting practice. For the shooting practice, they used assorted weapons. That is why it caused fear and concern to the villagers. These villagers are just ordinary people who work on farms and plantations. When they heard the guns firing, they were shocked and frightened.

As you mentioned before, some villagers have to move away because of the military activity. Is that right?

Yes. During the period that the Tatmadaw conducts military activity, for two or three days at a time, we have to move away in order to avoid them. The problem is that they conduct military activity in the village. They said that they are based in Kyauk Tai area but they came to conduct their military activity in Shauk Pin Chaung village tract.

What challenges are you going to face in the future because of land confiscation? Do

you face livelihood challenges?

The villagers who depend on the lands will be facing difficulty. It will be good if we can work on our lands peacefully. Now we have to work in a state of anxiety because we do not know exactly whether or not they really [officially] confiscated the lands. For example they said they confiscated the lands but they let villagers work on it. However, they came to conduct military activity in our lands. They did not inform our village administration committee with an official order letter when they conducted military activity. They just gave us a copy of the order letter. In the order letter, it states that villagers, including cows and buffaloes, should not cross the lands during the period they conduct military activity. It takes two or three days at a time. However, they cannot block the road between Ngwe Taunggyi village and Nan Thar Kone village because the villagers have to travel on this road. But this time they do not block the road because I think they just came here to do their own stuff. They do not make troubles to villagers. It is like villagers just do their work after they went back.

Because of the land confiscation issue, because they do not have land to work on, are there some people who have to migrate to other places to find jobs?

After the dam was constructed, many villagers did not have jobs to do anymore. There were some villagers who went to other places to find jobs. However, that was already a long time ago. This is very normal here. Many families' members had to go to other places to find jobs, so their wives and children were left in the village because they did not have lands to work on and they lost their jobs. For some people, they still have their lands to work on. That's why they do not go anywhere to find jobs but they have to work on their lands in a state of anxiety.

So you mean you are in a situation where you cannot trust the system fully?

Yes.

Who committed human rights violations the most such as land confiscation? Is it the Myanmar government or Tatmadaw soldiers?

I think, actually, the Myanmar government is the first actor who created the root cause of human rights because in the past, the government was the military government. That's why the Tatmadaw, later on, committed human rights abuses. Villagers have suffered a lot. Now the Tatmadaw said that they would return lands to villagers but they do not actually return them. They just want villagers to sign the contract so that villagers can work on the lands as they have to paid money to the Tatmadaw. I do not like it very much but villagers have to agree with what they [Tatmadaw] want to do. Actually, they should return the lands to villagers because they already said that. They said that they plants trees in the lands but actually they destroyed the villagers' plantations and they grew trees. Now they said that they would return the lands but they just make a contract with villager where they lend villagers the use of their lands. I think it is not appropriate to do this kind of action because they should not make the villagers rent their own lands for cultivation. Another problem is that they just conduct military training near our village. They do not do military activity in other areas. Villagers have already suffered a lot. Besides, the Tatmadaw wants to oppress them.

What should be done for perpetrators who committed human rights abuses? I mean what kind of punishments should be made for them?

We did not have a punishment culture for perpetrators in the past. They said that they would return the lands to villagers so they should show the official letter to the public that they returned the lands to their original land owners. Some villagers disagreed with what the Tatmadaw said because it was just a verbal promise that they would return the land. Some people thought that

these lands are owned by the Myanmar government. However, some people try to take advantage of this situation because they want to own the lands. That's why they buy the lands with a cheap price. So they get the lands on the cheap without exerting effort. They do not do anything beneficial for the community. The local land committee said that the selling and buying of the lands are not legal. The committee said that we can work on our lands if we are the real land owners. For the case of buying and selling land, they [committee] said that those people who buy and sell lands will negotiate with each other. Tatmadaw officers also told me that land business has nothing to do with them. They told me that they do not sell the lands. That is why I started working on my own lands. But when they came to conduct military activity, I and my workers had to come back to stay in the village. As for me, I do not want to make any trouble with anyone. I do not want to make any trouble with the Tatmadaw. The Tatmadaw also does not want to make trouble to us because they just went back to their army after they conducted military activity. However, it is not appropriate to conduct military activity near the village. In the future, more and more people will be in the village. So the living place will be narrow if they conduct military activity near our village. We feel like we have to stay in a narrow place.

What kind of action do you think should be taken in order to stop them from doing it [military activity]?

Their leaders are responsible for this. They should tell their soldiers [Tatmadaw] not to do it. They should order their soldiers not to harm the villagers. All we can do is report it to their leaders.

As you told me that the Tatmadaw confiscated villagers' lands, when did they confiscate the land and what are their names?

The confiscated the lands when my brother-in-law was the village head in 2000. They confiscated the lands with land confiscation order letters. The former head of the Ba Yint Naung [military training school] came and told the village tract administrators that they will take land and form a military training camp. Then, they asked the village tract administrators to give them a list of the villagers who own the lands. We had our land receipts from 1973 to 1983. When the Tatmadaw got the lists and they learned that we had land receipts, they told the village heads that the land owners should not report the case even if the Tatmadaw confiscated the lands. They said the land owners can talk to them directly if they are not satisfied. They also said that in the cases where they do not take the lands, they will give it back to the land owners. That is what the Ba Yint Naung's headmaster talked about. But one of the Tatmadaw soldiers got married in this place and his family members cooperated with rich people and sold some parts of the lands that were confiscated by the Tatmadaw. There are consequences of selling lands like that.

Do you mean that Tatmadaw soldier sold the lands to businessmen?

Yes.

Is he from this area?

No, he is not from this area. He got married to a woman who is in this area. Later, the new headmasters of Ba Yint Naung military training school also said that they already gave the lands back to the villagers. But they only gave back from their mouths and did not officially give them back.

You said a Tatmadaw soldier who got married here. Did he sell the villagers' lands all by himself?

Yes.

How do you think his [Tatmadaw] leaders should punish him?

I think he should be punished by sending him to court because he sold the lands illegally. We do not want to sue the people who sold the lands. We want them to pay fair compensation to the villagers whose lands were confiscated. If they cannot pay compensation, they should give the lands back.

So how do you think he should be punished by his own leaders?

I do not know about that because I do not know where he moved to now. Only his wife and children are here. Since they change their leaders every time, the new leaders also act like that.

Do you know which Tatmadaw soldiers organized and took responsibility for the confiscated lands and planted the plants?

They are the Tatmadaw family members here. I think the customary leaders know more than me. Actually, the Tatmadaw planted the plants on the lands and later they sold it as if they were their own lands. Some Tatmadaw leaders called us and told us "people who sold the lands are doing it illegally so if you want to sue them, let us know." They told us like that but only with their mouths. Actually, we just want to have an understanding with them. We want them to pay compensation and they can continue to do whatever they want. If they do not pay us compensation, we cannot accept that because we are impacted a lot by that. Even though we go to court, we know that it does not solve all the problems.

Ok. So what do you know about the ceasefire?

I know about the ceasefire from watching the news. I saw that our leaders were negotiating an agreement between them. I think they only want to show off to foreign countries that they are taking steps to bring about peace. In reality, the Tatmadaw travels to Karen State with so many military trucks full of soldiers and weapons. They are also doing large-scale business projects in the region. We also heard about fighting. So, I think this ceasefire agreement is only temporary and fake.

After the ceasefire, do you see the Tatmadaw transport their rations to their army camps?

Yes, the Tatmadaw came with their soldiers and weapons. They also construct the road along the way they go. If they keep doing these things in this peace process, there will never be peace in our country. Between the KNLA and the Tatmadaw, they have restricted areas, and if they cross each other's restricted areas, they will shoot each other. I have a nephew who has land for working, close to the place where Tatmadaw is doing its activities. Since it is dangerous for him, I had to call him to come back here.

Do you mean that the ceasefire should not be mixed with development projects?

Yes, I mean like that. Since they act like that, it can affect the peace process.

In your perspective, what improvements would you like to see to achieve sustainable peace?

The peace process described by our leaders is not what we are experiencing on the ground. When the Tatmadaw enters in KNU-controlled areas to build a road, and they use peace as an excuse to do what they want, I do not think that we have genuine peace. I am worried that they will trick us again one day.

So, you mean you do not trust this peace process?

No. I do not trust this peace process.

What do you think is the best way to make you trust this peace process?

I think if the Myanmar government wants to do development projects, they can come up with a plan and do it by themselves. They should not use Tatmadaw military forces. When the Tatmadaw uses its weapons and does development projects, the peace process becomes meaningless. If this peace process is true, they have to do it with law.

Do you feel safer now after the ceasefire?

For the people who live in this area, we are safer than the other people who live close to restricted areas.

If you could change one thing in this peace process to make genuine peace, what would it be? Who do you think should be involved in this peace process?

I think civilians should be involved in this peace process. I believe that we will achieve peace only if the civilians get involved in this peace process.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I think our leaders [KNU and Myanmar government] already know what to do. I heard they say the peace process is to surrender our arms. They said they will exchange the peace with arms. If surrendering arms is the main thing they talked about, peace will only be in their [Tatmadaw] hands. Likewise, if they keep acting like in this current situation, they will never achieve peace as well because they can control the entire nation by themselves. They also talked about single army in Myanmar; in that case, not every ethnic group can accept that.

Do you think that there is justice in this peace process?

No, I do not think so. If our KNLA surrenders its arms just to achieve peace, I do not think that is a good idea. I do not believe in that peace either. That is my own perspective. I also believe that ethnic groups will be oppressed by them.

As a civilian, what do you think should be done to achieve peace and justice?

Ethnic groups including Karen people have requested to have a federal nation. Related to that issue, if the Myanmar government can create a federal territory for them, it is good.

What do you think would result if they cannot create a federal system?

I think there will never be peace if they cannot do it.

The next one is about the NCA, so what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

We do not have that many human rights challenges in our area here anymore after signing the NCA.

What about land confiscation? Does it continue to happen or has it stopped already?

It continues to happen until now. They keep saying they will solve it for us but they never do it. Sometimes, government authorities called us to meet with them at the township office but they never provide us with the effective answer. The Tatmadaw also said that they would give us the

lands back. When they called us they told us that they should call a meeting officially with relevant leaders. So, what they do is not right. Since they told us and are not giving us our lands back, they are violating the rules. Some people who work with government organizations came and confiscated the land for the P'Thi dam. So, it is also a human rights violation. We submitted our land forms to them but in return, they did not respond anything to us. They just act like they do not care. In terms of providing electricity, they passed over our village like that too. They gave it to other villages. They did not provide it to the villages that have been through so many difficulties like ours. I feel like we do not have rights.

Did they just pass your village like that?

Yes. They provided for the villages next to us but they did not provide it to our village. Actually, they should go according to the law.

I would like to ask you about the justice system too. What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU or local justice system?

It is Myanmar government justice system.

Do you trust it? Do you feel it is fair?

They are still amending their justice system and I still do not feel that it is fair.

Why do you think it is not fair?

Because I feel like other villagers from other villages have more rights than us. And people from my village do not have rights that other people have.

Do you also trust the court? Do you think it is fair?

Yes.

Have you also heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

I have not heard about it. We villagers have been to court to testify about what happened, for example with land confiscation. But about fair or unfair decision-making, it is in their hands. They still have not made any decision yet.

How fair do you think is the Myanmar government's decision-making in court?

I think they give more favour to Myanmar people. I still have a feeling that it is not fair enough.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want? Would you want to take a case to court or do you want to receive compensation or reparations?

Like I explained earlier, if they take our lands illegally, they have to pay us fair compensation. If they do not pay us like that, they are just destroying the trust of civilians.

I thank you so much for giving me your time like this. Are there any questions I have not asked you that you wanted to tell me?

I just wanted to say that the Myanmar government should not procrastinate in solving cases for us. For example, the case like development projects in our area.

Thank you so much Sir for answering my questions. Can we use this information for our upcoming report?

Yes. You can.

Thank you so much.

Source #45

Source doc #	Source #45
Log #	19-8-A2-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Saw Gm--- (male, 57), Gn--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

Religion: Christian

Ethnicity: Karen

Family Statue: Married

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

I experienced a human rights abuse in October 2018. The KNU soldiers came to my house so the Tatmadaw military took photos of my wife and children. They actually came to see me but they did not see me when they came. I was sad because the issue was about me, my wife and children did not know about that. I thought they [Tatmadaw military] should not do that.

Why did they take these photos?

They said, "The KNU came to your house and why did you not let us know about that." Then they took photos to record it. So I think that was a kind of human rights abuse.

Who took the photos?

It was the Tatmadaw military soldiers.

Do you know the Battalion number?

I don't know but they stay close to the village.

Is there a Tatmadaw army camp close to the village?

Yes, there is one. It is the 16mile army camp. They rotate the troops regularly. So I don't know exactly [which army unit].

What did they say?

They said, why didn't you let us know when the KNU came into the village. I actually told the administrator. They just want to make trouble, so they came to me even though I'd let the administrator know about that.

How have abuses affected your life and the lives of people in your community?

The consequence that we've faced was land confiscations.

Where and when did this happen?

It started in 1999. The Myanmar government decided 3,450 acres of land would become reserved forest.

Was it in Si Pin Gyi village tract?

Yes, it was, and Si Pin Klay village tract was included as well.

How many villages?

There are three villages. They were Gn---, 20-Mile and Ba Mon villages.

Were the local people's plantations and lands included in the reserved forest?

The reserved forest areas have been plantation areas for 200 years. The local people were not aware that the plantation areas were included in the reserved forest. So now they have to face the consequences until now.

What did the local people do to hang on to the reserved forest? Did they write complaint letters and organize protests?

We formed a committee and wrote a complaint letter. We cooperate with the educated people to help us write the complaint letters. We sent those complaint letters to the president, the state, the department of forestry, and we also sent it to the other departments.

Did you get any answers or replies?

They said they would come to do something for us. Actually, they just said it and they never actually come to do it.

Did you sent it to other organizations?

Yes, we sent it to the KNU and the [KNU] department of forestry.

When did this happen?

It's already five or six years ago but there has been no change.

Did any organization or NGO come to the village to give awareness trainings?

Yes.

Where and when did they come?

The land networks association comes to give awareness training and knowledge about land once a year. They are not a government group.

Do they go to other villages as well?

Yes, they come to give training in other villages as well, not only in our village.

Did the local people become more knowledgeable after receiving awareness training?

Yes, they became more sensitive when the case relates to their land. They became more active on the land confiscation cases and they asked for help about this. Then they gained more knowledge and their mindsets have changed a lot.

Have you been to court?

No, I have not.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved after the ceasefire?

We can travel easily and the livelihood situation is also getting better.

What do you think about the ceasefire?

The Myanmar government and the ethnic groups should meet, discuss and exchange their knowledge, it will be better. There will be peace opportunities for the local people.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

Both soldiers from the Tatmadaw military and KNU should meet together and their relationships need to be stronger. When they meet frequently and their relationships are stronger, they can share and exchange their knowledge, strengths and weaknesses. When they forgive each other and understand each other, the NCA peace process will get better and stronger.

Do you think there is peace in your area/village now?

There is not fully peace yet but we can feel a little bit better.

Why is there no peace yet?

It is because of the political situation and military activities. So we don't feel secure under these circumstances yet. That's why I said there is not fully peace yet.

In your perspective, what do you think the biggest barrier is to making sustainable peace?

I think the biggest barrier for making sustainable peace is armed conflicts between the Tatmadaw and ethnic groups.

Do the local people still have concerns for the NCA and peace process?

Yes, they have because the peace process is not sustainable yet. Therefore, the local people don't trust the peace process so much yet.

Do you have the right to participate in the peace process?

I cannot do anything about participating in the peace process yet. I just arrange communication for the two groups of soldiers to be able to travel. I just help them to be able to travel easily.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

What I want to suggest is that the KNU and the Myanmar government should meet and discuss issues frequently. When you frequently meet with each other, your mindset will change and you will feel closer. Then you will know each other's strengths and weaknesses. If you can build up understanding with each other, it will help the peace process to be sustainable.

What does justice mean to you? How will you define it?

Justice is when there is rule of law and you have freedom of speech and movement.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

There are both Myanmar and KNU justice systems used in my village. When something happens, it just depends on the plaintiff which justice system he/she would like to use.

So you can use both justice systems?

Yes, if you like both and want to use both justice systems, you can. Both of them can solve the

problems for you.

What do you know about the KNU justice system? Do you think it is fair?

The KNU justice system is transparent and there is no bribery. So I think they try to process, solve and decide the problems fairly. In the Myanmar government justice system, there is a lot of bribery and most of the people have arrogant attitudes. So I like the KNU justice system more.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

I have seen it in the Myanmar government justice system but I have not seen it in the KNU justice system. I have experienced in the Myanmar government justice system that a lawyer was able to fund a child's education until Standard Ten with the bribe from court cases he dealt with.

Have you experienced it?

Yes, I have experienced and known it as well.

What else did you experience?

Mostly I know about the bribery according to what I heard and saw around me. I heard my close friends and neighbours tell me. I also heard the accused tell me that most of the justice systems under the Myanmar government have bribery.

What about the KNU justice system?

I only experienced it at village tract level but I never experienced it at Township and District levels.

What is the best way to stop corruption in Burma?

To stop bribery in the justice system in Burma, everyone should have good morals and everyone should understand the laws. Everyone should have kind and pure hearts.

Were you or your family displaced?

I've never experienced it.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

I want both KNU and Myanmar government to talk and discuss about the peace process more so that we can live in peace without any concerns. Otherwise, the local people cannot live in peace and have to be worried.

Thank you so much. Can I use this information?

Yes, you can.

Thank you.

Yes.

Source #46

Source doc #	Source #46
Log #	19-8-A3-11

Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Saw Go--- (male, 30), Gp--- Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

What is your religion?
I am a Christian.

What is your ethnicity?
I am Karen.

How about your address?
I live in Gp--- Town, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District.

What is your job?
I work in an organization. I am chairperson of the youth committee and I am one of the committee members for Toungoo District.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?
Yes, there were human rights abuses in our area in the past.

What happened?
They called for forced porters. We were forced to carry loads. If we did not go, we had to pay money or hire some people who would go instead of us.

When did this happen?
I think it was from 2002 to 2012.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?
Most of the perpetrators were those who had power or who were powerful.

Was it the Tatmadaw military?
Yes, they were the Tatmadaw military, village administrators and Township administrators.

Where there other human rights abuses?
Forced relocation and armed land confiscation happened as human rights violations as well.

Did you experience forced displacement?
I did not but I saw the villages which were close to each other had to combine and live together in the same village [two or three villages combined into one village]. For example, 13-Mile had to combine and live with another village.

Do you know the Battalion numbers?
As I knew they were Infantry Battalions #124 and #39.

Which areas had the worst human rights abuses?

To be honest, the whole area from Thandaunggyi experienced the human rights violations because the Tatmadaw military treated it as the Tatmadaw military operations area.

How do the human rights abuses continue to affect your life?

We experienced livelihood difficulties because of the Tatmadaw military operations. We could not travel and go to work in our plantation areas. They created military laws and some people were arrested for communicating with the rebel group. It also affected the education and healthcare system. There were curfews imposed.

Were there any armed groups near your village?

Yes, sometimes they entered into the village.

Were the local people affected by the conflict?

There were local people affected and injured by land mine explosions during the conflict period.

Did any organizations come to help and support the people who were affected by the human rights abuses?

There were no organizations that came to help and support in the [military] operations period.

Have you experienced any human rights abuse since the ceasefire agreement was signed in 2012?

We don't see and hear anything now.

So the situation got better after the NCA?

Yes, the situation got better a little bit after the ceasefire.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I think only when the political system gets stable will the situation get better.

Have there been any corporate development projects in your village?

No, there was no mining in the area but cronies who have money came and bought the lands. They built a resort and a hotel there.

Where and when did this happen?

I don't know the exact time but they built them near the Pa Thi Dam⁵ area.

Can you guess?

I think it is already 10 years ago since they built them.

Was it a company?

Yes, they were.

Do you know the company's name?

I heard it is called Zay Ka Bar Company.

⁵For more detail information please see "<https://khrgh.org/2018/11/18-21-a2-i1/toungoo-interview-repeated-instances-land-confiscations-harm-livelihoods-local>", November 2018

Did they build hotels and motels?

Yes, they built a resort and hotel there.

Did they build on the land of local people?

Those lands were once the local people's land. However, the government confiscated those lands and sold it to some other people who live near those areas.

Did the local people protest?

No, they did not. The local people [who bought the lands from government] sold out those lands at the current land price to the company in advance because they knew that the government was going to confiscate those lands again..

Are there other development projects?

We don't see other huge development projects but now we aware that the Tatmadaw is constructing the road.

Where is the road construction?

It is from Bago Division to 13-Mile. Then I heard they will continue it to Baw G'Lee according to their conversations.

Did they meet with local people or take the local people's concerns into account?

No, they did not ask the local people about their concerns for expanding the road construction. They just said those trees are in the areas where the road construction would expand.

So the local people's trees were taken down?

Yes.

Will the construction of the road take one year?

It is not like that. I heard it that depends on their budget. [Another person present person said they are going to build that road as far as Moe Hkee].

When did they start constructing the road?

They started constructing it since [1997 or Koe Koe Kwa] and they started expanding the road construction in 2019. It started in late 2018 and continued to the beginning of 2019.

Do you know anything about the ceasefire?

What I think is that they are just talking about politics and it is just political discussion or negotiation.

Anything else?

It is a political problem. They could not solve it with the fighting so they are now solving it with the political discussion and negotiation.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

The NCA has both strengths and weaknesses.

What are the weaknesses?

The weaknesses are that they don't fully give or recognize ethnicity rights. We think we don't fully have democracy or freedom yet.

What are the strengths?

The ethnic groups could reveal their political aims, hopes and political thinking publicly. They can work together with the public more closely.

What would you like to change?

The Myanmar government, the armed groups and the public should meet and talk together about politics. Then the Tatmadaw military should be included as well.

Do you have other suggestions to strengthen the peace process?

The NCA is not the main thing to change about politics; the 2008 constitution is the main thing. The weaknesses will be erased only if we can change it [the 2008 constitution].

Do you think there is peace in your area/village now?

There is no full peace yet. However, the recent situation is getting better.

How do the local people feel about it now?

The local people still don't forget what they faced and suffered when the Tatmadaw military had the most influence and had all the power before. They still have those feelings.

So the situation has improved?

Yes.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

The ethnic armed groups, the current government and the Tatmadaw military should meet because there will be a lasting peace process only if they meet in an ongoing process.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

The main barrier is the 25 percent [of seats] in the parliament owned by the Tatmadaw military. It is from the 2008 constitution. It is just because the Tatmadaw is taking a role [in politics].

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

I would like to talk about the political discussion and negotiation. The reason that makes the peace process slow and blocks progress is that the Tatmadaw military told the local people [ethnic armed groups] to surrender their weapons and themselves. Then they should go and stay under the Tatmadaw military. The ethnic groups cannot accept this, so the peace process is slow and delayed. There are many weaknesses stemming from the 2008 constitution, so the peace process will be sustainable only when we can change it. That would lead to sustainable peace.

Anything else?

What I want to say is that the government who has the power now also said before that it [the constitution] should be changed and that it's time to change it. However, sadly we still see they cannot change the 2008 constitution yet.

Thank you so much for giving me your time to interview you.

Thank you so much too.

Do you give us permission to use this information?

Yes, you can use it.

Thank you.

Source #47

Source doc #	Source # 47
Log #	18-118-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Ks--- (male, 50), Kt--- village, K'Par Htar village tract, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

Have you experienced conflict?

We were terrified, so we ran into the jungle. The main challenges we faced during displacement were with food and healthcare. We ran out of food before reaching the border, [so] we had to hurry.

Do you often think about it?

Of course, I sometimes think about it. I will never forget it until I die.

Were there any human rights abuses in your area in the past?

Yes, there were so many human rights abuses in the past. They arrested, killed, cut and raped the civilians. It happened before the signing of the ceasefire, since 2001 or 2002, but 2006 was the worst year. It was during the time of [Tatmadaw Senior General] Min Aung Hlaing's operation. People were killed and women were raped during that time. So, some people reached to border, became refugees and even went to third countries.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The worst things during the conflict period were food shortages and health problems.

Were you or your family displaced?

The whole family was displaced. Not just my family- the whole village was displaced.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

For rape cases, I did not witness it, but I witnessed killing cases. I saw the Tatmadaw shoot villagers but I only heard about rape cases that were committed by the Tatmadaw.

Why did they shoot the villagers?

They shot the villagers because they ran away. They also tied up the villagers and killed them.

Did you witness it?

Yes.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

They did not allow us cut our fields. And when we fled from them, they destroyed our properties and ate all our animals. We had to leave our fields so we could not do anything for our livelihood.

As you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life and the lives of your family members?

It affected the education of our children. Teachers could not teach and children could not go to school so they did not learn anything and became illiterate.

How has the conflict period affected the lives in your community?

We all experienced the same thing during that time. The villagers did farming like us so when the conflict happened we had to leaves our fields and could not do anything. They burned our houses so nothing was left in the village. They even burned the school and the church.

What is your ethnicity?

Karen.

What about your religion?

I am a Christian.

You are married right?

Yes. I have six family members.

Okay. You said you witnessed so many things. So who were the main perpetrators of these human rights violations?

They were Na Aa Pa [the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)]. They killed and ate all our animals. I cannot remember their LIB number. But the one who did [tortured] my father was IB #85.

What did they do to your father?

They tied my father with rope and beat him. It was IB #85 led by Bo Mya Than. He tied, beat and killed my father. I will never forget that until I die.

Have any of those human rights abuses been resolved by SPDC?

How? It is impossible.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I do not know whether they were punished or not because it depends on them [SPDC].

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

It will be better if none of them exist. I do not want them to exist.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

In my personal opinion, I just want people to live in peace and unity because everyone likes to live in peace. No one likes to live in conflict.

What do you think is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause is them [SPDC]. They started the conflict. If they live in peace, we, civilians will definitely live in peace. How can we live in peace when they started the conflict?

What do you know about the ceasefire?

I just heard of that recently.

What do you think about it?

They said it is a ceasefire but there is no peace. They do something different from what their mouth talks about.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

We do not know whether we should trust this ceasefire or not because they act differently to what they said.

Do you know about Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) or peace process?

Yes, I know.

How much do you know about the peace process?

I know about it but I cannot remember the date.

How do you know about this peace process?

I always listen to the radio, so I know about the peace process from that.

What would you like to know more about? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

I just want to see people live in love and unity. Moreover, I even expect to get the independence for Karen state because I want sovereignty. That is what I want from this peace process.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

No, I do not think there is peace in my village now.

How has the peace process affected your life? What benefits do you get from the peace process?

The traveling from place to place and working conditions are getting better. But now we are facing with the rodents that destroy our paddy.

What do you think are the disadvantages of this peace process?

The worst thing for us is the rodents destroy our paddy. The rest are fine with us. The challenge we face in this year is most of us were doing farming (in the field) but we did not get any paddy. We do not know what we will face in the coming year. I think we will face challenges in the coming year because we did not get any paddy this year. We would like others to help us because we also worry for our livelihood. We face a lot of things such as broken bridges as a result of flooding this year.

Do you have any other challenges from the peace process?

The Tatmadaw is increasing its forces, especially in Brigade 5. We have less soldiers in our area compared to Brigade 5.

Do you know how many places they strengthen their army in this area?

It is in #1 and #6. Before the ceasefire, I remember that there were over 30 army camps but after the ceasefire they built 25 more.

Is it in Mone Township?

Yes but it also includes part of Brigade 5 as well. Only two army camps were built here in Mone Township. There are a lot in Brigade 5. I do not know whether our country will have peace or not but the Tatmadaw army camps increased in number after the ceasefire.

Do you know where the two army camps built in Mone Township are located?

I guess they are [Battalions] #1 and #6.

Do you know where #6 is located?

It is in Koe Lar Wah Loo mountain in Karen. The other one is located in Saw Thay Der. They let the KNU know that they would build army camps there but the KNU has not given them permission yet. If they build army camps without permission from the KNU, fighting might break out between them. It is the same in brigade 5. They were told not to construct the road, but they did so they were shot. They were not allowed to transport rations with a truck, but they did so they were shot. But in the end, they blamed the KNU for that. They will never see it as their mistakes. They always criticize the KNU for starting fights. Even though other countries put pressure on them, they will never change themselves. They just show off in front of other countries.

Do you feel safe now?

No.

Has your livelihood improved?

We have nothing since we were born. We are just daily workers. I do not own anything, not even land. I still need to buy land.

So you said you are part of the revolution, right?

Yes, I do not want to do it anymore.

Which section do you take the responsibility?

The rations section.

What does peace mean to you?

If there is unity, there is peace as well. If the KNU and the Myanmar government are not united, it is impossible to have peace.

What do you think is the condition of the peace process now?

I do not know about the peace process condition but all I know is it is to get genuine peace. I want unity but the situation is not so good right now. The activities of the Tatmadaw in Hpapun District are not even published in BBC or VOA news. The news should report about it whether the Tatmadaw is active in brigade #5, #3 and #2. I listen to the news, but it has not said anything yet.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

I think if the Tatmadaw do not disturb us or cause any conflict, we will have peace. If they do not want to be united with us or love us, how can we have sustainable peace? I see that as a barrier.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

I think the KNU needs to take responsibility to make the situation better and more stable. We want peace but if the Tatmadaw does not want peace then we have to empower our KNU leaders.

If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I would change people to be united.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would suggest to both the Myanmar government and KNU leaders, "the improvement of the peace process is in your hands and unity between the two groups is needed." I would say that to them.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I think it is the KNU.

Why do you think the KNU could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

It is because I trust in the KNU, but it also needs the pressure of other countries in order to get peace and justice in Myanmar.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I think I cannot contribute to it alone unless everyone participate in this peace process.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

I think mostly people face land confiscations.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihood?

How can we work when our lands are confiscated? If they give our lands back, we can still find a way for our livelihood. But now we do not get our land back so we have to work hard to earn for a living. They confiscated land even before ceasefire and they still confiscate land until now.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

The women also do not know what to do for their livelihood. They also face poverty.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities?

I do not see any human rights challenges that are facing minorities.

Do you think that your rights as a minority are respected?

Yes, I do feel that my personal rights are respected in the current situation.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice means justice to me. Everyone deserves to have justice and what we really want is also justice.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We are using the KNU justice system.

What do you know about this justice system?

I think this justice system is good.

Do you trust it?

Yes, I trust it.

Do you think it is fair?

Yes, I think it is.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

No, I have not heard of it in the KNU justice system.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system?

I just experienced and saw it with the Tatmadaw in the past, but not in my community here.

Were you displaced in the conflict period?

Yes.

How long were you displaced for?

I left my village and fled in 1991.

Where did you go?

And again from 2005 or 2006 on, I fled to the border refugee camp.

What is the name of the refugee camp?

It is Ei Tu Hta camp. It was during [Myanmar Military Senior Genera] Min Aung Hlaing's operation and it caused a lot of local populations flee to the refugee camp.

Where did you live from 1991 to 2005?

We just lived in the jungle.

When did you come back here?

I came back here in 2017.

How many years did you live in the camp?

I think 10 or 11 years because it was from 2006 to 2017.

Did you cross any borders?

No.

So before you went to camp, you were in the jungle for around 14 years, right?

Yes.

Are you able to go back and live in your own village?

They said we can go back because they signed the NCA. I do not go back to my village now because I do not trust the situation and the Tatmadaw yet.

So you are living now in the Township office?

I am living in people's houses around here.

What was the root cause of the refugee situation?

It was because of the SPDC.

What do you think were the challenges of displaced people?

We faced problems with food and health while fleeing from the war.

What about work? What did you do at that time?

How could we work while fleeing?

Do you have any challenges since returning here?

I currently face the challenges of health, livelihood and house. Those are the main things I need to face if this peace process goes well. If the situation gets worse, I cannot tell exactly what more I will have to face. We are now facing problems with our paddy because the rodents destroyed almost all of it. I feel like this year has the worst weather conditions.

What about the situation of other refugee people?

Some people still live in the jungle and they still have not returned to their village yet.

Are they still living in the refugee camp?

Some are still living there. They do not trust the situation so they do not come back.

What do you know of the current services available in the area where you are returning to?

There are no services in the area we returned to. We have to start our livelihood by ourselves. For me, if I have nothing left to eat, I go to the office (Township office) and ask for a bowl of rice or something.

What do you want for your future?

If I have a chance to ask for help, I would ask for my livelihood and healthcare. I do not want to ask for house because the situation does not seem good yet.

Do you know how many people have already returned?

Thirteen households have returned. One or two households have returned to their own villages. Some of us have not returned yet because we cannot trust the situation yet.

Do you have anything to ask or say?

I have nothing special to say but as I mentioned above, we have challenges with livelihood and healthcare, so if people can help us, it is good. If they cannot help, that is okay as well.

What do you want to suggest to the KNU or the Myanmar government?

If they can help us with those things (healthcare, livelihood).

Thank you so much for giving me your time. So as I have recorded your voice, can we use it for publication?

You can but I do not want you to use my name and my photos because I have to keep myself safe from the Tatmadaw. I think you know about it. The SPDC always looks for the information so if they see my photos, it can be dangerous for me.

Thank you. We will not use it if you cannot give us the photos and we will only use the information.

Okay. Thank you.

Source #48

Source doc #	Source # 48
Log #	19-6-A9-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District

Full Text

Toungoo Interview | Saw Hd--- (male, 63), He--- village, Sin Pu Daw village tract Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (June 2019)

What is your ethnicity?

I am a Karen.

What is your religion?

I am an animist.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have five children.

What is your occupation?

I work on my plantation.

Do you have a special position?

No.

Where do you live?

I live in He--- village, Sin Pu Daw village tract, Taungoo Township.

How many houses are there in your village?

There are 70 or 80 houses in our village.

What do villagers mostly do in your village?

Most of the villagers are working in their farmlands.

Have you experienced conflict in your village?

We experienced Kaung Myanmar Aung Company's land confiscation.

How did the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company confiscate your land?

They came onto our lands and confiscated them without any prior notification. They planned for their cultivation. They couldn't do it as we stopped them. I was not included, but my nephews shouted at them to block their operation.

How did they react to your resistance?

I don't know because I didn't go. The only thing that I know is they sued us.

How did they sue you?

We had to go to the police station and listed down our names there.

Were you interrogated?

They didn't interrogate any of us. Perhaps they canceled the case because they had a weak case. At that time, the vice general manager U Saw Maung from Kaung Myanmar Aung company canceled the case. Later, they sued another person [himself] separately. I don't know about their tricks. The first time, they sued six of us. When we arrived at Taung Su, they canceled it and reconciled the case. After that, they sued me individually. They couldn't bend us. That's why they tried another trick. We've suffered that case until now.

Are the judicial procedures ongoing?

Yes. Currently, Daw Kyi Aye's case [She was personally sued by the Kaung Myanmar Aung Company] has reached to divisional level. Her case was sent back to township court though, because of the weakness in investigation. But for our case, they have prepared to appeal. It is not clear how long the appeal will take.

Do you know anything about the ceasefire?

I don't know.

Were there Tatmadaw soldiers fighting or trespassing before the NCA?

I often heard the Tatmadaw soldiers approaching.

What kind of transportation did they use?

They were marching up with trucks.

How many trucks did they have?

They used ten trucks and sometimes five of them were transporting rations. I don't know where they are sending these rations to.

When did this happen?

It happened in November 2018.

Were the villagers in fear when they saw the Tatmadaw reinforcing their troops?

Yes, the villagers were in fear. We kept hearing the sound of shooting from helicopters once every three or four days in the Moe Kone Sat Pyit Kwine [military target practice area]. I don't

know all the difficulties that the villagers have. Tatmadaw's military target practice area in Shwe Sin and Moe Kone places. I also heard that huts were burned down by artillery shelling. We saw the place where the huts had burned and damages caused by the shelling. The villagers were working in their farmlands with fear. They [Tatmadaw soldiers] had made a prior announcement so they thought they wouldn't have to take responsibility when losses or damages happened. Villagers who live in Na Ga Maut, Shwe Sin, Toe Daung and Moe Kone village tracts heard the sound of the shooting. It's really dangerous to see the Tatmadaw soldiers come and stay in the huts of villagers. Even though they said they are trying to achieve peace in the country, we frequently heard the sounds of shooting. There's land confiscation done by the Tatmadaw soldiers. While they are trying to achieve peace, they shouldn't do these kinds of activities. They even came to shoot with helicopters.

Did they inform the villagers in advance?

The very first time, they informed the village heads about it. Later, they came to operate however they wished. They came to shoot and went back. We frequently heard the sounds of shooting. That really made us fearful during the period of the ceasefire agreement.

Do you know where they are from?

I am not sure whether they were from Nay Pyi Daw [Myanmar capital city] or other places. But usually there were two airplanes.

Did they come to shoot the farmlands of the villagers?

No. All the farmlands were owned by the villagers. They targeted to shoot the big stone. Sometimes, they missed their target and it [the shell or rocket] went down into villagers' farmlands. The people who live near that area knew more about it. As for us, we heard the sounds of shooting from here. And the helicopters flied round and round here. The two helicopters came mostly at 10 and 11 o'clock. The sounds of the shooting were very loud.

Did this happen before or after the NCA?

They came and shot once every two or three days.

Was there more shooting before or after the NCA?

After the NCA, there was even more shooting. There were different types of shooting. But I don't know how big the weapons are.

Why were they shooting?

In my opinion, they came for military training.

How has the peace process affected or benefited your life?

We're longing for peace. There was displacement before. After the NCA, the shooting was still ongoing. So we are in doubt about genuine peace and fearful.

Do you believe in this peace process?

As for me, I don't trust the peace process because the government plan was full of lies and delay tactics.

Did it affect the livelihoods of the villagers?

I don't know because I didn't go to the area where the shooting took place. I heard that some of the villagers' livestock died. I heard from one of my friends that there was a person who got

injured last year. But I am not sure because I didn't see it personally.

What responsibility does the Myanmar government have to achieve sustainable peace in the country?

If possible, they should stop the activities that frighten the villagers. According to our research in the news, we cannot say truly that there's genuine peace. We still have to be afraid.

Did the NCA affect the transportation by the Tatmadaw?

We've seen a lot of Tatmadaw rations transported both with trucks and horses. I saw they've increased to 10 or 20 trucks when they transport rations. I don't know what else they're bringing because they securely cover the trucks [cargo].

Is it #39 battalion?

Yes.

How does the transportation of ammunition affect the villagers?

When the Tatmadaw soldiers came into villages, they burned the villages and stole villagers' livestock. Even in Na Ga Maut village tract, the Tatmadaw soldiers killed villagers. The killing case happened because they were unhappy about the logging incidents.

When did this happen?

It was 19 years ago.

Do you know the name of the person that was killed by the Tatmadaw soldier?

His name was Poe Ma. He had a wife and children.

What is the name of the unit?

The name of the unit is (#39). At that time, Thet Way was taking responsibility at Doe Tawng bridge gate.

Do you know his rank?

He was a sergeant. He passed away already.

Did the Tatmadaw kill or bully villagers after the NCA?

We haven't heard about the killing or bullying after the NCA. It happened mostly before the NCA. Currently, we've heard only the helicopter [Tatmadaw air forces] shooting and them reinforcing their troops.

What should the Tatmadaw do?

In my opinion, they should stay in their places. They shouldn't do anything that could be threatening for the civilians. Sending rations and shooting make us live in fear. So we don't want this to happen.

After the NCA, were there more or less land confiscations?

In our area we haven't heard about land confiscations [that occurred post-NCA]. I don't know about other areas. Now, in Loo [village], Na Ga Maut village tract, [Thandaunggyi] Township, Taungoo District the Tatmadaw confiscated over 500 acres of land for the purpose of military training. In addition, there are also land confiscations south of He--- village, Sin Pu Daw village tract. They're conducting the mining process. It was handed over to the businessmen. Villagers

are facing difficulties living in the area. The confiscated lands were not handed back to the villagers even though they petitioned to get them back.

In your perspective, what should the KNU do to achieve sustainable peace?

They should cooperate together with the Myanmar government and have given and take on both sides.

What should the Myanmar government do to achieve sustainable peace?

When we look at the 2008 constitution, it's really terrible.

What should they do?

It will only bring a better situation if they cooperate together. If not, it will have serious effects on the civilians.

Do you mean that the 2008 constitution is hindering the peace process?

It is absolutely. They were delaying or writing the constitution from the period of [General] Ne Win to the period of [General] Than Shwe [entirely during the military dictatorship period]. As long as they firmly stick to the 2008 constitution, the civilians will not like it. They should make amendments to the 2008 constitution. According to chapter #12 section #436, it can be amended with the prior approval of more than seventy-five percent of all the representatives of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw [Myanmar Assembly of the Union], after which in a nation-wide referendum only with the votes of more than half of those who are eligible to vote, in order to achieve federalism. It's really difficult and impossible. As a result, civilians will have to suffer.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is your area ruled by Myanmar government or KNU?

As for me, I don't like the Myanmar government justice system. You can only ever win if you have money and you lose if you don't in the Myanmar government justice system.

Can you tell me more about your experience?

Our lands were confiscated on May 23rd 2013 and until now. But, we cannot say whether they will bring the case to their headquarters [capital] or not.

Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

No.

Why not?

We lost even though it was our land but because we didn't have any money. They were favouring the rich men by showing bias.

What do you know about the KNU justice system?

I like the KNU justice system because it doesn't cost any money.

What do you know about the Myanmar justice system?

In the Myanmar justice system, truth can always be defeated by money.

Do you have anything else to say?

I would like our people to have an autonomous place where they can provide for themselves . The Myanmar government justice system is complicated. Furthermore, there are a lot of

processes.

Would you allow us to use the information you have provided?

Yes. I really would like to feature it to the Myanmar government.

Source #49

Source doc #	Source # 49
Log #	19-2-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished:
Location	Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Sa--- (male, 30), Sb--- village, Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

Religion: Christian

Ethnicity: Karen

Occupation: Casual Daily Worker

Could you recall your experience in the past regarding the conflict situation?

When I was little, my family was displaced to the forest because of the fighting. The Tatmadaw burnt down our rice barn and houses. We could not take all of our belongings and food with us. We had to stay in the forest for a week. Due to the lack of food, we had to eat porridge and bamboo shoots while hiding in the forest.

How many siblings do you have?

I have three siblings.

Which military group attacked your village?

It was Tatmadaw Division #77.

Do you remember when did it happen?

I do not remember the year anymore, but it happened before 2000.

What was the toughest experience you have faced?

While we were hiding in the forest, my father went back to the village to get us rice. The Tatmadaw shot him on his way there. He had to flee from the Tatmadaw again. We could not contact him during that time. It was a difficult time, waiting for our father to bring us food because our food had almost run out. We tried to find vegetables in the forest for our daily food. We did not know whether he was still alive or not.

Was everyone in your village fleeing with you?

Yeah, all of our family and people in the village had to flee. It was more than one month hiding in the forest.

How did such armed conflicts continue to impact your livelihoods?

During that time, we dared not go back to our village because the Tatmadaw was based nearby. They shot local people who went back and worked on their lands. The Tatmadaaw burnt down our paddies when they entered the village. Then we had to eat plain porridge [to save the rice from running out quickly]. Following the conflict, local people were afraid to work on their lands where there were rich fertilizers. They had to work in other places with fear. We could not grow many crops during that time.

Did other local people have the same situation like you?

Yes, everyone in the local area faced the same situation.

How many villages and households were in your local area?

There were four villages with 23 households. There were Sb--- village, Sc--- village, Sd--- village and Se--- village.

Was there any problem-solving mechanism or support during that time?

We had the community based organisations such as CIDKP providing some support to us. They distributed 800 kyat to individual villagers. The cost [of things] was not so expensive during that time. We could buy a pack of rice when we collected money from all of our family members.

Who were the people who committed human rights abuses?

It was the Tatmadaw. We heard that they planned to clear out all the Karen people but they could not complete it because we have our leaders who fight for us and rebel against the persecutors [Tatmadaw].

Did you have justice throughout your experience?

We have justice sometimes but not always.

Was there any punishment for those who perpetrated you?

No.

Do you want compensation, reparations or a court judgment [for past wrongdoing]?

I would prefer reparations because we cannot do anything with the past. It is important for the perpetrator to admit wrong deeds they have committed in the past and to never do it again. In this case, we will be able to live in peace as well as them. This is what I dreamt of. I hope to live together and cooperate in peace to be able to fully enjoy the freedom of our rights. Both sides of us [Karen and Burmese] would not have peace without diplomacy.

What is the most appropriate remedy for the victims of human rights abuses?

The victims of human rights abuse need protection, supports and encouragement. Many people fled and resettled in other countries because of conflict but we still stay in our community [Karen State] with the support of our leaders.

What is the most prevalent human rights abuse in your local area?

The most prevalent human rights abuse in our local area is caused by the military. The two military [armed] sides fight against each other in order to control a particular territory. Many times, local people became the target and innocent victims of armed groups. Such action undermines our dignity and damages our livelihoods.

Do you know about the ceasefire process?

I know but I do not remember the date.

What is your perspective on the ceasefire process?

For me, the current ceasefire does not seem good because the military [especially Tatmadaw] take advantage of the ceasefire and strengthen their militarization. It seems like they are preparing for future fighting. They also take advantage of the ceasefire process by implementing development projects and confiscating local people's lands. There might be some benefit of the ceasefire but I see that the disadvantages are much more.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement?

I do not know.

What do you think about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement?

I think our leaders [the negotiators] came into the ceasefire agreement to promote safety and freedom for our people [Karen]. They would not be able to promote safety and freedom for community members without a ceasefire. Conflict is the main cause of fear, insecurity and instability for our community. This is what I know.

What do you expect from the peace process?

I expect stability and faithfulness in the process. I expect that both armed groups [KNLA and Tatmadaw] will be faithful to their ceasefire agreement and will not fight anymore.

What [consequences] do you think the peace process will bring for you?

When there is peace in the country, there will be more development. We will be able work for our livelihood peacefully and travel freely. The way to earn income for our livelihood will become easier for local people as well.

Do you think there is peace in your community now? What are the positive and negative impacts of the peace process in your community?

According to my experience, we work on our ancestral lands as was normal before the ceasefire. However, after the ceasefire, we expected a better way to cultivate our lands and work on agriculture. Unfortunately, the Myanmar government confiscated our lands and they damaged parts of them while implementing their development project. We do not even have freedom to work on our lands. We are afraid to confront them because they have power. Our lands with good soil became rocky and infertile after the company implemented its project. We lost lands around our village because the company confiscated them for the dam construction. The fertile lands that we used to grow rice were ruined by gold mining activities. This is the negative impacts of the peace process.

Where did the company get permission from? Are the companies foreign or domestic?

Companies are both foreign (i.e. Chinese company) and domestic. They receive permission from the Myanmar government as well as the regional government such as the KNU. The companies paid a lot of tax to the government in order to implement the development project.

Do you think your livelihood is now in a good condition?

The security is getting better but our livelihood is not stable. We cannot cultivate land and work on it long-term anymore because the Myanmar government could say it belongs to them and confiscate it anytime. We lost our motivation to work on lands because we cannot trust the government.

What does the peace process mean to you?

The peace means we do not need to be afraid and flee from war anymore. We would not be tortured and killed arbitrary. This is peace means to me.

What are the barriers to sustainable peace?

The unfaithfulness and violation of the National Ceasefire Agreement [NCA] code of conducts is the barrier to building sustainable peace. The Tatmadaw violates the NCA code of conduct by trespassing into demarcated territory, firing weapons and killing KNLA soldiers. I do not see the KNLA disturb them. Recently, the Tatmadaw marched to the KNLA area with a large number of soldiers. However, the KNLA demanded them to turn back. I see that the KNLA tries to maintain peace within the ceasefire process even when the Tatmadaw seeks to make a conflict. Such behavior of the Tatmadaw is quite frequent. It seems the Tatmadaw has pride and wants to take control alone. There would be peace in the country if the Tatmadaw lost its pride and considered ethnic minorities.

What changes you want to see in order to build sustainable peace?

There are different national leaders. Some of them desire peace but some are troublesome. Troublesome leaders who abuse their power should be withdrawn from their positions. National leaders should look forward, making the country develop and promoting peace with all ethnic minorities.

Do you mean the Myanmar government or the KNU?

I mean the Myanmar government. They feel they are better than the KNU [ethnic groups]. They always prepare for fighting.

What suggestion would you like to give to the national government if you got a chance?

I would like to suggest that our Karen people are trying to make peace but both sides of authorities should be faithful and understand each other. Our Karen people should also be united in order to stand firm in times of conflict.

Who are the most responsible for building sustainable peace?

I do not know about this.

What can you do to build peace and justice in your community?

All I can do is pray for the leaders to maintain peace. I have no authority or knowledge to do anything.

What are the most prevalent human rights abuses in your community?

After the ceasefire, we faced a lot of human rights abuses because of development project. Our lands were taken and damaged. We cannot claim our own lands back since they were taken. Some local people were threatened and killed by the perpetrators when arguing for their lands. A woman became a widow raising her young children after her husband was killed by the land confiscator. The disputes happened between land users and the confiscators.

How do such human rights abuses impact your livelihoods?

Before the ceasefire, we could cultivate our lands anytime as we needed to. Now, we cannot work on any lands because we were prohibited by laws and authorities. Instead, authorities allow companies to implement their business on our lands. This is very common in our

community. We cannot work on our livelihood freely. We have to argue with authorities and land confiscators. This really impacts our livelihoods. Last year when I cultivated my lands and planted paddy, the company and Myanmar government excavated it with machines. They have taken large areas of our lands. We could only work on the remaining parts. We cannot work on them without arguing with land confiscators. This is really disturbing.

What are the particular human rights abuses committed against women?

I heard about some human rights abuses against women. A Bamar person was promoted [by the Myanmar government] to be the village head in a village. He raped a Karen teacher but no one dared to blame him. He would kill anyone who blames him. The victim was secretly sent to the KNU District office [for protection]. Authorities [KNU] could not investigate the case because the perpetrator was also a local Myanmar government official. In this case, I would like to recommend decision-makers and government to consider local perspectives in selecting local leaders.

Where did the incident that you just mentioned happen?

It happened in a Karen village called Sf---, located in Sg--- area.

Do you know the name of the woman who was raped?

I did not know her name but I have seen her.

Is she still in the district office?

I think she is not there anymore. She was brought to the district office in order to report the case. Villagers brought her secretly because they were afraid of the village head. The village head abused his power because the Tatmadaw stood behind him. He killed a Karen man with a knife and raped a Karen woman.

Are there any human rights abuses against ethnic minorities and religious minorities?

Every religion has the freedom to practice their rituals and beliefs, including Animism and Christianity.

Are the rights of the minority group respected?

Not always. Some people do not take care of their domestic animals carefully. So animals like cows and pigs damaged our plantations.

What do you know about justice?

Justice means faithfulness to your promises. In another way, it means equality. There is no discrimination by race.

What is the justice mechanism in your community? And how is it applied? Is the responsibility handled by the KNU or the Myanmar government?

Mostly the KNU handles the cases in our community. They assign the penalty according to the legal principles. For example, they would detain a perpetrator for two years and then release them freely.

Is the justice system really fair for local people?

It is not fair every time. Sometime, they violate the laws themselves, rather than local people. For instance, local people have to report and ask permission whenever they want to cut trees to build a house or implement their small business associated with natural resources. Still, the

local people were not allowed to in some cases. Nonetheless, they [KNU] allow the outsiders [business men], companies and the Myanmar government who can pay bribes to them. For us [local people], we cannot work on our own lands [to run our businesses].

So it is about the bribes and corruption. Have you ever heard of bribes and corruption in judgment?

I also heard about that but I have not seen it with my eyes. Some authorities sold the lands of local people [to business men] and paid them unfair compensation.

Do you want the past human rights perpetrator to be sent to court?

Local leaders who accept bribes and who are corrupt should be reprimanded so that they will admit their wrongdoings and stop treating people unfairly. Otherwise, the local people will not be satisfied or trust them.

Which authority is more responsible for accountability on justice?

The Myanmar government has more responsibility because they violate the justice system more than the KNU.

What is the best way to cease the human rights abuses in your community?

Negotiation and consistent transparency between local people and local leaders would be the best way to cease the human rights abuses. Local leaders should protect their community. They have to honor God and live according to God's will.

Have you ever been displaced during armed conflicts?

I have been displaced for two months in the jungle because of armed conflicts.

What is the main cause of displacement?

It is because of fighting over territory between armed groups.

Can you stay in your original village now?

I do not go back to my village but other community members already went back. It is safe from conflict now.

How is the current livelihood of local people?

The current livelihood is good enough even though it is not in the best condition. I mean the soils are not as good as before but local people can produce crops.

Was there any land and property remaining in your village after the damage from displacement?

Our parents' property including clothes and wealth that they hid in the village [when they fled] were ruined and taken by the Tatmadaw.

Is there any barrier for you to return to your original village?

Currently, we have no barrier.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

We cannot say that there is peace in the community because we often see the military movement such as marching with full weapons.

How do think about the political situation in Myanmar?

It is not in good condition. The Myanmar government attempt to influence civilians and minorities. They do not really seem to maintain peace but prepare for fighting.

What kind of support is needed for refugees who are going to be repatriated?

They need housing lands and lands for their livelihoods.

Do you have anything else to suggest or share with us?

I am thankful for being able to share my experiences to be heard. We hope that our leaders will do their best.

Would you allow us to use the information in publication?

Yes, you can use it. All I have shared was truly witnessed and real experiences I have seen.

Source #50

Source doc #	Source # 50
Log #	18-128-A6-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Pc--- (male, 49), Pd---village, Noh Taw Plah village tract, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District. (November 2018)

What is your religion and ethnicity?

I am Karen, Christian.

You have an important responsibility in the village so I would like to interview you about the village situation through your experiences. Could I interview you?

Yes, I can tell you about my experiences.

Did you ever experience conflict in the past?

Do you mean human rights violations in this country?

Yes.

Regarding the human rights violations in Dooplaya District, the Baman people [Tatmadaw] attacked us and we were forced to porter; forced to carry things [ammunitions/military supplies].

Do you remember the year?

I do not remember. I did not remember to note the incident date at that time. But, it was around ten years ago.

How did they [Tatmadaw] abuse villagers?

The incidents that I saw and experienced are; the Tatmadaw arrested anyone they encountered on their way and forced them to work for them. Some villagers were released from the porters by the Tatmadaw and some of them had to escape [from being porters]. Whenever they entered

the village, they entered with brutal behavior, looting villagers' chickens and other animals that they could kill for meat. They did these things without permission from the owners, but we did not dare to stop them.

Have you ever been thinking about those experiences?

Yes, I have. I sometimes think about it.

Which kinds of human rights violations did you encounter in your village?

Whenever they [Tatmadaw] arrived in the village, they gradually committed human rights violations against villagers such as arbitrarily arresting villagers and forcing them to work [porter] for them.

Do you remember when they did it?

At that period, we did not know and understand human rights. We did not understand the role of the government; we were just afraid [of the Tatmadaw and the government].

During the conflict period, were you, your family and your villagers displaced?

Yes, we were.

Could you please explain this to me?

A Tatmadaw general sent us a letter ordering all the villagers to move to other villages within ten days. After this ten-day period, they would shoot on sight anyone they saw in the village without questions. The major problem for us was to carry our food [paddy and others] for us.

Do you know why they acted like this?

They persecuted the civilians because of their enemy and they accused us that we were helping their enemy [KNLA]. They knew that we were Karen people, like their enemy.

Would you like to talk about the human rights violations you experienced in the past? And how did it impact your livelihoods?

Do you mean after the incident?

Yes

It disturbed our livelihoods so we could not do what we had to do for our daily livelihood. The Tatmadaw ordered me to be a porter through the village head and said they would release us after two to three day. Anyway, they forced us to be their porters for two weeks, and they did not release us yet. We had to walk [porter with them though their patrol] every day through [Thai-Myanmar] border villages such as Waw Lay, Oo Kree Hta and others villages that I do not remember. During that year I had to be a porter [for Tatmadaw] for a month during the paddy plating period so my farming work was delayed. That year, I decided to work on a plain farm instead of hill farm. Due to my delay, I could not plant on the paddy and I could not prepare the hill farm either. Therefore, I could not work on my farm and I had harvest the paddies of other people during the harvest period [to recover my family livelihoods].

How did this impact your families' livelihoods?

For me, I was in [trauma] fear and I could not control my emotion whenever I heard about the Tatmadaw. When I was in fear, I did not feel safe enough to work for my livelihood so my family faced food shortage.

When did it happen do you think?

It was around ten years ago.

Did villagers in your community face livelihood difficulties as a result of human rights violations?

Some of them had to sell their land and their animals in order to secure a livelihood for their family. Consequently, some of them had to flee to the refugee camp.

Who committed those human rights abuses?

They were Tatmadaw military and we were eye witnesses.

Have any human rights violation abuses that you have experienced been solved?

No, there are no investigations.

Do you know if the victims had access to justice?

I have not seen anything [victims' access to justice].

Do you know if the perpetrators of human rights violation have been punished? What should be done to them?

Because we suffered [human rights violation], we want justice. They [perpetrators] should be punished [...], they might not change their behavior and they might always repeat those [human rights violations].

To change their [perpetrator's] behavior, do you think they should be taken to the court justice system? Do you think they should pay compensation or apologies to you?

They should be taken to court [for justice].

Which justice system do you want them to be taken to; KNU or Myanmar government justice system?

[In doubtful voice] Will the KNU and Myanmar government justice system settle the case with justice as a result? If possible, I want those [human rights violation issues] to be taken to the United Nations [UN] justice court. The UN has the Human Rights Council so they will investigate the case more effectively. .

What was the worst human rights violation you have experienced in your community?

Displacement was the worst human rights violation facing civilians in my community. We were not rich families so we faced poverty and food shortage.

Do you know about the peace process? How do you know about it?

I do not understand the root cause of it and I have not even learned about it so I do not understand the process and the objective of it.

How does the peace process relevant to you do you think?

It is relevant to me because there is no fighting and I do not have to be a porter.

How much do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)?

I do not know about it [NCA]. I think this work [NCA process] will improve the human rights situation.

What do you know about the peace process?

Do you mean the peace process in the future?

Yes.

If the peace process is successful, there will be peace and everyone will be able to create their livelihoods.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

I expect that there will be peace and improvement [everything] in the community.

In your perspective, what will the peace process bring for you?

I do not have special expectation from the peace process for myself, but when I am thinking of what our forefather said, "Even if there will be peace, the peace process will still be in danger [insecure situation]".

What kind of danger do you mean?

Injustice and robbery can be on our journey.

Do you think there is peace in your village?

There is no peace yet because I have not seeing the fruits [of the peace process] in my village yet.

Why haven't you see the benefits of the peace process yet?

In my village and my community, everyone can talk about human rights, but I do not see everyone practice human rights [treaty] and work for human rights.

How does the peace process impact and benefit your life in the community?

If the peace process is organised effectively, it will benefit the local civilians' livelihoods. If there are no more [human rights] violations and force portering, then local civilians can work in happiness.

In your own perspective, do you feel safer now?

No, not yet.

Why?

Because, I do not see the people who govern the country prepare and work on the security of local civilians.

Have your livelihoods improved?

The improvement [...] is that we do not have to be afraid of the military and there is no more portering.

What does peace mean to you?

When there is genuine peace, everyone should benefit from it and they should be able to work [for their livelihoods] so that there will [eventually] be improvement [in the community].

In your perspective, what do you think are the biggest barriers in making sustainable peace?

I think it depends on each of the civilians. If they acknowledge the human rights, they can build

peace and there will be sustainable peace.

If you would have the opportunity and the power to change something to achieve sustainable peace, what would you like to change?

I want to change the injustice into justice in my community. Everyone will know the human rights, what human rights look like and they will also know their own rights. So that people [civilians] can change make change.

Do you think there is equality in your community?

We have [some equality], but it is not complete yet.

Why?

I cannot explain all the reasons. I think some reasons might be because they [authority] do not know their rights or other people's rights and some of them want to violate the human rights.

If you have an opportunity to provide your opinion to the Myanmar and KNU governments, what suggestion would you like to give to improve the peace process?

Both of them should have government systems and departments without violation abuses [then there will be improvement [peace].

Which governments do you think will bring you peace and justice?

Regarding the peace process and justice?

Yes,

I think the KNU.

Why?

They [KNU] desire to live with freedom as an ethnic group and protect the Karen. Although they live in a country controlled by nationalism [Burmanisation], I think they will find a way to build peace.

What can you contribute to the peace process as a civilian?

As we are civilians, we have to live in peace and be an example to others. We need peace; if you do not live in peace we will not have access to peace.

What was the main root cause of the human rights violation in your community?

When there were human rights violations, the number of the civilians in the community decreased and our livelihoods became worse. If we could work on our farm for our livelihoods, there will be prosperity for us [...] and there will be life improvement in the community.

What human rights violations do women face in your community?

Due to the conflict and the government, women still have to be concerned about their security while travelling. We also heard that this [rape] happened to women.

What human rights violations do ethnic or religion minorities face in your community?

It [human rights violation] is not because of the religion but because of ethnicity.

Why?

As an ethnic group, we want to live in freedom. People [Tatmadaw and Myanmar government]

probably oppressed us because of our lack of education and knowledge.

What does justice mean to you?

I do not understand justice clearly.

It means the truth.

The truth is, everyone has to see and know what the authorities] say. . We can speak the truth. We can ask other people to do the right thing, but if we do not practice it, then it is not the real truth.

What is the justice system in your village?

I do not see a fruitful justice [system] in my village. The leaders [local authorities] are responsible for taking action on any incident, but they do not do it.

Why don't they fulfill their responsibility?

Maybe they might not know their responsibilities, they do not want to do it or they just want the case to be forgotten.

How the cases are usually investigated in your village? By the KNU or Myanmar government authorities?

It [the problem of no investigation on the cases] is with both governments [KNU and Myanmar government].

Why did they take action towards justice?

I do not know why did not take action towards justice, but I understand that they should act in the investigation and settle the case. There is impunity and injustice. [...]

Do you believe the justice system in your village?

As I mentioned earlier, I do not completely believe in it yet.

Why? What is your concern?

From what I witnessed, I did not see a fruitful result so I do not believe it yet.

Have you ever seen and heard about bribery in the justice system?

I have heard about it, but have not seen it. It happened in the KNU justice system because the rich opposition [plaintiff or defendant] bribed the judge.

What are the barriers to achieve justice?

The barrier to achieve justice is money [bribery] or powerful actors. [...]

What do you want to improve in the justice system? Does the court system cause any human rights violations?

Yes, it caused human rights violations so I want the authorities [of the justice system] to improve the justice system.

How do you want them to improve it? Who should improve it?

I think people who work on human rights violation cases should develop and improve the justice court system.

Looking back at the past human rights abuses, what kind of reparation or justice do you want? For example, would you want to take the case to the court? Would you want a compensation or reparation? Would you want an official apology?

In my opinion, I do not want compensation and apology but I want change. I want them [perpetrators] to transform to the good behavior and bring justice. I want people [higher authority] to judge authorities [perpetrators] and so they change their behavior.

What do you want to bring you peace?

I want all the country leaders in all departments to improve in a positive way

Who are, in your opinion, responsible for the past human rights abuses? The KNU or Myanmar government?

It the incidents were caused by Myanmar government and in the Myanmar government control area, they are responsible o and should bring justice. If the incidents were caused by the KNU in KNU controlled area, the KNU is the responsible actor. Thus, if the incidents were caused between civilians, the civilians are the responsible actor and we should know how live in peace.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

I would like to suggest that all people should know their rights and other peoples' rights.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

The best way is if human rights workers [UNHRC] spread awareness and take action against any governments who violate human rights.

Why should the human rights groups [workers] take action against the perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They [perpetrators] should understand the consequences of their action on the human rights. People in the whole country should understand the human rights.

Were you displaced during the conflict period? If yes, where did you displace to?

I fled to other villages and then I moved to Kyain village [now town].

How long were you displaced?

I do not remember.

What were the main root causes of the conflict?

The root cause was the fighting between the KNU [KNLA] and the Myanmar government military. Therefore, the fighting consequently caused the displacement of the civilians.

During that conflict period, how did the survivors (IDPs) live?

During that period, we could not work on our farm for our livelihoods due to the safety risks. When we were displaced in other villages, we did not have land to farm so we just had to work as daily laborers. Some of us returned to the village to provide for their family in a risky security condition. We faced food shortage because we could not work on our farms due to the security concerns.

Do you feel secure in your village?

I do not feel completely secure yet. I still have to live with [security] concerns.

Why?

I do not trust the two armed groups [KNLA and Tatmadaw]. I worry that one day they might fight against each other because I know that they do not like each other yet [They stopped the fighting because of the ceasefire [NCA code of conduct].

What concerns do you have?

I think both of them [KNLA and Tatmadaw] cannot give share power with each other.

What are your concerns for the future?

I worry that the fighting will start again because, as I previously mentioned, the two groups [KNLA and Tatmadaw] do not accepts each other's' rights. . Therefore, I think the fighting possibly will happen again.

If the fighting happens again, what will, in your opinion, be the negative consequences?

Civilians will face the same problems as in the past.

Do you have anything you would like to add?

We [civilians] want access to genuine justice and the people who govern the country [KNU/Myanmar government] should love and protect the civilians, build unity among the civilians and bring justice for the civilians.

Can we [KHRG] use your information for publication?

Yes, you can. I shared the information that I have been experiencing.

Can I take your picture?

Yes, you can.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Source #51

Source doc #	Source # 51
Log #	18-135-A3-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Thaton Interview | Naw Pt--- (female, 58), Pu---village, Bilin Township, Thaton District (December 2018)

What is your religion and ethnicity?

Karen, Christian

How many family members do you have?

My family has five members [including me].

How many children do you have?

I have three children.

How old is your oldest and what is his marital status?

He is 26 years old and he/she is single.

What is his job?

He/she migrated to Thailand for a job opportunity.

How old is your youngest child and what is [he/she] doing?

My youngest child is a student in high school. My second child is 19 years old and studies at seminary school.

What is your job and responsibility in the village?

I am a farmer and school principal.

How long have you been a teacher?

I have been a teacher for 36 years.

Do you have any other responsibility?

I am also a village KWO chairperson.

How many households are there in Pu--- village?

There are [censored for security] households.

What kinds of job do the villagers have?

They are working on hill farms, but mice damaged our paddy harvest this year.

Have you ever experienced conflict?

Oh I cannot even describe all of the [conflicts] I experienced when I first returned to this place as a teacher. The Tatmadaw gradually entered into the village. Even though I am a teacher, I had to be a porter for the Tatmadaw. Whenever the Tatmadaw came, they ordered me to go to them and used me as a village head to fulfill their demands. I had to do whatever they demanded; I arrested porters for them, I brought them pigs and chickens for their food, looked for allies for them. Honestly, at that time, I did not even have time to challenge the orders from the Tatmadaw. I could not teach students peacefully like now. Now, I tell young teachers that they are lucky. I am not lucky because when I was a teacher during the conflict period. When the Tatmadaw came in day or night time, they ordered me to meet them and obey their orders.

Did the Tatmadaw torture you?

No, they never did it to me. I feared them [Tatmadaw] a lot and worried that they would hit me so whenever fierce Tatmadaw generals came, I always tried to be nice and humble to them by bringing them food and cooking [meal] for them in order to make them satisfied so that they would not be cruel to us [villagers]. If they hit me, I would die.

When did this conflict happen?

It was when I was young, 22 years old. It was during the "Four Cuts Strategy" when the Tatmadaw military troops were huge. The Tatmadaw soldiers used to slap my face and threatened me in many ways. Fortunately, they never tortured me. They did not even allow me

to teach Karen language at school. One Tatmadaw general hated me a lot and told me that "Teaching Karen language is like supporting the Karen National Union (KNU). You are not a pure teacher. You are a teacher supporting the KNU." They were attacking villagers and the school. Oh there are a lot of [human rights violation] abuses. We could not even finish describing these anymore.

Yes, you can report any abuses you experienced.

Bo Meh Lo was known as a fierce Tatmadaw general and I always had to satisfy him. He threatened me in many ways including taking out his penis and holding it in front of me and saying, "T'Kaw Paw! T'Kaw Paw! Look at this! Look at this!" Therefore, I was too afraid of him and I did not even dare to glance at it. It was very dangerous. The other Tatmadaw general was Hpa Cheh Daw and ordered all villagers to meet him in the monastery. He threatened villagers in several forms such as pointing at villagers' mouths with guns and pointing at villagers with knives. I faced a lot of violations.

Did those violations happen during the "Four Cuts Tactic" period?

Yes

How long did you have to face it?

That period last until the 2012 Preliminary Ceasefire. After that, we can live a little bit more peaceful and I sleep better now and my skin looks healthier. Before the ceasefire, I slept in fear and I had to meet the Tatmadaw whenever they entered into the village. I was in too much fear, but my fellow villagers were even more fearful than me so I always had to meet with the Tatmadaw. I remember one time, the Tatmadaw military told me that they would kill me so at that time, I was so much fear and shacking so much I could not sleep.

Do you often think about those experiences?

Yes, I can see it in front of my eyes everywhere. Whenever I think about my experiences, I am in disbelief like "OMG, I got through it well by the grace of God". I was praying a lot in that period. Even when I talked to the Tatmadaw, I was reciting scriptures in my heart because I was in too much fear. I am an eye witness of the Tatmadaw torturing and threatening villagers in front of me; pointing at villagers' mouths with a gun, pointing at villagers' bodies with knives, putting cigarette butts which they were smoking [on villagers' bodies] and punching the villagers' jaws until they fell over unconsciously. I saw this kind of torture a lot in the past.

Who were the perpetrators?

They were the Tatmadaw military.

Where there any human rights abuses happening in your area in the past?

We had to be afraid of all of the armed groups and had to obey to their orders. I do not lie.

Why you were afraid of the Karen armed group?

They also ordered us to send news whenever the Tatmadaw came and we also had to be afraid of the Tatmadaw military. We provided them with news [about Tatmadaw as much as we could but if the Tatmadaw knew, we would be in trouble. They [KNLA] also threatened us that they would fire guns and burn down the village if we did not provide them with information..

What types of abuses did you see? For example, killing, beating ...

The Tatmadaw military shot villagers who were hiding from them [seeking safe shelter]. They

shot and killed three to four villagers every time.

When did it happen?

I do not remember the date.

Did any human right abuses occur in your community recently?

After 2016, I did not see these kinds of human rights abuses happen [in my community].

What was the worse experience that you had during the conflict period?

It was when Tatmadaw military was attacking because we were in danger and in fear. We had to obey to every order from them. They saw me as a leader of the village and if I could not fulfill their demands, they scorned me saying that I could not manage the villagers. So when they ordered me to look for porters, I had to find porters for them. When they ordered me to look for an ally, I had to look for ally. If I could fulfill their order, they were satisfied. On the other hand, villagers were also in fear because the Tatmadaw military were committing abuses whenever they came to the village. So male villagers always ran away before the Tatmadaw arrived only women [and children] stayed. We [women] also felt insecure when all the men were gone. When I faced this situation, I would have liked to run away, but I did not because I felt sorry for my fellow villagers.

Were you or your family displaced?

Yes, the Tatmadaw military forced us to displace three times. Some families displaced to Pv---village and some displaced to Pw---village.

What problems did you face during the displacement period?

At that time I was a student. There would be a lot of problems at that time because the Tatmadaw military restricted the freedom of movement of villagers at that period.

How did the conflict affect your livelihoods?

During the conflict period, we could not work on our hill farms. Even at school, I had to prepare a hole for students in order to hide [from the bullets]. When we heard the sound of guns, we all hid in the hole. The Tatmadaw military prohibited us from travelling to our farms so it affected our livelihoods a lot. They restricted our freedom of movement because we had to get a recommendation letter from them whenever we wanted to go out. It was very difficult situation, especially when my son died. At that time, if I would have had medicine for him, he would not have died. When I asked them for medicine, they replied to me that, "We bring medicine for adults only so we do not have it for the children." You see, they were heartless so they did not help me cure my children. They did not have good hearts to help civilians.

Do you mean your son died because of a lack of access to medicines?

Yes, he got diarrhea and vomited at the same time. We couldn't access even one tablet of B1 for treatment to save his life so he died. I was deeply sad.

How old was he?

He was two years old.

How did you feel at that time?

I was deeply sorry because I could not provide medicine for him due to the conflict. The Tatmadaw military did not have a favor system to protect the civilians and help the civilians; they were only committing evil violence against civilians.

What kind of human rights abuses did you face during the displacement?

We faced food and clothing shortage. We had to eat boiled rice with bamboo shoot. Sometimes, we had to eat rice mixed with noodles because we did not have rice. Some people could only have one meal per day. We did not feel secure enough to look for food at that time.

When did it happen?

I was in 2000.

Could you forget about this experience?

No, I will never forget it in any life.

Are you always thinking of it?

Yes, I always see my mom's face in front of my eyes when I was serving her rice [without any curry] so she told me that, "My dear daughter, if you serve me food like this, I cannot live!" I felt bad for my mother.

Was it during the conflict period?

Yes, it was.

Do villagers in your community face human rights abuses?

Yes, they did. Tatmadaw arrested them, tied them up, beat them, shot them, and ordered chickens, pigs and money if any arrested villager ran away.

What were the villagers' strategies when they faced problems?

We just had to fulfill their demands; if they ordered a chicken, we had to provide a chicken. Even when we did not have food, we had to combine the food that we had and take it to the Tatmadaw whenever they ordered us.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They were the Myanmar military.

Were there any other perpetrators?

No

According to your experiences you described above, have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Has any action being taken against the human rights abuses actors?

I did not see anything [about the investigation or resolve].

Was there any justice for the victims of human rights abuses?

No, there is no justice [for them].

Can you explain why there is no justice [for the victim]?

The perpetrators [Tatmadaw] came here [villages] doing bad things [abusing human rights violation]. They did not come to do good things [protect us].

Did they ever protect civilians?

No, they had not.

Have you ever seen the [human rights abuses] perpetrators being punished?

No, nobody dares to punish them [Tatmadaw]. Bamar [Tatmadaw] are like the proverb, "If we step on their shit, they curse us "my dick". If they step on our shit, they curse us "my dick"." [It means, Bamar are always blaming others even it was their own fault.]

What do you think should happen to the perpetrators of human rights abuses? What do you want them to be punished?

I want them to be given a punishment that will change their behavior to prevent them from committing human rights violations against us ever again. To do so, they may stay in their place, and we will stay in our place in a peaceful and delightful situation. Our dream is to live peacefully so it will be the best thing if people [authorities] give them [Tatmadaw] the proper punishment.

Should they go to court?

Yes.

What do you want the perpetrators to do for you?

I want peace and to live in happiness.

If the perpetrators with the position of power, what do you want them to be punish? Should they lose power?

If they change after receiving proportional punishments, they can still maintain their positions. However, if they do not change, the best solution is them losing their position of power.

What do you think should be done for the people who were the victims of human rights abuses during the conflict period? For example, the husband of a woman was murdered [by armed actor] so what kind of humanitarian aid should be provide to her?

People should look after her and provide the necessary humanitarian support.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

There is no peace between them [Tatmadaw] and the Karen National Union [KNU] because they see each other as bad [enemy]. In the past, my father was a KNU [Karen National Liberation Army] general so whenever the Tatmadaw came to the village, they questioned us about my father. Eventually my mother had to flee but then she was arrested by the Tatmadaw. She was put in prison with my younger brother for around two years. They blamed us and never did a good thing for us [Tatmadaw kidnapping].

Where was she imprisoned and how long?

It was a Myanmar prison and she was there for almost two years.

Why was she punished?

It is because she was a [KNLA] Major's wife so she was kidnapped by the Tatmadaw. The Tatmadaw called the KNLA "Karen Tha Bo [rebel]" which means "bad people" My mother was Tha Bo's wife so they arrested my mother in order to persuade my father to surrender. My father did not go to my mother and was eventually killed by KNLA General Bo Mya and another major. You might know about the mass murder of KNLA majors, committed by General Bo Mya one of the victims included my father.

Why he was murdered?

At that time, my father and Bo Kyaw Htoe were elected to be District administrator and my father won the votes. Bo Kyaw Htoe was not satisfied with the election so he tricked my father and eventually my father was murdered. If he would not have died, she would not have been released.

How did your mother get released from the prison?

She was released after my father died. At that time, the Tatmadaw arbitrarily checked my whole house without permission when we were displaced in the forest, in Px---and Py---area.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

I think the ceasefire is for the villagers to be able to live in peace and free from [human rights] violations.

What do you think about the ceasefire?

I think it is good.

Why?

Because we are not faced with violent Tatmadaw attacks like before; they used to come into the village and question us, "Where are Nga Pway [meaning 'ringworm' is SLORC/SPDC slang for Karen soldiers? You are hiding the Nga Pway. Tell them to work with us and surrender so that you will live in peace. Because of Kaw Thoo Lei Nga Pway, you are now in trouble."

Is the ceasefire relevant to you? If yes, how?

Yes, because now I can teach the students well and we do not have to be concerned about security like in the past. In the past, we had to teach in fear. The fighting broke out when the Tatmadaw came to the community and met with Karen [KNLA]. Therefore, I think the ceasefire is good.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]? How do you know about it?

Yes, I know it in the village. I know that the NCA is them [Myanmar government and Ethnic Armed Organisations] holding hands together [to build peace].

What do you expect to get from the peace process?

I hope there will be peace in my community someday. If the conflict continues, it may impact villagers, put villagers at risk of starvation, sickness and poverty. So I want the peace process to continue in the future. I cannot suffer anymore. I want all of my people to live peacefully in the community.

Do you think there is peace in your village yet?

Not yet.

Why?

Sometimes, we don't have peace between us in the village.

How does the peace process affect your life?

We now have access to support such as school buildings, books, and financial support for the teachers. In the past, we never had it. We could not even stay [teach] in the village due to safety

issues. Now, our children and students have access to enough books [text books and note books].

Do you still face any problems now, during the peace process?

Yes

Can you give an example please?

Now, we face problems related to the diversity of the teachers; Myanmar government teachers are assigned to teach in our school and we also have local village teachers.

What kinds of conflict occur between the Myanmar government teachers and local community teachers?

The Myanmar government teachers are from far away and they often travel [from their village to school]. In that respect, we possibly understand each other. Sometimes, the Myanmar teachers look down [discriminate] local teachers as they do not know anything. The Myanmar government teachers graduated from college so they are more educated.

Is your school a government school?

Yes, it is a government school now, but in the past there was a community school. Now, all government teachers ran away [no government teacher now].

When did the school transfer into a Myanmar government school?

It was in 2015. The government sends their teachers to our school in 2017.

When the government teachers were in the village, did it cause any problem to the student's parents?

No, there is no problem now.

How has the peace process affected the lives of the people in your community?

We can now live and work for our livelihoods in peace.

Do you feel completely safe during the peace process?

Not yet

Can you explain this please?

I am concerned for what will happen with my life, whether there will be peace or not. This is my concern.

Has your livelihood improved?

Yes, it improved. We still face problems and mice damaged our paddy.

What does peace mean to you?

For me, peace means that we can live without any concerns about our freedom of movement and sleep without having to worry.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier for sustainable peace?

If the Myanmar government and military are honest and serious about the peace process, there will be genuine peace. If they are untrustworthy like in the proverb, "Their mouth talks about God!! God!! But their hands are clumsy", which means that their actions are different from their

words, and then there will be no sustainable peace.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

They should follow the rule of the law [treaty, NCA] they have agreed on. I want to see the [Myanmar] government do the right thing and their actions should be in line with their words. If not, there will be no peace.

Which governments [KNU/Myanmar] do you mean?

Myanmar government.

How about KNU government?

Yes, I want them to follow the rules they have agreed on. Both of them [KNU and Myanmar government] have to live in harmony.

If you could change one thing in peace process, what would it be?

I want to live in harmony and peace without problems.

If you would have an opportunity to share your ideas about improving the peace process, what suggestions would you like to give to the KNU and Myanmar government?

I suggest both to live in, peace and unity. They should understand each other, not blame each other and forgive each other the conflicts and mistakes that happened in the past. Let's move forward and build peace for our children.

Which governments do you think could build peace for you?

Both of the governments should build peace together because one government could not build peace. I want them to bring peace for us together.

What kind of peace do you want them to provide for you?

As I mentioned above, I want them to provide me peace in my life without any violence.

As you are a civilian, what could you do to contribute to the peace process?

I do not know.

What are the main human rights violations in your community? For example land abuses, education.

As I told you before, the challenges that we face are Myanmar government teachers discriminating and looking down on local community teachers.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

Maybe.

What are they?

I do not remember.

What are the current human abuses facing women in your community?

There is domestic violence happening against women and children when men return home drunk.

Do the women in your community feel secure travelling alone?

Not yet, because we sometimes have to be afraid of head cutters [kidnappers] so we have to

travel with our friends.

How about armed groups?

Yes, we have to be afraid of them.

What are the human rights abuses challenges facing minorities? For example, ethnic, religion, language

We can teach Karen now.

Do you feel like your rights as a minority are respected?

Yes, they do.

What does justice mean to you? For example, one abuse happens in you village, do people [leaders] take action? Is the case resolved or not?

If any abuses happen in the village, people [leaders] solve the cases.

What is the justice system in your village? KNU/Myanmar government?

KNU

Do you feel that is fair?

Yes, I do.

What should be done to stop the human rights abuses [in your community]?

[They] need to investigate the cases and prosecute [the perpetrators]. We should live in unity and peace. Take action with justice [in the court system].

Who are responsible for the court system?

My people [KNU] are responsible.

Do you want the cases to be taken to the court?

Yes, I want to take it to the court.

If you are a victim, what do you want?

I want all local population to be able to live in peace, unity, happiness and with knowledge.

What do you want from the perpetrators?

I think the perpetrators were uneducated so they committed human rights violations. Thus, they should be taught with awareness and knowledge of humanity.

Which governments are responsible for justice?

Both of them are responsible.

How do you want them to do this?

I want them to hold hands and work together in unity. They should not hold arms [weapons] anymore.

What is the best way to stop the human rights violations in your community and Myanmar?

I want peace. Leaders and educated people should build peace.

My interview is finished now. Do you have anything that you want to add more?

I want my people to be self-determined and without oppression by any authorities; Karen people in our land and Bamar in their land. I want equality; no blaming and discriminating each other. There should be unity. If not, there will never be peace in our country. So we will be in peace like one [Karen] proverb said, "If younger siblings are down, the older siblings should raise them up. If the older siblings are down, the younger siblings should raise them up."

Anything else?

No

**Thank you so much Tharamu for your time and providing information for us [KNU].
Can I use your information and photos?**

Yes, you can.

Thank you.

Source #52

Source doc #	Source # 52
Log #	18-118-A3-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Da--- (male, 56), Db--- village, T'Hkaw Pwar village tract, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

Are you married?

Yes

What about your religion?

Christian.

We will keep your name, your photo and your place censored for your security. Now let's start our interview. The first question is, have you experienced conflict?

Yes, I experienced a lot of things before the NCA. The place where we are living is mixed control area between KNU and Myanmar government. We, Karen people are not trusted by others as I know so far. We had conflict with Tatmadaw and they always misunderstand us and even punish us.

Do you often think about what you have experienced?

It is not only often. I always think about it. We cannot forget what we experienced before the NCA and we sometimes share to our children about it.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

Yes, killings happened a lot before in my area here but I have not seen any rape cases here.

Some villagers were killed because they were part of the KNU and KNLA.

When did it happen? Did it happen during 'Four Cuts' doctrine?

Yes, but 'Four Cuts' doctrine happened when I was in 3 or 4 standard [age 8 or 9] in Dc---village. Tatmadaw came and based their army camps around there. It was terrible because we had to flee.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The worst experience was when Tatmadaw used guerrilla attacks [against KNLA]. That time was worse than other conflict periods for our villagers here. At that time, they threatened us and even violated us.

How did they violate you?

They called [arrested] us and then beat some of us to death.

What was the worst experience for you?

I also worked as a village leader in the past. When I had to face them [Tatmadaw], I did not even dare to face them because when they asked us to look for something for them, it was something quite impossible to find. When we could not find something for them, they threatened that they would kill us.

What were the things they asked you to find for them?

Last time, they told us to find the oil of chicken. How can you find chicken oil easily? Sometimes, they wrote us a letter saying that we had to look for a curry for them. But they only gave us limited time, like 30 minutes. They said, if we take more than 30 minutes, then we will face the death penalty. We villagers are afraid of them so we tried our very best even though what they demanded was challenging.

Have you ever been late for what they demanded?

No because villagers knew if they did not do exactly what was demanded, they or I would be beaten. The villagers also understood our problem (as a village leader) so they tried their best to complete it. We experienced it with fear.

Have you been arrested by Tatmadaw?

I have never been arrested but I have been demanded to follow their soldiers before.

Were you asked to follow them to their army camp?

Yes.

Were you beaten before?

No.

Were you or your family displaced?

No, my family was not displaced. As you know, we have to stay between the KNU and Myanmar government and act properly between them. The people who are responsible in the KNU side mostly had to run away. Men including old people had to hide themselves in the jungle sometimes.

How many times did you hide yourselves?

We cannot count how many times we ran away when we were afraid of being recruited as porters. We ran away because of that so many times, more than a hundred times.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

I am certain that it happened but I just did not witness it.

What did they do to you when they asked you to go to them?

They just called me and investigated me and let me come back. But they let me sleep there for a night once. They called every village head in this area to go and meet them.

Do you still remember when it happened?

It was when I was over 40 years old.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

It did not affect our livelihood that much but we faced difficulties in our work because our farms were very far from us and we had to sign our names in their [Tatmadaw] office once every three days. They did not let us sleep in our farm or build a hut when we went to the farms. In rainy season, we needed to stay in a hut but they did not let us stay there, so we had to come back to our house in the village. Before, they used to apply the saying "I do not want to hear the bottle has a hole, but I want see the bottle full of water". They did like that all the time. They did not understand our problems. They asked us to pay a cart of paddy for each acre of farmland. Some people did not have even one acre but still had to pay a cart of paddy. If we could not pay them, they used armed force and threatened us.

Were they Tatmadaw?

Yes. If we sell our paddy outside, we will get 1,000 kyat but when we sold to them, we only got 500 kyat. Our paddy could equal 20 baskets in a cart if we sell to them.

Could you travel well?

We had to travel in secret. We had to look at the situation before travelling.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They were Tatmadaw. We are able to travel a little bit easier since the NCA.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

The Tatmadaw did not resolve anything but the villagers had to solve the problems with money in order to live our lives easier which means if we did not pay money to them, they would give us trouble.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses?

I think it has nothing to do with justice. The facts I told you did not have any justice. Most victims were local civilians and I did not see any justice for them.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

No, I have never seen the perpetrators (Tatmadaw) being punished. They even took the opportunity [shield their soldiers from persecution to impunity] instead of giving the punishment to the perpetrators. During that time, either villagers or Tatmadaw made mistakes; villagers were always blamed with the fault by Tatmadaw.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

We do not understand about what types of punishment they should be punished [by law] but, we just want to live, work and travel in peace without their disturbance.

Do you think the perpetrators should be sent to court or should pay reparations to victims or should they lose their position of power?

I think if we follow the law, the perpetrators should go to court to be fair for the victims. They should be punished according to the law.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

I think most of the villagers face poverty. We have to ask for money from others and we have debts. Therefore, I would like to suggest that it would be helpful for us if we have interest-free capital [money or food loaning] in our village. I think it will be useful for us.

What do you think is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

The root cause is military greed of land and power.

What do you know about the ceasefire as you are a [position censor for security]?

I just understand that in this ceasefire, we want to have a chance to rule our own people and by our people which is a self-ruling system. I think we will have peace if we get freedom. We also need equality and justice.

According to what you know about the ceasefire, what do you think about it?

I think our leaders have tried their best for signing this ceasefire agreement and we, civilians also want it to happen.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

I think as a civilian, the needs of our people are the same as my needs. Therefore, if this ceasefire is relevant to my people, it is relevant to me as well because we are together as one.

Could you also please tell us how much do you know about the peace process?

I do not know much about it since I did not go to meetings or conferences but as we heard from the leaders, they are trying to move forward to be able to achieve a sustainable peace. But as we can see, this current peace process is not moving forward but sort of moving backward instead. It becomes the concern of the civilians.

How did you know about this peace process?

I listen to our leaders and I also observe it myself sometimes. I see it from the phone (internet) as well.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

We want to see peace between Myanmar government and the ethnic groups. I also want to do things with freedom. We want to have the opportunity to do the things we want to do. I expect justice in this peace process.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

No. I do not think there is peace in my village now.

How has the peace process affected your life? What benefits do you get from the peace process?

The fear and taxation is decreasing a little bit but we still have concerns about this situation. If this peace process does not go well, we will be faced with the conflict again so we do not want to face things like that.

Do you still have forced porter recruitment in your area after NCA?

No.

Do you still need to pay for taxation?

No. We can work and travel easier than before.

What about the weakness or disadvantage of NCA?

We do not hear about weaknesses like in the past. But as we live between two government groups and they have their own restricted areas, we still hear that they cross each other's areas. Especially, we have heard that Tatmadaw side cross into the KNU's restricted areas regularly.

Does the Tatmadaw recognize or respect the area that KNU has restricted?

I do not understand about that but Tatmadaw intends to cross KNU's restricted areas. We still have concerns about that.

Do you feel safer now?

I do not think we have enough safety now.

Has your livelihood improved?

We still have difficulties in our livelihood because we just started it again now.

What does peace mean to you?

For me, peace means civilians must have rights and freedom to speak, to work and to travel. Before, we did not dare to speak. If we wanted to say something, we had to look around first. I hope that we can speak and work in peace from now.

What do you think about the peace process?

I think ethnic groups and Myanmar government still need to try very hard to get to sustainable peace. We have almost 60 to 70 years of the revolution period so it is not easy to attain sustainable peace. I think the leaders will need to take time for this.

Do you know what local populations think about the peace process? Do they still have concern?

Some local people try to know about the situation but some people are not interested. The situation of this peace process does not seem good. Therefore, I think the leaders must do something to fix the problems that happen during the peace process in whatever ways.

Do you think the situation could possibly get back like the past or moving forward with this peace process?

For my personal opinion, I think it can become like the past easily.

In your perspective or local villagers' perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

I think the barriers will be greed and wanting to have power.

Which side of government are you talking about?

Myanmar government.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

I think the Myanmar government should amend or change their policy in order to run the peace process well.

What are those changes that the Myanmar government should do?

As we can see, Tatmadaw military want to take up authority and there is also no justice so ethnic groups and civilians do not want it to happen. If Tatmadaw really only want peace then they should change their policy can lead us to sustainable peace.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

My opinion to both Myanmar government and KNU authorities is to change the wrong things to the right things. Because, Myanmar government want to take the power alone. If they do not change that, and other ethnic groups do not agree with their current policy, it can lead to conflict easily.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I do not think it is easy for government to guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar in the current situation because there is no justice. Political parties and bribery are still there. Unless those things disappear, it will not be easy to have justice.

So you mean there is no government that could guarantee for us to access to peace and justice as long as we have one-sided political parties and bribery?

Yes. Those things should be lost.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I cannot contribute any special thing but we all have the responsibility to do what we can do.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

Before the NCA, there was a case about Htee Gu Noh [lake or also known as community pastureland]. The local populations recognized it as Htee Noh area where the animals went for food or rest if the lake dried up. But we do not understand the map. Now, people are farming even inside of Htee Noh lake so it can be dangerous for animals and can harm that Htee Noh area. Since we cannot live without animals, if animals cannot get food from there, we will be in trouble. The villages had to relocate during the conflict time. When we moved to other's villages and then later were told that we can now go back to our own village, some people do not want to go back yet. Some people lived in the others' farms. The farm owners will also face problems if they cannot work in their own farms.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihood?

It is just like I told you recently. I do not have much challenge but some people do face livelihood challenges because of the conflict.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

I do not see the challenges that women have so far except for livelihood challenges. We are living here and if we do not work, we cannot survive.

You said that you can go back and live in your place if you want to right? Did Myanmar government release a statement regarding that case?

I do not think Myanmar government released a statement on that issue. I think KNU arranged things for us to have the opportunity to go back and live in our village.

What about Htee Noh (community pastureland) one?

For that one, we put the signpost saying "do not trespass Htee Noh (pastureland)" so I think some land authorities arranged the land titles for us.

Does KNU or Myanmar government help in solving this problem?

We submitted our case to Myanmar government and they came but they did not do anything although they promised us they will do something. So there is no change.

That's why it caused the conflict that villagers fight against each other with a knife, right?

Yes. They are the villagers from our community. One of them [villagers who fought against each other with knife] was a villager who looked after buffalos and the other one was a farmer. However, they did not kill each other during that incident.

What about KNU side? Did they solve anything?

I do not see anything about that either.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities?

We do not have any challenges like that with minorities.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

I think both KNU and Myanmar government should meet and make decisions about what happened in the community, especially about Htee Noh (community pastureland).

What does justice mean to you?

Justice to me means civilians and government should live according to the law. If we do not follow the law, there will not be justice. I also think the law should be above humans and humans should not be above the law.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

The justice system in my village came from the local populations. We make the decisions by ourselves.

So which government justice system are you following?

We follow both governments' systems because sometimes we cannot avoid their systems. We have to go through them depending on the situation.

What do you know about the justice system?

For the Myanmar government, they wrote the law but they do not follow it. KNU is also like that. They cannot follow all the laws they made.

Do you trust Myanmar government justice system?

I do not trust it completely.

What about KNU justice system?

KNU also cannot follow all their laws either so they cannot solve the problems. I also do not trust it completely.

Do you feel that it is fair?

No for both governments.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

Yes. Corruption and bribery are still there in the justice system.

What about in KNU?

I think one sided parties are still there in KNU too. I do not think we have justice yet from either government.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system?

I will tell you the closest cases. We had four motorbike cases in our village this year. We already solved two cases. We still did not solve the other two yet. For us, we would like to solve cases as soon as possible after they happen. But people in a higher position of responsibility from the department above do not solve anything unless they receive some amount of money. They did not ask for money but we can understand that they solve problems only if they receive money.

Are they judge or police?

Police are the first people that we have to give money to.

Have you also seen bribery in KNU justice system?

There was no huge case happening in the KNU side. There were just small cases happened that we can solve on the village level. We make huge cases become small cases and small cases get lost.

What do we need to change to get justice?

We need to change the current situation that has been practiced in Myanmar. For example, bribery.

What do you think is the main reason of practicing bribery? Is it because of the lack of their salary?

I do not think it is because of the lack of salary but this is the policy that they have been practicing for a long time so they cannot easily get rid of it yet.

Do you think bribery should end?

I also think it is because of the innocence or lack of knowledge of civilians. The authorities also do not pay attention to what happens to the civilians. The civilians also do not know their own rights. They do not understand the law and they worry very much about the cases that happen, so they pay to the authorities. I think those are the reasons for bribery.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of bribery?

I think they have to be punished according to the law.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

I think both KNU and Myanmar government should meet together and discuss about human rights cases and come up with a decision. They should not stay in their own place. They should do something for this.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

I think human rights violations like land confiscation become very hot issues in Myanmar. I think they should solve the problem like that in a just way.

As I am recording your voice and I explained about using your information for our upcoming report, can we use it for publication or in our report?

Yes, you can.

Thank you.

Source #53

Source doc #	Source # 53
Log #	18-124-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dawei Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
Full Text	

Mergui-Tavoy Interview | Saw Ea--- (male, 60), Eb--- village, Htee Moh Pwah area, Dawei Township, Mergui-Tavoy District (November 2018)

Have you experienced conflict? How? Do you often think about it?

We as Karen people, we have experienced and suffered a lot in the past. In 1996 and 1997, our people faced the Tatmadaw soldiers' persecution. To be able to escape their persecution, the villagers displaced to other countries and some villagers displaced to the backwoods. Unfortunately, some people suffered from diseases and lost their lives. Likewise, villagers who were arrested by the Tatmadaw soldiers were tortured, killed, raped, and forced to porter supplies mercilessly. Moreover, we had difficulty with our livelihood situation as we fled. As a group, myself as pastor and our village authorities went to meet with Tatmadaw soldiers for our villagers to be able to return. Sadly, the KNU (Karen National Union) didn't stand by our side. They couldn't help us even though we needed help. We were like orphans in the middle of nowhere. As pastor, I had to take a role as village administrator. We tried a lot to protect our people. However, the Tatmadaw soldiers persecuted us for this role. But, we had to take full responsibilities for our people to return to their area of origin.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

When Tatmadaw soldiers came into our village, they arrested villagers. After that, they asked villagers if they have weapons. As for villagers, they used only rifles when they went to their farm and in the forest. The Tatmadaw soldiers asked for M16s and AKs from the villagers so they could be promoted in rank. However, the villagers didn't have any of the guns they wanted, so they were beaten, punched, and tortured by the Tatmadaw soldiers. The villagers also were

forced to nod their head that they possess those guns even though they didn't have it. Tatmadaw soldiers forced villagers to find these guns. That was difficult for the villagers. In that critical time, villagers had to sell their lands and livestock and find the types of guns the Tatmadaw soldiers asked for. During the conflict period, men were captured to be porters. Furthermore, men who were left behind had to transport [the soldiers'] rations to the border. If there were no men available, women were forced to send rations both day and night. Human rights abuses happened from 1996 through 2000. There were still human rights violations in 2001 and 2002. We tried our best to prevent the Tatmadaw soldiers' human right violations. However, human rights abuses happened a lot.

What was the worst experienced that you had during the conflict period?

During the conflict period, either KNU or Tatmadaw viewed us like thorns. We were viewed as spies by both sides. That forced us to live under difficulty and anxiety. They even frightened us that they would fight against each other at our villages. Later, they did as they had said. That's the time when we confronted difficulty.

Were you or your family displaced?

Yes, we were displaced to the backwoods areas for one or two months. Every day we observed if we could go back to our village to worship on Sunday. When the fighting situation seemed to be calm, we sneaked into our village for worship. Sometimes, we gathered together in the forest for worship when the situation got worse.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

We as pastors tried a lot for our rights. It was not because we wanted to influence the villagers, but because we wanted the opportunity to be free to live sustainably in our home area.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

We were so unsatisfied in our livelihoods, because we couldn't do farming and tend our livestock when we had to live under Tatmadaw soldiers' command while they were living in our village.

If you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life or the lives of your community?

We didn't have freedom to work or freedom of education for our children. That's why our children grew up without education. And it was hard to find leaders to administrate the villages.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

We lived in between two governments. But I was neutral between the two groups every time I spoke. As for me, I stood faithfully on the truth. These two governments talked like they cared for the population. However, they didn't actually apply the standards or rules they set. Sometimes, we raised our problems to both governments, but they sometimes ignored and didn't listen carefully to the villagers' voices. As for us, we are longing for our voices to be heard clearly by both governments.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

Helping one another, and solving a matter by cooperation in a just way is the most important thing I can think of to be done with perpetrators. In my perception, the payment of reparation money by the perpetrators is just a temporary solution. All-inclusiveness is important for

governments and the civilians when solving a matter.

What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

In the 2012 preliminary ceasefire, our KNU leaders made appointments with religious leaders and village administrators and asked us if the civilians agree on the peace-making process. They asked our desires for the ceasefire agreement. After that, we answered them that it would be really good to stop fighting instead of increasing the skirmishes in our areas. We had agreement on that because our people faced a difficult situation every time skirmishes took place in our areas. We believed that it would be a lot better for the civilians if there is no more fighting. After the NCA, the civilians faced another problem which was land confiscations by businessmen. That undermined the population's living. So we cannot say the NCA has brought genuine peace in the country. We do hope for genuine peace and sustainable peace which would bring development to our country.

Do you know about Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement or peace process? How much do you know about the peace process? What would you like to know more about? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

As for me, I don't know much about the NCA and how the leaders manage it. Loving one another and staying united with villagers would bring genuine peace. Likewise, there would be real peace in the country and among ethnicities if the government viewed peace the way we do. But peace-making is not in our hands and we don't have responsibility for this. We are not educated about this either.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

Looking back on the peace process, it didn't satisfy us. Our communities faced a lot of difficulties. The populations were in fear. The [government's new] forestry law, and the vacant, fallow and virgin land law, and various kinds of laws threaten the villagers because living here local villagers do not have land titles. Moreover, we were not told what their [government's] arrangements are and how are they going to guarantee our land. The population is still living in fear in this peace process. We all need to be aware and cooperate together for things not to get worse.

Do you feel safer now? Has your livelihood improved?

After the NCA, the transportation situation became better. But in contrast, villagers have struggled for their livelihoods and living conditions. The Myanmar government implemented national park for the purpose of the dam project. These kinds of situations give us doubts about this peace-making. A lot of people are in fear because of these emerging conditions. There is now also gold mining along the river. They extract gold using toxic chemicals that cause the fish to die. After eating those fish, 29 villagers out of 30 suffered from disease. That's why we hope and believe that our leaders can find ways we can cope with the problems that are appearing. We also hope for everybody to cooperate together and heal the problems.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to sustainable peace?

There are various kinds of barriers in making sustainable peace. Before the NCA, there were a lot of development projects coming up. Instead of bringing good results, these development projects brought anxiety for the population in the area. The governments also didn't give one another mutual opportunity in the discussion of the peace process. That's the biggest barrier in

making sustainable peace.

What improvement would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

Mutual understanding, humility, love and consensus are necessary to be able to achieve lasting peace. At the same time, we should have a common sharing of our responsibility. Moreover, the opportunity of autonomy for the ethnic nationalities should be given.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would suggest to both the Myanmar government and the KNU to include the input of the civilians in any decision they make, because they are being selected by the civilians.

Since NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

Even though the government agreed to stop human rights violations since the NCA, the community is still being forced to satisfy the needs of the authorities.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

When we worked on our farm, we were forced to go and work for them. That is one obstacle for us to work for our livelihoods. We were also fined to give them money if we were unable to go because of illness. So we could say that there is no peace in our community.

What human rights challenges do women currently face?

Girls below the age of consent were raped by the men and military. The human rights abuses such as these are increasing in our area. This is the way of destroying the peace process.

What human rights challenges do minorities currently face?

After the NCA, there were human rights challenges facing minorities in Rakhine state. Similar to this, the population in our community hasn't had the chance to come back to live in their place of origin yet, even though the government signed the NCA. We could say that none of the promises have been fulfilled in the country.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

Our rights as humans are not totally respected.

How were your rights violated?

Mainly our culture was not respected. Besides, they tried to annihilate our culture and language. I would like to say that these intimidations are continuing.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice comes when many countries combine efforts. The UNHCR has responsibility to care for people in a just way.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it the Myanmar government or KNU?

In our area neither government practices justice. When it comes to the justice system in the judiciary, there are lots of corrupt practices among governments. Sometimes they make judgments in cases they shouldn't interfere in.

What do you know about this justice system? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

When we look at the rule of law before the NCA in 2015 and the rule of law now, things are the still the same. Before, the corruption was evident, you put your envelope [bribe] on the table. Now, the corruption is given under the table secretly. That brings an answer of no justice in the judiciary.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

Bribery is common nowadays in our area. Everybody wants it. The value of the bribe given depends on how rich or poor he or she is. Yet, no one can avoid the bribery.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to get justice?

In 2017, we experienced a case that made the local population suffer. Instead of tackling a problem in a just way, people who have rank, power and money were favoured over poor people. For instance, a case was easily solved when persons who have power sent out a letter. I could totally say that no justice system was practiced.

If you have experienced past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

There were human rights abuses that affected our livelihood, our homes and even our lives were in danger. That's why we want both KNU and Myanmar government to take this affair seriously for the decreasing of human rights abuses. As for the KNU and Myanmar government, they didn't care and love for the civilians.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want? Would you want to take a case to court?

I just would like leaders to try to monitor the righteousness of the situations that are happening with their involvement.

How would you want justice to become?

Just as governments and employers have principles, we hope the leaders do everything in a just way whenever they are tackling matters. They should live according to rules and principles.

Would you want an official apology? What would bring you a feeling of peace?

Instead of apologizing, we would like a perpetrator to follow the principles in an agreement with the aggrieved in solving a matter.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

Both the Myanmar government and the KNU have full responsibility to give access to justice for human rights abuses.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

To stop human rights violations in our community and around the country, Myanmar is one of the countries that has signed human rights [treaties] together with another 144 countries. So we hope that the Myanmar government will follow these principles.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

Myanmar government and the KNU have the responsibility stop human rights abuses. They need to cooperate together and assign responsible people to monitor the situations that happen.

Would you like to add anything to this conversation?

I think this is enough. Hope to see you again and have conversation.

Would you allow me to use your photos and the information you have provided?

Yes.

Source #54

Source doc #	Source # 54
Log #	18-122-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Taungoo Interview | U Ep--- (male, 55), Eq--- village, Taw Pyar Gyi village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Where do you live?

I live in Eq---n village, Taw Pyar Gyi village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, [Toungoo District], Karen State.

Have you experienced conflict in your village?

Yes. I used to be a village head in 2010. As a village head, I tried to do my best for my village but I was in trouble in 2011.

Can you please tell me about your experiences as a village head?

At that time, how can I say, there was no peace. We had to be afraid of both sides [Tatmadaw and KNLA]. I mean we were innocent victims. We were stuck between two buffalos. [Also], we had to pay taxes [to KNU] because everyone pays taxes. I also had to buy a military cell phone for the other side [Tatmadaw].

Whom did you have to buy a military cell phone for?

I had to buy it for the battalion deputy commander.

Is he [battalion deputy commander] from the Myanmar government's military?

Yes. He was working for the Myanmar government military.

What is his name? What is the name of his battalion?

He was the Tatmadaw Battalion #124 deputy commander, though I forgot his name.

What happened then?

Even though I am Bamar, I had to pay taxes [to the KNU] as a village head because everyone pays. However, I cannot do things for the other side [Tatmadaw] because there was a lack of

rain in the village and also villagers were not doing good business. As I could not fulfill their wishes, they gave me trouble. They said I gave money to the rebels [KNU] but I did not give anything to them. That is why they arrested me because they said I supported [the KNU]. Finally, they put me into jail for three different reasons.

How did they arrest you?

They [Tatmadaw] invited me to go and meet with them because they said they were going to hold a meeting in the village. So I and other elder people went to meet with them. When we were there, they said I paid taxes to the KNU. Afterwards, I went to Nay Pyi Daw for a meeting to discuss access to electricity in the village. They accused me by saying that I had gone to Nay Pyi Daw as a KNU spy. Therefore, they arrested me and they tortured me. They beat me and other elder people from the village with bamboo sticks. Five bamboo sticks were broken for beating us.. Finally, they said I was a deserter. They arrested me according to the [penal code] article 17/1, 17/2 and being a deserter. With three different reasons, they made a decision and I was sentenced to jail for 20 years.

Did you serve in the Tatmadaw before?

Yes. I used to serve in the Tatmadaw for 12 years. After I'd already served for more than 10 years, I really wanted to leave but I couldn't. So I left the army by my own decision. Later, they arrested me as they said I am a deserter. I was very embittered by this. Now I am just working as a gardener. I can live peacefully. I do not work for anybody [armed actors] anymore. I do not do anything which is associated with armed actors. I just live with my family happily.

Were you put in jail as soon as you were arrested?

I was detained in Leik Tho army camp for two weeks [after I was arrested]. Then, I was sent to the detention center at Division level. After that, I was again sent to my mother army camp. I was tortured in the detention center at Division level for one week.

How did they torture you?

They put a wooden stick into a hose and they hit me with that. I was not alone at that time. There were three people including me from Eq--- village. Finally, they [the other two villagers] were sent to Toungoo detention center but I was sent to my mother army camp. Then later I was sent to Toungoo prison.

You mean you were sent to Southern Command headquarters?

Yes. In the past, that [Southern Command headquarters] was called Central Command headquarters. Now they've changed it. It is used as Southern Command headquarters.

How did they [Tatmadaw] interrogate you?

They blindfolded me day and night. They never let me see. When it was time to eat, they fed me with a spoon [as I was blindfolded]. I could only drink water when I ate. They only gave me a bottle of water. Even though I received a bottle of water, I only could drink a little. After that, they did not let me drink water for the whole night. Even if I wanted to use the toilet during the night time, I was not allowed to use the toilet. They let me use the toilet when the morning came. During night time, I had to poo on my clothes on the floor. I had to keep it like that [in the jail] for the whole night. The next morning, I had to throw it in the toilet.

How did they torture you when you were detained?

They gave me electric shocks. They ordered me to hold electric stuff. Would you be able to do

that? When I held it, I got electric shocks. Therefore, I took my hands off. When I put my hands off, they beat me.

Why did they detain you?

Actually, I told them [Tatmadaw] that we are villagers. I explained that to them very well. In our village, nobody wants to be a village head. Therefore, we had to draw lots to decide who will be a village head. After a year, we had to draw lots again to decide who will be the next village head. For me, I was not lucky because I had to be a village head continually for two years when we drew lots. I told them that I am a real villager and I am not a rebel [KNLA]. I told them to go and ask my family in my village about my personal history and background. I told them I have my own family and my house in my village. I worked as a volunteer when I became village head. I did not receive a salary. I explained to them but they did not accept it. When I was detained, I was very afraid of nightfall. When it got dark, they came to me and beat me. They stopped beating me when it was 9 or 10 PM. I could not endure it anymore. So I told them, "If you dare to beat me, beat me. If you beat me, I will commit suicide here. I will hit my head against the wall until I die. You torture me. You beat me every night. It is better to commit suicide and die immediately". Three times I told them I will hit my head against the wall if they continue to beat me. Then, they stopped beating me. After all that, I was sent to my mother army camp. When I was detained in my mother army camp, nothing changed. They tied me up. They handcuffed me and manacled my legs. They did not release my handcuffs and leg-cuffs during night time. I was handcuffed and leg-cuffed even when I slept at night. I only had a longyi and tank top. I had to use my longyi as a blanket. There was nothing for a bed. I only had to sleep on the concrete floor. Because of these experiences, I cannot work on anything now after I was released. My health condition is not good now because of these experiences.

Where is your mother army camp?

It is in Shwegyin town.

Which battalion?

It's Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #349.

Can you remember the name of the battalion commander of LIB #349?

When I was a soldier, the name of the battalion commander of LIB #349 was Bo Win Myint.

I mean the name of battalion commander of LIB #349 when you were detained.

No. At that time I cannot remember his name. It's been a long time already.

Did they torture you when you were detained in your mother army camp?

No. They did not torture me but they just kept me handcuffed and leg-cuffed.

After you were detained in your mother army camp, where were you sent to?

After I was detained in my mother army camp, I was sent to Toungoo prison.

On the basis of which articles were you put in prison?

They put me into jail because of article 17/1, 17/2 and being a deserter.

How many cases?

Three cases.

How many years were you sentenced to jail?

The decision was made that I was sentenced to 20 years jail.

When you were arrested, did anyone try to solve the case for you?

My wife tried to follow up with the case in order to release me but it cost a lot of money. She had to bribe many Tatmadaw officers including the operations commander. She had to give money and gifts to Tatmadaw officers. When I was detained in the detention center at Division level, there's a person who tried to solve the case for me. His name is U Chit Than Tun. He organized the case and he asked money from my wife. Then, he came to follow up with the case for me. Actually he is with [military] intelligence but he lied to my wife, took her money and he ran away. He did not come to meet me. I did not know about this when I was detained but I found out about it when I was put into prison. When I was in jail, [my wife] had to give money to jailer.

Does U Chit Than Tun work for the KNU or the Myanmar government?

He works for the Myanmar government as intelligence.

How much money did he ask from your wife?

I do not know about it but my wife knows how much money he asked. I also told my wife not to give money to anybody. I told her not to try to solve the case for me. I knew that I was surely going to prison if they made a decision that I was sentenced to jail for article 17/1, 17/2 and being a deserter. With these three reasons, I would surely be sentenced to jail. I told her that nothing would change even if she pays money [to Tatmadaw officers]. However, my wife thought that the punishment would be reduced for her husband if she bribed Tatmadaw officers. That is why she gave money if other people came to ask her.

Did U Chit Than Tun come to ask money from your wife at your house?

He did not come to my house by himself to ask money from my wife but he just ordered other people to tell my wife that he would solve the case for me, so he needed money to go and solve the case such as transportation fees. Then he took the money but he did not come to meet with me.

As you said before, you had to pay money to the guard when you were in jail?

No. I did not give money to anybody but my wife gave money to the jailer because she thought the punishments would be reduced if she bribed the officers. She just did it without letting me know. I couldn't tell her not to pay money but she just worried for me when I was in jail.

Can you tell me about your experiences when you were in jail?

The room [cell] is just 6 feet square. My friends, Ko Chit Par and Ko Ko Aung, were kept in a wide place together with other people in the jail. For me, I was kept in a different place because I'd been sentenced to jail for 17/1, 17/2 and being a deserter. With these three reasons, they said I was like a big criminal, like a criminal who is against the national government. Therefore, they kept me in the place together with political prisoners. The room is just six feet square for each person.

What about food? How did they feed you?

They gave me tea in the morning. They fed me rice for lunch and dinner.

Did you have to work when you were in prison?

No. I did not work on anything in the jail. We were not allowed to work as well.

As you said before, your wife tried to bribe officers in order to release you from the jail. Did you try other things to get out?

I do not know much about it. My wife went to meet with the jailer. She had to give money to many Tatmadaw officers including the battalion commander and head of the office. She gave money and other gifts such as durians. She gave 300,000 kyat to each officer. She did it for me in order to reduce the punishment.

Did anything change after she gave money to the officers?

Nothing changed. I was still handcuffed and leg-cuffed although she paid money. I think my situation would have been worse if my wife did not pay money. I thought I could live in better conditions but nothing changed. If we did not give money, I can't imagine how badly they would have treated me. I was very angry about it. Even though we paid money, they handcuffed me and manacled my legs. If we did not pay money, I think they would have hung me upside down.

How was your family doing when you were in jail?

My children were very young when I was in jail. My wife did not have time to take care of her children because she was busy travelling to try to help me. So she had to call her niece to come and look after her children at home. My whole family had trouble, such as livelihood challenges because I couldn't work for them.

How many years did you spend in jail?

I was in jail for two and half years.

When were you released?

The KNU signed the preliminary ceasefire agreement with the Myanmar government in 2012. After they signed it, Minister U Aung Min was told to release prisoners. At first, my friends were released. Then, one year later after they were released, I was released in 2013. Before I was released, they asked if anybody from my village had not yet been released. They checked the list. They saw that the village head [the interviewee] had not been released. They checked my name and they came to ask for my household [registration] document and ID number at my house. Then I was released from jail on December 11, 2013.

Do you think that there was justice for you?

I worked as a volunteer when I was a village head. I did not receive a salary. A village head is just a man they [the Myanmar government] can bully. The Myanmar government should have protected me as I was a village head. I worked for them. I did not receive salary. They should protect me. Instead, they gave me troubles. So I think it is not fair in this case [arrest]. When people are in trouble, they [the Myanmar government] should protect the people but they give the people more troubles. I want to say that the local authorities from the Myanmar government had to investigate the case [that he was arrested]. They had to follow up with the case. They already knew [that I was innocent] but they were silent. Why did they hide their heads under the blanket? They should protect the people but they did not do anything. If they see that people are drowning in the water, they should try to offer a bamboo stick to the people who are drowning in the water in order to save the people. Instead, they try to stab the people who are drowning in the water with the bamboo stick. In my case, I think it is very unfair. Because I speak like this, they may want to put me into jail again. Then put me into the jail. I speak the truth.

You sacrificed yourself by working for the community and they should have protected

you.

Yes. It is like that. How can I say it? There are many words in the Burmese language. In fact, I was like a man who carries heavy things. They [the Myanmar government] should help me. Instead, they put more heavy things on my shoulders. They were responsible for protecting me when I was in trouble [arrest] but they did not protect me. Instead, they gave me more troubles. This is not fair.

I did my best as a village head. If there is no village head in the village, do you think that everything would go well in the village? Even if villagers want to travel or work, they will not feel secure because there is no village head in the village. If there's a village head, they might feel secure in their minds when they stay in the village because they might think that the village head will be doing something for them if they are in trouble. Am I right? Therefore, I worked for my community to be safe although I did not receive a salary. There are thousands of people in the village. I did my best as a village head in order for them to feel secure. How can they sleep well if there is no village head in the village? The local authorities should understand that this man [interviewee] worked very hard for the community even though the Myanmar government did not give him a salary. So they should keep in mind that they had to save the village head if he is in trouble. But they did not save me and they gave me more troubles. Do you think that is fair?

How has your time in prison affected your life?

In the past, I could work very well. I was fast and I could do things quickly. After I was released from the jail, I did not want to work anymore because I couldn't do as much as I used to. In my mind I want to work a lot, but my body cannot follow as my mind wishes because I had bad experiences when I was tortured. Because of these experiences, it critically affected my health condition. In my mind, I really want to work hard as before but my body cannot follow my mind.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

I think it is really good. I like it because the people can work peacefully. More and more people can go to school. The transition is moving toward the transparent transition period. In my family, we can work together and my children can go to school. We are happy when we travel. We do not worry much about our livelihood. I am really happy with the peace process. Everything will be peaceful if we have peace.

What do you expect to get from this peace process? Or do you have any suggestion for that?

We want a genuine peace. If I speak frankly, I do not want to hear the sound of gunfire and bomb explosions anymore in this country. I would like to see that everyone with their family can live happily and peacefully.

What about the current peace process? What do you think about it?

As I am not a politician, I do not know much what to say regarding this.

What do the people in your village think about the current peace process?

The people in my village can live happily and work peacefully now. In the past, we could not sleep when dogs barked. We were afraid when we saw the colour green [military uniforms]. We had to be afraid of both sides. We were afraid whoever [armed actors] came to our village. When we see soldiers now, we treat them like friends. Nothing happens. In my mind, I feel like our new generation is really lucky now because we had to flee even if we saw the dogs in the

past. I think our children are lucky. I only wish to see that there's no more fear. Everyone can go together like siblings.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

As I am not a politician, I do not know much what to say. I just work as a gardener. I do not study the peace process. I am sorry that I cannot say a lot.

Should the KNU and the Myanmar government work together to improve the peace process?

We would be happier if both sides can work hand in hand in the peaceful way.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

In order for future generations to be able to live peacefully, it will be better if they both can work hand in hand. They should not think about how much power they have. I think it will be good if they discuss and negotiate based on what they want.

Do you know about the NCA?

No. I do not know. I do not know anything about it because I do not study it.

I want to say thank you very much for your answers. Thank you for telling me about your experiences.

Yes. I really want to express how I feel. Now you came to me and ask me at my house about my experiences. So I thank you too.

Do you have anything to say regarding your feelings and experiences?

I just want to say that it will be just fine if nothing happens to me in the future. I do not do anything anymore [related to armed actors]. I do not do anything anymore like I am between the KNU and Tatmadaw. I do not do like a politician anymore. I would be satisfied if I can live with my family happily. I do not give any trouble to anyone. It would be better if no one gives me troubles. I always pray to God every night before I go to bed.

Thank you very much for the answer. Will you allow KHRG to publish this information?

Yes. I allow the KHRG to use this information. As a human, we should learn things always. Am I right? Because of this book, I can read it when I live in my house. So I'll gain more knowledge. Now you are here to ask me but I cannot answer all of your questions. If you come to ask me next time, I believe I will be able to answer your questions.

Thank you so much. As KHRG publishes information, we also publish the photo of the human rights victims but we censor the victim's face. Therefore, do you allow me to take a picture of you?

Yes. You mean, for example, you take a picture of me. Then when you publish it, you cover my face. Is it like that?

Yes.

Then, I allow you to use it. However, even if you disclose my face, I would be fine because I tell the truth.

Yes. We censor the victim's face due to security reasons. So do you allow KHRG to use

your picture?

Yes. I give the KHRG the consent to use my picture.

Thank you very much.

Yes.

Source #55

Source doc #	Source # 55
Log #	18-123-A2-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya district
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Er--- (male, 43), Es--- village, Shwe Do village tract, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

What are you determined to do for the living?

I desire to do farming.

What is your religion?

I am Christian.

What is your position in this village?

I work in religious affairs.

Have you experienced conflict? Do you often think about it?

Severe fighting happened before. We were so much afraid when we experienced shelling among the armed groups. I often think about it.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

Soldiers threatened us when the battle took place. We couldn't stay in a stable condition. It happened in 1997.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

We couldn't stay peacefully. We often had to flee.

Were you or your family displaced?

Yes.

What did you witness during the conflict time?

We were in a calamitous condition caused by the fighting.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

We had to be afraid.

What were you afraid of?

We couldn't eat regularly as we fled from the danger of battle.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

We couldn't dare to work on our farms and we went elsewhere to be able to survive. That really affected our livelihoods.

Did you experience human rights abuses?

Yes.

Were you displaced? How did it affect your life and the lives of your family?

When this happened to my family, they [his children] didn't have the chance to study at school. (It affected family livelihood, education.)

How has the conflict period affected your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

People fled from the fighting.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

The governments who rule the country were the main perpetrators. Mostly it was people from the [SPDC] dictatorship.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Was there any justice for the victims of human rights abuses?

We didn't dare to solve these matters and we didn't have any chance to solve them. There has been no justice.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

In my experience, it's rare to witness perpetrators being punished.

How should the perpetrators be punished? Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

In my opinion, they should go to court.

What kind of court do you think they should go to?

They should go to criminal court. And they should be removed from their positions.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

Both Myanmar government and KNU (Karen National Union) should aid them and protect the victims.

How should the victims of human rights abuses be aided and protected?

They [Myanmar government and KNU] should aid us for our livelihoods and healthcare.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area [Er--- village]?

Currently, my land is confiscated by the military.

When did they confiscate your land?

They confiscated my land in 1997.

Could you tell me who confiscated your land?

Bo Moo [Major] Ohn Kyine from artillery confiscated my land.

How many people in your community were victims of land confiscation?

There were ten people from this part whose lands were confiscated.

What did they plant there?

They planted rubber trees and the trees have now grown enough to tap for rubber. There are also another six people from the other part whose lands were confiscated.

How do you feel about the land confiscation?

I am really devastated as you can imagine, we had only rubber plantations. The government should do something to get our land back.

What do you know about the ceasefire?

What I know about the NCA is that the NCA is achieving a negotiated settlement between the government of Myanmar and non-state ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) that paves the way for peace-building and national dialogue.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

It's very important. I would say so because we can only work and travel freely if they stop the fighting among them. That would make our hearts satisfied.

How much do you know about the peace process? What would you like to know more about? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

In paving the way for peace-making, I really desire to see genuine peace.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life and the lives of people in your community?

The peace process affected people in our community very much, but we cannot say that they are implementing the peace completely because they have confiscated people's lands.

Do you feel safer now? Has your livelihood improved?

I cannot say that our security or our livelihood conditions have improved. We can't do anything as they confiscated our lands.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

The Tatmadaw army is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace.

Why are they the biggest barrier?

Their actions are destructive in many different ways.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

In my opinion, there must be firm law, justice and sympathetic action to be able to achieve lasting peace. They additionally need to value human rights.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

If both government and KNU authorities are negotiating faithfully among them, they could succeed in peace-making.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

Myanmar government could guarantee peace and justice if they really want to do it.

What about KNU?

KNU also can do it.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

Civilians should participate in whatever way we can. Moreover, we must be speaking the truth.

Since the NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

As for my own human rights challenges, the Tatmadaw army confiscated my land.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

Yes, it is affecting our livelihoods.

Could you explain to us how has it affected your livelihoods?

We couldn't do any kind of farming after the Tatmadaw soldiers confiscated my land.

What are the current human rights challenges that women face?

Women also faced land confiscations like the others.

What are the current human rights challenges that minorities face?

The minorities are facing land confiscation, and damages caused by corporate development projects.

Could you explain us more about how the companies came in and implemented a development project?

I saw it on Facebook.

What does justice mean to you?

We've lost our rights if we can never win in the courts.

What if the court was fair?

That would be justice.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

They cooperate and do it together in Er--- village.

Do you trust the justice system? Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

I don't trust the justice system completely.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system?

Yes, I heard about it.

Which injustices have you experienced?

They used various ways.

What are the barriers to get justice?

I haven't experienced it myself.

If you have experience with past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

In my opinion, the victims should receive reparations.

Why do you want the reparations?

A case should be solved in a just way.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

They should support the civilians.

How should they help?

I have no idea.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

[No answer, so the interviewer moved on]

Were you displaced in the conflict period? How long were you displaced for? Where did you go? Did you cross any borders?

I used to live on the border for more than ten years.

Where were you displaced?

I went to live there for the treatment.

What was the root cause of the refugee situation?

The root cause of the refugee situation was because of the fighting.

If you were displaced, were you able to safely return home? What about other displaced families from your village?

If we look at the situation in our area now, it is not safe to return. We have to think carefully about whether we could return or not.

Were there any challenges to return? Were there any concerns regarding land or property?

We were afraid to return because of the land confiscation and we were afraid of the fighting would happen again.

Could you explain the challenges you faced with the land confiscations?

I mean lands that were confiscated by the Tatmadaw' army. A good livelihood situation, education and healthcare are necessary to be able to return home.

What made you return? Did you feel safe enough to do so?

I don't feel like I am safe enough now. The UNHCR prepared repatriation for the refugees with the Myanmar government agreement.

If you are still displaced, what is preventing your from returning?

My very big concern is that the fighting will happen again.

What are you afraid of?

I am afraid and have worry.

What are the barriers to returning? Is it related to livelihoods? Is it related to something else?

There are various kinds of barriers to our livelihoods, healthcare and occupations for us to return.

What do you know of the current services available in the area for your potential return?

We were told by UNHCR that we would get 9000 Thai baht.

What do you know of the current situation in Myanmar for return? E.g. Security, politics, human rights?

The status of security, political and human rights situations are not progressing.

What do you want for your future? For example, return to your village? Access what services for you and your family?

I would like to have equal opportunity for my children.

Do you have anything to add concerning your security issues and land confiscation?

I really would like to get my land back.

What are you plans once you get your land back? Could you explain us a little bit?

If I get my land back, I would like to tap my rubber trees because they have grown enough.

Do you want to add anything?

No.

If so, I would like to take your photo. After that, how would you suggest us to use your information?

You can use the information that I gave you. But, please don't use my photo.

Thank you very much.

What would you suggest to our organisation?

I would like your organisation to help people in need. That is noble work.

Source #56

Source doc #

Source # 56

Log #	18-123-A3-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | U Ei--- (male, 58), Em--- village, Htee Saw Shee village tract, Win Yay Township, Doopaya District (November 2018)

Have you experienced conflict? How? Do you often think about it?

In 1999 and 2000, our community suffered a lot when Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion #88 entered our village. I had the feeling that the government activities were not right. It's completely different between what they say and what they do. It is like a good man's words coming from the mouth of an aggressive person. Their actions traumatised innocent civilians living in the village. In 1999, 2000 and 2001, the population dispersed to other areas. We could not control the situation. Also as a village administrator, I faced difficulties in this condition. Some villagers suffered death because of the conflicts that happened between the Tatmadaw military and KNU. One of our villagers was tortured and he still can't do anything until now. They intended to kill him, but he didn't die. This situation still remains in my mind. I could only breathe after the NCA (National Ceasefire Agreement).

When you say government, which government are you referring to?

I mean Myanmar government.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

We didn't have freedom of expression. The Myanmar government objected to our right to express our needs. There was a time when the Tatmadaw forced villagers to confess to wrong things as though they were right, and right things as though they were wrong. That is absurd. There were a lot of villagers who had to confess because they couldn't stand the persecution done by the Tatmadaw. I felt really sad to see the things that happened. That's what made me dedicate my life to my community, and that's what I did

What did you witness during the conflict time?

As a village administrator, I am familiar with Intelligent Officer (G2) and Operations Commander (G3). In addition, I bravely dedicated my life and worked for my village. I didn't drink alcohol. So I was respected. The neighbouring village administrator and villagers were being tortured. I was looking and noticing every day that groups of Tatmadaw troops went in and out from the village, taking along four or five villagers. They wrapped scarfs around the villagers' heads and took them back with them. Actually, the villagers were not their enemy. Before the Tatmadaw placed their military camp in the area, some villagers were given positions as village administrator and security. The Tatmadaw had given weapons to them in order to ensure the village security. Later when another Tatmadaw group came and found out the villagers' weapons, they accused them of being soldiers and punished them.

Were you or your family displaced?

No. But, my villagers have faced a difficult time. I was not appointed as village administrator back in 1999 and 2000. I slept on my farm. At the time, a brigade commander directed the

village administrator to find porters in whatever numbers he demanded. The village administrator was drunk a little bit and he failed to do his responsibility. Later, the commander captured all of the villagers from the village and kept them in the football pitch the whole cold night. Then, they told the villagers to replace the village administrator. If not, they would burn down the village and kill all of the villagers. After that, my uncle came to call me early in the morning to be appointed as village administrator. As soon as I arrived, I was appointed as village administrator right away. I called all the villagers to the monastery and met with them. Then, he let the villagers return to their homes. It had been a difficult time for us.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

We had really difficult time for our livelihood. We couldn't do farming or travel freely. That's why we could only get one third of the produce from our farms. Every family faced that.

How did you overcome these difficulties?

We had the rice to survive for our lives.

Could you tell me the name of the brigade commander?

The brigade commander's name is Soe Nwe. He is brigade commander from brigade (88). He is not a brigade commander. He is SOC (Strategic Operations Commander). He returned from the Tha Non Yin Lae. Currently, the TOC (Tactical Operations Commander) takes responsibility here. His name is Tin Oo Lwin. We had to hide when he took the place of the Strategic Operations Commander. After the SOC went back, the villagers were tortured by the TOC. Some villagers even jumped from the top of the mountain when they couldn't stand their persecution. They are still alive until this period.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

They are the main perpetrators.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No.

Was there any justice for the victims of human rights abuses?

No. Now or before, the human rights abuses and the injustices have never been resolved.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

Yes. But I haven't seen it.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

The incidents happened a long time ago. We didn't want to report it to the court. In my opinion, I would require that they should give compensation to the victims who can't work for their livelihood.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

When they came and stayed here, some of their soldiers fled from the Tatmadaw military camp. They reached En--- village as they searched for their men. When they arrived at En--- village, they arrested a man from there. They accused him of being a [KNLA] soldier. As for me, I was a villager. I was farming together with another man. (he is titled as Sir) At that period, we didn't

dare to call people sir even if they are teachers, doctors and so on. If a person was called sir, they [Tatmadaw] consider them as a [rebel] KNLA soldiers' commander.

What do you know about the ceasefire? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

That would be really great for the population if the NCA is accurate and genuine. We can't believe the situation is stable only with the NCA process, when there is no peace yet.

What do you know about NCA (National Wide Ceasefire)? What do you expect to get from this peace process as a villager?

In my opinion, our KNU (Karen National Union) leader signed the NCA to be able to gain a stable situation so that villagers could work in their place of origin.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

We cannot say completely that there is peace. We can just say the situation is stable after the NCA.

How has the peace process affected the lives of people in your community?

Before, both Tatmadaw and KNU violated human rights. Even the KNU, they ignored the villagers' requirement of not shooting or planting landmines in the village. Anyhow, after the NCA, these kinds of situation seem to have calmed down. But their attitude doesn't seem like changing.

What does peace mean to you?

Being able to stay or live peacefully as an individual person, family, community and country is my philosophy of understanding peace.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

In the process of peace-making, the population must be involved. The Tatmadaw and armed-ethnic groups cannot do it all alone. Peace will only be accomplished with all the arguments brought up by the civilians and the governments along with their interaction. If two governments reach agreement all alone in a peace process ignoring civilians, I am sure that this will never ever become lasting peace.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

I would like to see such improvements in livelihood, healthcare, education in the community. I am certain that there will be improvement if there is genuine peace.

If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

There is lots of injustice in court, so I would like to change the justice system. Justice is rarely seen in our area. Nowadays, there is also corruption. There is no equality in the judicial system either. Justice is necessary in discovering the truth. Without justice, the truth would never be discovered. As long as they practice unrighteous things, we cannot call it court because the real court practices only the justice. What we call justice doesn't exist alongside injustice. As for me, I just want justice.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would like to suggest to both governments not to practice the attitude of egotism. They must

respect and value one's attitude. Furthermore, I want all ethnicities to work in unison and brotherhood so that it can bring genuine peace.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar

In my opinion, we cannot foretell how much governments can guarantee peace in our country. That is a political affair and top level. They have various strategies and they are wily. I would pressure them to negotiate in trustworthy ways.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

There are aspects we can be involved in but I am not interested in that affair. They are sophisticated. I don't want to interfere in the political affairs full of people practicing unrighteous ways. It will not be possible if only one of you practices the righteous way, right? I don't want to do it. I have suffered a lot from the past. When it comes to war, I don't want to drink the water even if it's been filtered. It is not because I hate it.

Since the NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

Drugs are one of the challenges that the community is facing now.

Could you further explain this?

No one has the right argue with authorities about drugs except the village administrators. I don't know if we could say that is a human rights violation. That's what I think. I would like to interrupt them and tell them that this is not legal. I felt frustrated when I was not able to be involved in the discussion about the drugs. That is discrimination against my right of expression.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

There's a law for people who takes drugs, that possessing less than ten pills will be imprisonment for one year if they are arrested with cogent evidence. The imprisonment is depending on the pills they take. This law was officially recognized on August 7th, 2017 after it had been enacted in 2014. That is unlawful if they arrest people without having cogent evidence. We had no right to say anything about it. There is a law not to persecute criminals, even if they committed the crime. That is illegal as well.

Could you tell me the name of the victim [person who was beaten]? Where does he live?

He is from our village. His name is U Nay Win Ni. People [authorities] didn't find drug pills in his hands. People [villagers] went to get 150 drug pills from him. He distributed the drug pills as a secondary supplier [wholesale]. They [authorities] investigated him to discover who are the users and sellers based on the number of drug pills they [authorities] obtained. Later, people related to the drugs case were beaten until they had to confess that they took drug pills to match the number of 150. Actually, they didn't use that amount of drug pills. The ways they were beaten by them was not lawful.

What human rights challenges do women currently face?

There are no special things that women are facing currently.

Who were the investigators of the drugs case you were talking about?

I am really afraid to say it. This country is like anarchy. There is no rule of law, I am afraid to say when someone conducts an interview.

Could you tell me the name of the organisation and name of the battalion? Is it from the

KNU or Myanmar government side?

It's from the KNU side. Another thing is that once the criminal is imprisoned, they have the responsibility of taking care of them in every aspect such as living and accommodation. That's enacted in the law. But now, they [prisoners] have to go with money for their expenditures. That's difficult for family members and that is illegal. One year imprisonment needs cogent evidence. I would like to suggest to them that they need to examine the case very carefully if they would like to do things better. Their punishment shouldn't go beyond one year imprisonment equal to 500, 000 kyat. But now, it is not just that they ask 1,500,000 for one year imprisonment.

What does justice mean to you?

If there's a real justice system, it could bring lots of benefit to the community. Because of the unjust system, there's discord. That's based on the justice system.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We use the KNU justice system.

Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

Our trust is depending on the justice they give. If their decisions are trustworthy, we would trust them. Whether in the village, township, district or headquarters, in making decisions, they need to be honest. That would also bring peace in the community.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers for you?

What I have experienced is not so bad. It was justice. As an imperfect human, the justice they provide can sometimes be skewed. Sometimes, we should leave aside our desire and do the more important things.

If you have experience with past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

If possible, I would like to have justice. Reparations are just temporary. It will all be gone in a short time. But, having justice is beneficial for all and will last.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

I will not say it is only the responsibility of the Myanmar government and KNU arbitrarily. It is the responsibility of both government and civilians to cooperate to be able to have justice.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

Both KNU and Myanmar government and also civilians should negotiate in unity. The practice of egotism does not bring the justice among the government and the civilians.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

Myanmar government has the main responsibility to stop human rights violations in Myanmar. As the government, they should apply justice in the justice system. They should also live harmony with moral laws for governors. If they couldn't practice all completely, they should live harmony. If we look at the governance in Myanmar now, the government is not a good governor. There are also bad governors in other countries who rule the populations cruelly. To my mind, it is mainly the responsibility of the Myanmar government to stop the human rights

violations in Myanmar.

Were you displaced in the conflict period? How long were you displaced for? Where did you go? Did you cross any borders?

At that time of the conflict period, no one fled from the village because I took full responsibility for them. Even other villages such as Eo--- village came to shelter in my village.

What was the root cause of the refugee situation?

It is clear. The root cause of the refugee situation is because of the fighting. Along with the fighting, the populations couldn't stand their forced-labor, torture and discrimination. That's why they fled away from their villages to find shelter as refugees.

If the families were displaced, were they able to return to their village? Do they think it is safe to return?

No one was being displaced from our village in the past. But some of our neighbouring villages were displaced and they didn't think that it's safe to return. They're in doubt about the NCA. The populations did not fully trust the ceasefire agreement. However, they certainly would return if there's real peace. There's no one who doesn't want to live in their original area.

Were there any challenges to return? Were there any concerns regarding land or property?

There's no challenge in our village. But some neighbouring villages might have challenges.

To make the question more clear, what are the barriers to refugees/displaced persons returning to live in their villages? Is that because of their lands or property confiscated by Myanmar government or KNU?

No. these kinds of confiscation didn't happen. Even if this kind of confiscation happens, they would lend their lands or property back.

What more would you like to add to our conversation?

I don't have anything more to add but just a suggestion to both the KNU and Myanmar government that they shouldn't forget the civilians in peace-making.

Are you Karen?

Yes, I am.

Married?

Yes, I am.

How many children do you have?

I have five children.

How old is your oldest child?

My oldest child is 32 years old.

How old is the youngest child?

My youngest child is 22 years old.

Can you tell me where you are living?

We have both KNU and Myanmar village tracts [the two governments define the village tracts differently]. It is Sin Pyay village tract to the KNU and it is Kyaut Pa Du village tract to the government.

What is your occupation?

I do farming.

What is your position given in your village?

I am a village judge.

After the conversations, I would like to take photos of you. How would you like us to use your information and your photos?

I only can allow you to use my information but not my photos and place where I live and also my name.

Source #57

Source doc #	Source # 57
Log #	18-120-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Naw Ew--- (female, 23), Ex--- village, Kho Hkee village tract, Htantabin Township, Toungoo District (December 2018)

Have there been any corporate development projects in your village?

No, there is no development project ongoing in our village.

Were you or others in your community displaced in the conflict period?

Yes, we were displaced and fled into the jungle.

Did you have to relocate?

Yes, we had to relocate in the past and we just came back to our village two years ago. We had to flee into the jungle and then in 2007 we went to stay in the refugee camp.

Did you or others in your community stay at a refugee camp?

Yes, there were only some people who were left in the village.

When did this happen?

People started going to stay in the refugee camp since 2006. Since then, people kept going to the refugee camp.

Do you know the name of the Battalion?

I don't know which Battalion it was.

Which difficulties did you face while you were displaced?

I did not know that because I was just a child at that time. We did not know where to go but our parents told us not to go to other places.

Did you have access to food?

Yes, even if we didn't have enough food, we were afraid to go and buy or find food to eat.

How long did it take you to reach the camp?

We had to sleep on the way. When we arrived at Kho Nee Woh, we had to sleep for one or two days there on the way because there were pregnant women, babies and children also going.

How many people were there in your group?

There were three families when we went there from our village.

Where did you go? How many years did you stay there?

We went to stay in Au Weh Klo. I stayed in Au Weh Klo two years and then I went to stay in Mae Ra Moh three years and studied there.

When did you return to your village?

It is already three years since I came back to stay in my village.

What about the other people?

They already came back to stay over three or four years ago. But there are two or three families that haven't come back yet. They are still living there. They are Thu Lay Paw's family, Myat Thuzar's family and Hser Ku's family.

When did they come back? Did they come back after the NCA was signed?

People think they can now travel in freedom because of the ceasefire agreement. There is no fighting so they found a way to come back to their villages. However, the camp leaders don't want people to go back to their villages yet because the situation is not stable yet.

Did anyone from your village get killed in 2006?

Yes, Zari Paw's father, Ta Lah Lu and Pweh Kler Htoo got killed. I think it was in 2006.

How many people did the Tatmadaw military kill between 2006 and 2010?

There were a lot of people killed by the Tatmadaw military, over 20 people.

How did they feel when their family members were killed?

Yes, of course they felt sad because they lost their family members. You don't even get to know about some people, where were they taken? Where did they die? What happened to them?

Do you get any other humanitarian support from KNU or other CBOs/CSOs?

No, we don't get any.

How has the peace process affected or benefited your life?

In my opinion, if we think it is good, then it is good. Everyone has to surrender and put down their weapons. But now they still have their weapons and they can fight back any time they want. It is not full freedom yet. They just signed the ceasefire agreement, it's not a peace process yet.

Has your livelihood improved after the NCA was signed?

Yes, it is better now because the local people can travel to work freely. But it is not full freedom yet.

Do the villagers still face difficulties?

Yes, there are still concerns for the local people when they are travelling on the road. Some people who do plantations near the [vehicle] road don't even dare to go there, and people say don't go alone or be careful when you are travelling.

Do the Tatmadaw military come into your village?

They come to Htee Baw Hsee near people plantation. They live in [Poe T' Hsee Tha] and they visit there sometimes. People are afraid to go there.

Did they remove their army camps?

No, they haven't reduced them. On the contrary, they have added more army camps.

Are the local people under threat when they are travelling?

No, there is no threatening.

Does the KNU come to your village?

They just live here [KNU].

How do you feel about the KNU?

Yes, they are good and they just work as they are supposed to do.

How do you feel about the Tatmadaw?

We can just say bad things about our enemy because of what they have done to us. We will just talk about bad things about them because we hate our enemy. We will just talk about good things about our own ethnic people.

As a villager, do you feel threatened by anyone?

Hmmm. [One woman beside her said her father had to run from the Tatmadaw military and two of her uncles were shot by the Tatmadaw but they did not die.]

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

I heard it from my teachers because they saw the news on facebook. We just got to hear from them that the KNU and Myanmar government were doing a ceasefire agreement.

Were you still in the refugee camp when the NCA was signed?

Yes, I was there.

What will the peace process bring you?

Yes, there should be peace. If there is peace, everything will be fine for the civilians.

Is there peace right now?

It's not completely peace and freedom yet.

What do you expect to get from this peace process? Or do you have any suggestion for that?

There should be peace and then personal freedom for everyone. Freedom is very important and everyone should have individual freedom.

Should the Tatmadaw soldiers who live behind the mountain have to retreat their army camps?

No, they are still there. So there won't be peace if they are still there.

Do they still transport rations?

They still transport rations and build the road.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

Finally, I would like to request for the Tatmadaw military to retreat from where they live near the villages. If they don't go back, it will still cause concern for the villagers to work and travel.

Thank you so much.

Source #58

Source doc #	Source # 58
Log #	18-118-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Daw Dd--- (female, 44), De--- village, Law Mu Thaw village tract, Kyaukkyi Township, Nyaunglebin District (December 2018)

Do you have a family? Are you married?

Yes.

What is your religion?

I am Buddhist.

Do you have a shop?

No. I go around villages and sell.

By foot?

Yes.

Do you have any other work apart from selling? Like farming?

No. I am not a farmer.

Let's start our interview. Have you experienced conflict in the past?

I experienced one thing when I was single and stayed with my parents. My father was misjudged once because in the past our life was easy and good. I had 8 siblings but two of them passed away. For six of us, only one is a boy and the rest are girls. At that time, my father was very old and he thought that he needed to do something because he was old. During that time,

we did not have a television in our community. So my father sold a piece of his cultivated land and bought a television. And it was during the period of conflict between KNLA and Tatmadaw. So, some people told the KNU that my father bought a television with Win Maung's money.

Who is Win Maung? Was he a KNU leader?

Yes, but I heard that he is now resettled in another country. They once threatened my father that they would kill him. They came with guns to our house.

Who mistakenly told the KNU that your father used Win Maung's money? Was it villagers?

Yes.

Who were the people who came to your house with guns and threatened your father?

They were also from KNU. Later, they realized that that information was wrong because my father worked and bought the TV honestly. They finally calmed down and went back.

Do you often think about it?

Yes but I do not want revenge anymore. When I was a kid at that time, I thought if I were a boy, I would get revenge. But now, as a woman who got married and had so many children, and as I grow older, I do not have that kind of thought anymore. I just think it was their mistake and their destiny.

Were there any human rights abuses in your area in the past?

No. Nothing happened except for my father's case.

How old were you at that time?

I was only 15 years old.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

When I was 12 or 13 years old, when we heard that something might happen, we had to fold our belongings and hide ourselves in a safe place. The whole village needed to do that.

Where did you live at that time?

We grew up in Df--- village.

Where did you run to and hide yourself?

When it was the time of guerrillas, we ran to Dg---. Again in 2006, we were told by Tatmadaw that we had to move so we ran to Dh--- and lived there for three rainy seasons. In 2008, we moved back to our own place but we lived in an old village at that time. Later, we moved here to De--- and we have been living here for only two rainy seasons now. Some people have been here for five or six years already.

So were you or your family displaced at that time?

Yes, the whole village was displaced.

Do you still remember which year that you were displaced?

I already got married at that time. I even had three children already when I was displaced. I do not know about the English year but it was in 1360 in Myanmar years [1998/1999].

How many years did you live in Pa Yar Gyi?

I think half a year and it is in a rainy season. Some people passed away there because of malaria.

Who were the people that asked you to move there?

It was the time of the guerrillas and we were afraid of them so we ran away.

Did you destroy your house and run away?

We did not destroy our house, and we stayed randomly with bamboo houses in the place we fled to. We faced lots of health problems there. Later, we moved back to our place and we did not hear anything about guerrillas anymore. We also moved to the place between Own Myay Tu village and Pa Ta La village. It was in the field.

How did it affect your livelihood?

We did not get to sleep in the village because the firewood was in the old village. So at 3 PM in the evening, we went back to our old village, cooked and ate there. At 5 or 6 PM, mosquitoes bit us like bees because we lived in the forest. We faced so many difficulties while fleeing from one place to another. When we fled from one place to another, we had nothing. We just carried our packs and belongings with our heads. My boys went to the river and found fish to eat and I had to stay back home and sell things. Our livelihood those days was very difficult.

How does it continue to affect your life?

We fled like that and we did not have any work so we could not do anything more than our meal each day.

Did you send your children to school?

I could not send them to school. They attended the school until standard three or four [age 8/9] and then left because it was really difficult to support our livelihoods, so we could not afford to send them to school. We only worked to live, day to day. We could not send them to school up to standard ten with our situation like that at that time. But we work honestly even though we are very poor.

How about the youngest one?

My youngest child is now 6 years and 7 months old. I start sending him to Kindergarten now. As parents, we want our children to be successful, but we cannot do it with our situation like this.

Do you have any farms?

No. We had one when we were children but we sold our properties to help cure our parents from their sickness. My mother passed away 23 years ago but my father is now 93 years old. He is also sick now because he is old. He is living with my oldest sister in her village now.

Who do you think were the main perpetrators of human rights violations?

I think both groups were the perpetrators because it caused us to flee from our place. We, civilians were in the middle so we became the innocent victims between them.

Did you witness anything like forced recruiting of porters or something like that?

We were forced to be porters when we lived with our mother. They call it 'three days labor' and 'eight days labor', which is also called 'big porter'. As a big porter, we had to go to the mountain and it took eight days. If we could not go, we had to ask someone to go on behalf of us and pay

them even though we were struggling for our livelihood.

Did your husband go before [as a forced porter]?

Yes.

Who asked you to do that?

They were Tatmadaw. My husband only got 600 kyat for three days labor.

What about the big labor (chaw), the one for eight days?

For that one, they paid more than 10,000 kyat. They asked us to do that during fighting so some people were afraid to go because they worried they will lose their life there. We also had to give our paddy to KNU. We had to work for both groups since we lived between them.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No. I have not seen anything has been resolved. We were afraid of both the KNU and the Tatmadaw at that time so we just listened and did what they said.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Should they go to court or what do you think?

As we are civilians and people from a rural area, we cannot send them to court. We just understand them like that. They can do whatever they want because they have power. We have nothing to protect ourselves from them so we just let them do what they are doing.

So you do not think about how they should be punished?

No.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

There was no one to help us during the conflict. But if we have people to help us, we would ask for them to support us by giving us some amount of money for our plantations because we would like to widen our plantation land.

What do you think should have been done to support you during the conflict period?

At that time, KNU supported us once by giving 30,000 kyat to each of my children and even parents like us. I think I had 5 children at that time. We were able to breed some chickens and ducks when we received it from them.

So what do you think is the root cause of human rights abuses during that time?

It was because of military activities. It caused us flee from one place to another. When we saw both governments sign the ceasefire agreement, we were very happy and our lives became easier than in the past. We do not care about how poor we are but at least we want to be happy and live in peace.

Do you know about the ceasefire?

Yes, I heard about it and I think the situation becomes better because we do not have to flee like in the past.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

It is not relevant to me because if they are in agreement, we are also in peace. If they fight each

other then we are in trouble and we cannot do anything.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) or peace process?

No. I do not understand about that.

How did you come to know about the ceasefire?

I just heard about it from people.

Do you think there is peace in your current village now?

We cannot decide whether we are in peace or not because it depends on both governments. If they are in peace, we will also be in peace.

So what about now? Do you think you are in peace now?

Yes, I feel like the situation is a little bit better.

How has the peace process affected your life? What benefits do you get from this peace process?

We can work and travel a little bit better now. There is no one to disturb us because we also set the security persons in the village for us to be safe.

What about the disadvantages of peace process?

I do not see any disadvantages of the peace process because I feel like I live better than in the past.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

I want to expect it but I do not know whether it will happen or not.

What do you expect?

If they support us with some amount of money, our livelihood will get better.

What does peace mean to you?

Peace means if both sides are in a peace agreement and then follow it. That is what peace means to me.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

We just worry that fighting will happen again because we will suffer twice more than others since we are very poor.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would say that we do not want conflict to happen again. We want to live in peace so they should stop fighting and live in peace as well. I just want to say that.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar? Or which government is more responsible?

I do not know about the government that could guarantee peace and justice but I think both governments are responsible.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I think as a civilian, I do not belong to politics or military armed groups and it also is not relevant to me. I honestly think like that because I only know how to work for my daily life in peace.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

I do not think we are facing human rights challenges now.

What about land issues? Do you face anything like that?

About land, we are not allowed to work in Sa Kyet Myay (customary pastureland). They do not allow us to work there for three years already.

So you had been worked in Sa Kyet Myay before?

Yes, I worked in Sa Kyat Myay (customary pastureland) for two years.

Who does not allow you to work there? KNU or Myanmar government?

None of them. We worked there because Tatmadaw said that they do not want to see the forest. It was during the 1988 uprising in Myanmar. So we cut down the plants and trees and worked there. But when the situation got better, we divided the lands and shared but the lands belonged to Wat Lar Taw village tract. Later, we were not allowed to work there anymore by Wat Lar Taw village tract authorities.

Are people still working there now?

No. Some people sold the land due to their livelihood difficulties. They also had arguments about those lands so the authorities stopped it and no one is allowed to work there now.

How many villages are in this Law Mu Thaw area?

They are Df--- village, Di--- village, Dj--- village, Dk--- village, Dl--- village and Dm--- village. For our village Df---, almost the whole village moved to here. At first, they gave three sacks of rice per household to the people who moved in here.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected here?

I do not expect anything like that because in my mind, I only think that if I have enough for my daily meal, it is enough.

So what does justice mean to you?

If both sides are satisfied, I think it can lead to justice.

Both sides means the perpetrator and victim?

Yes, if they are in agreement then I think it is justice.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

KNU solves the problem if anything happens so I think this place is using KNU justice system.

What do you know about this justice system?

I do not understand everything because I do not understand or speak Karen language.

Do you think it is fair?

They just solve the cases at the local level. They do not go to higher township levels so I think both the perpetrator and the victim are fine with the decision.

Have you also heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

No, we do not have it in the rural place.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

Actually, my brother in law also died before but I do not want to blame any armed groups because some people are inciting between armed groups. I left the past in the past. But some people died because of the injustice. Some villagers also made mistakes for inciting the others to commit bad things. But I do not want to blame or get revenge on anyone.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government in giving access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

Both of them are responsible to help and support the civilians.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

For me I think if no human right violations exist in our community it will be the best. I do not wish to have human right violations. I want people to be in unity, in peace and justice.

So what is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

I think if ethnic groups and the Myanmar government stay and work in peace, it will stop human rights violations in Myanmar.

(They are having a conversation about the interviewee's family and it is not relevant to the thematic topic)

Were you displaced in the conflict period?

Yes.

How long were you displaced for? Where did you go?

I went and stayed in Dn--- for three years and in between Dm--- and Dj--- for six months. I was just displaced for that time.

Did you cross any borders?

No.

What do you think was the root cause of the refugee situation?

In my personal opinion, the root cause was because of the conflict and fighting between KNLA and Tatmadaw. It happened because both groups did not agree with each other.

So as you were displaced, were you able to safely return to this village?

Yes. The whole village tract moved to here.

What about other displaced families from your village?

They also returned safely.

When did you return here?

I cannot remember the date anymore. It was when I had four children.

Did you face any armed conflict after returning here?

No.

Did you or your neighbours face illness or die because of sickness while fleeing?

One of my children passed away. I had ten children but two of them passed away due to sickness.

Were there any challenges to return?

The challenge was we did not receive any support from anyone when we first moved to this place. We had to carry our belongings and packs with our heads. We carried things twice a day from Dn--- to Df--- villages. We were very happy to return and we even forgot to be tired.

What do you want to ask for if you meet with KNU and Myanmar government?

We would like to ask for help but they have power so we dare not to ask anything from them. But if I have to tell them something, I will tell them that if they can support poor people like us, our life will be better and easier than this.

Do you have anything to say or to ask me?

I thank you for coming. I do not know about politics but I can just share some human rights abuses with you. For me as a civilian, we hope that KNU and Myanmar government will live in peace so that we will be able to live in peace.

I also thank you so much for your time. So the information you are giving me, can we use it for publication and for our report?

You can use it if it does not cause any problems and risks for me.

Okay. Thank you.

Source #59

Source doc #	Source # 59
Log #	19-8-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Htantabin Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Saw Gq--- (male, 54), Gr--- village, Htantabin Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

Were you or others displaced in the conflict period? Do you know of displaced people who were able to safely return home?

Since the ceasefire was signed, the villagers just live in the village.

How has the peace process affected the lives of the displaced people?

Yes, we had to flee and we even went to live in the refugee camp.

When was it?

It was in 2007.

Where did you go? Which refugee camp?

We went to stay in Ei Tu Hta refugee [IDP] camp.

Did all the villagers go to the same refugee camp?

There were four houses left. They did not go to stay there.

How many people were displaced?

When we went there were 180 people who went to stay in the camp.

Were there children and elders among that group?

Yes.

Was it a violent conflict?

Yes. The Tatmadaw military Division #66 shot at us so badly.

Was it in 2007?

It was in 2006.

Did they burn down the houses in the village?

No, they did not burn but they took all the paddy. So the villagers did not get to harvest paddy from the fields.

Was it during the harvesting period?

Yes.

Did you flee because there was not enough food?

Yes.

What difficulties or problems did you face?

We had to face the risks and dangers from enemies. Then we had to travel very secretly.

Did you face livelihood difficulties while you were staying in the refugee [IDP] camp?

In the camp, we got one basket of rice per person. We had to find more food by ourselves because it was not enough.

How many years did you stay there?

I stayed for four years.

Did your children go to school in the camp?

Yes, they studied there and graduated there.

How many of your children have graduated from high school?

There are three of my children who already graduated.

When did you come to return to your village?

I came here in 2011.

What made you return?

I just came back by myself on my own decision.

How many people did you come back with?

I came back with my whole family and with other people.

How many people?

It would be 20 to 30 people.

Were there other villagers with you?

Yes.

What problems did you face when you first came back to your village?

The first thing was food. We had really difficult times to buy food for eating.

Had the NCA been signed when you came back?

No, when I came back the ceasefire process hadn't started yet.

Where did you stay when you came back? Did you stay in the village?

No, I did not. I just stayed in the fields when we came back.

What were your concerns when you come back to stay in your village?

When we came back, we still heard gunfire from the Tatmadaw military. However, we just had to live with our concerns and we had to be alarmed every day.

Where did you buy rice and other food?

We went to buy it in Kaw Thay Der village.

How long did it take to go to buy things in Kaw Thay Der village?

It took the whole day. If you go and come back on the same day, it will be dark.

Did you have difficulties when you had to buy things?

Yes. When we went on the way, we had to be afraid.

Do you feel safe now?

Yes, I feel safe because we have the soldiers. We ask them how the situation is and we only go to wherever we want to go when we know the situation.

Are they KNU soldiers?

Yes, they are. We ask them about the Tatmadaw military soldiers' activities.

Do they [Tatmadaw] patrol?

If they don't, we go where we want to go.

Could your children return to school in the village?

My older children did not come back with me. They stayed in the camp to finish school.

How about your younger children?

They came back with me. The older children study in the camp.

Do the younger children go to school?

No, they don't study yet.

Did you get any support when you came back?

Since we came back, we haven't received any support. We have to work for ourselves.

Did you get support later?

When we came back to stay in the village, we just got the water pipes.

Did the Tatmadaw military soldiers kill the local villagers?

Yes, they were killing the local villagers.

How many people?

There were many people and they arrested them.

Can you guess?

I just know 4 people.

Was it when Division #66 came to the area?

No, it was before that.

One of my sons treaded on a bomb [landmine].

Was it in 2007 or 2008?

It was in 2006. He stepped on the Tatmadaw military's bomb.

Was it in the village or in the plantation?

It was in the plantation garden.

Was it a bomb from the Tatmadaw?

Yes.

When did you come back to your village?

It was in 2013.

Have other people from the camp come back?

Some are still left in the camp.

How about now?

There are still some who haven't come back yet.

So most of them fled to the camp?

Yes.

Do you get any support from organizations or NGOs?

I don't know.

Did you receive healthcare?

Yes, there is some help with healthcare through the provision of medicines and for maternal and

child health.

Is there a clinic in the village?

There is no clinic in the village.

Where do the local villagers go when they are sick?

They go to the District hospital.

[14:32 to 18:18]

[General information on healthcare and education]

Have there been any corporate development projects in your village after the ceasefire?

No, there are not.

Are there any human rights abuses happening right now?

No, I don't know.

Are there any land confiscations happening right now?

No.

How do you feel about the Nationwide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

I think it is good and a benefit for us. We can come back to stay in our own village and travel to work. It is so much better.

How has the peace process affected or benefited your life?

The change is that we can use the motorbike road and it is much better for our children.

Do you still have concerns?

Yes, I have because there are a lot of military camps around us. They don't retreat yet so we still have concerns.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

If the military camps retreat in our areas then we will feel less concern. It will be better.

What do you know about the NCA?

I haven't researched about it so I don't understand about it.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kinds of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I don't know what to suggest to them but if they have peace, love and unity, then it will be better for the next generations.

What else?

To improve our livelihood if we can live in our own village as our ancestors, I think it will be the best and peaceful.

What does peace mean to you?

I don't know.

What is the justice system like in your areas? Is it the Myanmar government or KNU?

It is the KNU justice system.

The Myanmar government justice system is never used then?

Yes, never. There is only the KNU justice system.

Is the KNU justice system fair for everyone in you area?

Yes, they decide fairly for the truth.

Do you have any experience [yourself] with the KNU justice system?

No.

What do you think about the KNU justice system?

I think it's right.

What do you think about the Myanmar government justice system?

I don't know and I've never seen that.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

I don't have anything to report.

Do you allow us to use the information you have provided?

Then we will take three photos and audio for recording. Then when we publish we censor the villager's face and name.

Yes.

Source #60

Source doc #	Source # 60
Log #	18-133-A3-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview |Naw Mo--- (female, 43), Mp--- village, Mq--- village tract, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District. (November 2018)

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen.

Are you responsible for anything in the village?

No, now I don't take any [special] responsibility.

Do you have a family?

Yes, I do.

How many children do you have?

I have six children.

What is the eldest child doing?

The eldest child is doing hill farming.

How about the youngest child?

The youngest child is a student.

Have you experienced conflict? If you have experienced it, can you please tell me about that? Do you often think about it?

Yes, I think about it. We had an experience that the Tatmadaw military arrested us and took our belongings. We had to be afraid of them and we had to flee and hide from them.

Where did you flee to?

We just fled into the jungle.

Did you dare to come back to the village?

Yes, we came back to the village.

What would they do if they saw you coming back to the village?

If they saw us, they arrested us for forced portering.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened? You said you had to do forced portering. When was it? Do you remember the date?

I don't remember the month but it was in 1995 and 1996.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The worst experience was when we had to go back and take our food [rations] in the village. We had to go back secretly as thieves. It was really hard and difficult for us to go back and take the food [rice].

Were you or your family displaced?

We went to stay in Kyainseikgyi once and then came back to the village.

How long did you stay in Kyainseikgyi?

We stayed there for two months.

Were you well taken care of when staying there?

No one took care of us; we just had to take our food with us.

The food that you ate, did you come back and take it from the village?

We just carried with us when we fled. We were afraid to come back to the village.

What did you witness during the conflict time? What were they?

There was a time when I went back to take the food [rice] in the village, and the Tatmadaw military arrested me. Then they took my belongings such as a watch and others. That was very difficult for me and they threatened us that they would kill us. We had to talk to them nicely and apologize to them. We escaped by the grace of God.

Where did the Tatmadaw military arrest you? Was it in the jungle or the village?

They arrested me at Mr--- beside my hut.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood? Did it affect your livelihood?

Yes, it affected our livelihood. They destroyed all our belongings that we kept in the hut such as rice, fruits, pigs and chickens.

Did they take everything to eat?

They took everything to eat and they just poured the rice around the area there.

Do they pay you the compensation because they did that to you?

No, nothing.

If you experienced human rights abuses or displacement, how does it continue to affect your life and the lives of your family [members]?

We had difficulty traveling. We could not travel easily because we had to take the letters from them.

What kind of letter is that?

That is the permission letter from the head of the Tatmadaw military. It is to protect us from the soldiers' abuses when they see us on the way. They signed their name in the letter.

How has the conflict period affected lives in your community? How have the local people in your village overcome this?

The village head had to solve the problems and they had to serve the food [bribe] to the Tatmadaw military as well. But sometimes they could not solve all the problems.

How did they solve the problems?

I don't know because I did not hear when the village head talked with them.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations? For example, were they the KNU or the Tatmadaw military?

We mostly saw that the Tatmadaw military soldiers were the perpetrators. There were not many from the KNU.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

No, nothing has been resolved.

Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses? For example, did they get any compensation because their lands were confiscated?

No. But there was a time when a Tatmadaw soldier took my belonging and his leader found that out. Then they resolved it for me and give me back my thing. So I thought it was justice for me.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished? For example, how did the

commander punish the soldier that took your watch?

Yes, he got punishment by beating.

Did he continue to cause human right violations after that?

I don't know whether he continued or not.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

They believe it was just because the Tatmadaw military was causing the abuses.

What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

I think it is good and our children do not have the experiences that we had to face before. So I see and think it is good.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

We want sustainable peace. We hope the peace process will last and we will get to travel and work peacefully. We want to see no more fighting.

What will the ceasefire bring you?

It will bring happiness.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

There is not sustainable peace in my village yet. There are some problems between the villagers, [though] not between the villagers and the soldiers. The peace process is good for me and there is no effect for me. I am happy for the peace process and I gain more strength from that.

What do people say about it [about NCA]? How has it affected them?

I don't know how people from the whole area think and talk about it. It is because different people have different ideas and thoughts.

Do you feel safer now? Has your livelihood improved?

It is getting better than before. Now we can travel and work freely. The situation has changed a little bit.

What does peace mean to you? What do you think about it?

I think if there are no obstacles for travelling and working, it is better for me.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

There are no barriers now.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I don't know what to change. I just think to change what fruits to grow and what to grow in the farms.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I don't know what to suggest to them. They do their best.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

What we can do is just live in unity. We cannot do anything else.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

We are facing discrimination for work and we don't have many opportunities.

Who discriminate against you for work and what kind of people are they?

They are the villagers.

Do they have power?

Yes, they have power and responsibilities. So we cannot do anything.

What kind of power do they have?

They are the village head and the forest department leader.

What do they tell you?

They don't allow us to have a plantation in our own area [lands]. So we cannot do anything.

Are you kind of doing logging?

No, we will just have a plantation in our own lands.

Don't they give you permission?

Right, they don't.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

The only thing that affects our livelihoods is we don't get the permission to work on our plantation.

Why don't they give you permission to work on your plantation? Did they confiscate the lands?

They said they prohibit it for the sake of the village.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

No, there are no challenges for women.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities and religious [groups]?

There are no challenges for minorities and religious [groups] in our area.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

In my opinion, I feel that my rights are not respected.

What does justice mean to you?

Everyone has to work honestly.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU? If

someone breaks the rules or the laws, how do they get punished? Do they send the perpetrator to the KNU or the Myanmar government?

I see they sent to the KNU. I never see people sent to the Myanmar government.

What do you think about the justice system in your village? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

I think if the perpetrators are arrested as [according to] the laws and the human rights laws, it will be good. It will be fair.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system? Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to justice?

Yes, I have heard of that. I have heard it from the past. Some people got accused even they did not do wrong. However, they just stayed quiet and they were patient. Finally, they got the apologies because the truth came out that they did not do wrong.

If you have experienced past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I just heard of those kinds of reparations or justice in other places.

Did you experience human rights abuses in the past?

Yes, I experienced it. There was a difficulty or problem to travel. We could not travel alone. So I think it was a human rights abuse against us.

What would they do if they saw you were travelling alone?

When they saw we are travelling alone, they would rape us. It is because they usually raped women in those days. We were afraid of them so we did not travel alone.

When was it?

It was a long time ago [many years ago].

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I want human rights violations to stop. Then I want to have opportunities and our rights respected.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

KNU should take the responsibility to access to justice for human rights abuses.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

I don't know how to stop them.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

The best way is to negotiate and talk about the way to stop human rights violations between the Myanmar government and KNU.

Have you seen the Myanmar government or the KNU cause human rights violations after the ceasefire was signed?

I don't see anything.

What else do you want to say?

I don't know how to report and talk more because it is [any remaining issues are just] the problems between us from the village.

Does anyone take action on it?

No one takes action. The case is just kept unsolved. We just stay patiently like this.

Does anyone write a complain letter?

No one does it and we never do it.

Will you give us the permission to use this information?

Yes, you can.

Source #61

Source doc #	Source # 61
Log #	19-9-A2-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Dbi--- (male, 52), Dbj--- village, Mone Township, Naunglebin District (January 2019)

I would like to ask you some information based on five main issues. What are the past human rights abuses you have faced during conflict?

Since I moved to Dbj--- village, we have been living between two armed groups until now. We have two village heads: one is for the Karen National Union and one is for NLD or Tatmadaw [along parties of Myanmar military dictatorship government such as State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)]. Our life was so tough. Almost every man fled when Tatmadaw came to the village because we were asked to go as porters, navigators and Lot Ah Pay [forced labour].⁶ Mostly, only women stayed in the village. The Rakhine military also reached our area in the past. During that time, I got a new son whom I named "Rakhine". Even though he was just born, the Tatmadaw called on us and we had to stay on the Dbk--- Mountain where we had to sleep in the forest. Tatmadaw called every villager: men, women, young and old. They questioned us, "do the rebels enter the village?" This was a mixed control area, how can both armed groups not come into the village. Fighting even happens in our village when two armed groups encounter each other. If they could not win over the other, they blame villagers and the village head, and scold and hit them. I used to be a Myanmar government section leader in Dbj--- village. There was no village head or other section leader when the fighting happened as they all fled to the forest. I was the only one arrested by Tatmadaw. I did not flee from Tatmadaw anymore but wisely explained to them

⁶ *Loh ah pay* is a Burmese term now commonly used in reference to forced labour, although traditionally referring to voluntary service for temples or the local community, not military or state projects.

about the situation. The Tatmadaw blamed our village that we were biased and supported the rebels [KNLA]. How can we do that! Soldiers can go anywhere they want without our support. The Tatmadaw hit me until I almost died. I tried to calm down Tatmadaw with hospitality and cooked foods for them such as chicken and pigs. Otherwise, they would be so violent.

Do you remember the year it happened?

I think it was between 1990 and 1995.

What was the worst experience you faced in the past?

I have more than one worst experience. The first time was when I was arrested by a Tatmadaw intelligent officer. The Tatmadaw came to Dbl--- village which is located between Dbm--- and Dbj--- villages. The Tatmadaw arrested many villagers who were selling snacks, rice and fish paste from the village. Then the Tatmadaw brought those villagers to the police [station in town] and reported that they arrested these people in Wa Hkee area as an excuse. The Tatmadaw claimed, "these villagers live in Dbn---, Dbo---, Dbp---, Dbq---, Dbr---, and Dbs--- villages". Actually, they did not arrest villagers from the mentioned villages. The Tatmadaw ordered a village head from these villages and detained them in jail for one night. That was the first time I was in jail. The reason was that Tatmadaw accused villagers of selling products to the rebels [KNLA]. A village head had to guarantee for these villagers. This happened probably in 1995-1996.

Has your family ever been displaced during conflict?

Oh, I feel so heavy hearted to talk about my family. We lived in between two armed groups' control. We worked hard to secure our livelihoods but casual work is the common option. The Tatmadaw threatened to kill us and even declared that a person who can arrest me would be paid this much, this much. The Tatmadaw accused me of transporting rations for soldiers [KNLA]. They wanted my head and [said they] will pay for it when someone could cut my head. Actually, I was only an ordinary villager and not related to any armed activities. It was very terrible to be targeted even though I was only a casual worker.

The other time was when I was cycling back from a Phyu Town for buying stuff. When I arrived at the Tatmadaw camp/checkpoint in Aung Ywa village, they surrounded the place. During that time, the Tatmadaw arrested Saw Dbt---'s father who is a KNLA soldier or ration transport officer. Tatmadaw brought him along the way and the fighting occurred when they arrived in Aung Ywa village. The Tatmadaw killed him and took away his head. I did not know about the fighting in advance, so I came straight back. Immediately when I encountered the Tatmadaw, they shouted at me to bow. When I bowed, a soldier strongly hit my head three times with a G4 gun butt. It really hurt and my head was bleeding. The Tatmadaw threw away everything I bought from town such as clothes and Christmas decorations.

What were your livelihood challenges during that time?

Our livelihood was very challenging during that period [before the NCA] around 1988 period because we did not have our own plantation. We were only casual daily workers. People who have plantations also have difficulties. Our lives and movement were very restricted. We always have to inform and get permission from the Tatmadaw about wherever we go and whatever we do. We had to travel every day because we were casual daily workers. We even had to get a permission letter to go to the plantation. We travelled in fear because of Tatmadaw's pressure. We could not travel freely for selling things and food. No need to say about the bigger businesses; even small casual work was restricted.

What are the consequences for your community?

There was no chance to run a small business for securing our livelihoods. We could not even go to our own plantations freely but only at limited times and with permission. It really affected every community member. In 2006, our local area became a fighting field. How can we secure our livelihoods properly?

How were these problems solved?

There was no way to solve them because it was the military dictatorship ruling period. Who would be able to solve for us? We found no comfort or refuge. That is why we still remain in fear until now. Every community member who experienced this is living in fear and trauma.

Who were the main perpetrators of such human rights abuses during conflict?

It was the Tatmadaw who attacked our people [Karen] and wanted to take over power. Our people [KNLA armed groups] did not abuse us. They [KNLA] could not even approach us to ask for food when they were facing a food shortage in the military field. We were also afraid to go to them because we were monitored by Tatmadaw through spies whom we could not know. We did not feel secure to talk about going outside openly in front of our children because we were not sure if the Tatmadaw had asked them to report our activities.

What would be the appropriate condemnation for those perpetrators? Do you think compensation or court reference is fair?

We did not know about the condemnation and justice at all. We did not know how we should be compensated and how to condemn the perpetrator. We have never been told about this. However, what we want is peace rather than condemnation. Being able to work freely is more than enough for us.

Have you ever expected any authorities to help you during conflict?

In 2005, I had one experience when I traded cattle, which was the popular business during that time. I went to Pyi Town for trading where I took 4,000,000 Kyat [\$2617 US]⁷ which I borrowed from some of my friends. Accidentally, an explosion occurred in Yangon because of the conflict. When I arrived in Pyi Town, police checked me and sent me to a police station because they saw my money. They accused me that I verbally insulted authorities. We are ordinary people, how can we insult authorities? Even though they had no evidence, they wrongly accused me because they wanted my money. I was checked and questioned every night for one week. Then they sent me to Taung P'Deh military headquarter #1 in Toungoo. I was detained in Pago jail, Toungoo jail and N'Hsaung Pyaing jail. I was yearning to find someone to help me but it was really hard. However, having money is the winner during that period. My wife visited me and secretly asked my needs. Then I instructed her to go to my rich friend Maung Dbu--- and let him know my situation. A few days later, I was released because my friend spoke for me.

What was the most common human rights abuse in the past?

The most common human rights abuse was property extortion by Tatmadaw. We dare not blame Tatmadaw when they take away and damage our property. One day, Tatmadaw came to my house and took away a big package of silk which cost 40,000 Kyat [\$26 US]. They ordered

⁷ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the September 4th 2019_official market rate of 1,526.80 kyats to US \$1.

me to reclaim it back with 20,000 Kyat [\$13 US]. This is how Tatmadaw treated us. We dare not confront them for our own property at all. Such abuses were very common in conflict.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)? How do you know it?

We do not know it in detail but we, civilians were very happy because of the ceasefire. We hope for freedom to live and work. The less the fighting, the better for us. We heard about the ceasefire agreement in radio news.

What do you expect from the ceasefire?

We expect freedom of movement and work.

Is your community peaceful after the NCA?

I am not sure because we still have fear remaining in us. However, we hope for the better situation and no more conflict again.

What are the positive and negative consequences of the ceasefire?

There are a lot of positive consequences such as freedom of travelling and transportation. In the past, we could not go to town whenever we wanted but now we can go anytime, regardless of day and night. We are not intimidated at checkpoints by soldiers. We can also go into the forest freely. The only thing we need to go forward is cooperating with our leaders [KNU] and approaching for real peace.

Is there safety in your community?

No, we do not guarantee that there is peace.

What does sustainable peace mean to you?

In conflict, we were nervous of fleeing and fear. The ceasefire is a great change for us because we can travel and work easily but not completely. We still remain in fear because of the past abuses we have faced.

What is the barrier to build sustainable peace?

Even our government could not obtain freedom, how can normal civilians have peace and freedom.

What would you like to change if you had authority?

I would like to change the 2008 constitution in order to build sustainable peace.

How would you advise the KNU or the Myanmar government?

As we are under two authorities [KNU and Myanmar government], I hope they can compromise and be in unity to achieve peace. It will also benefit civilians' potential development.

Which government could guarantee a sustainable peace?

It does not matter which group of government. All we want is any government that obtains peace and promotes peaceful life to civilians.

As a civilian, what could you do to promote peace?

For me, as I am a deacon, cooperation and sharing perspectives at the community level could somehow promote peace.

How is the human rights trend since the NCA? What are the human rights abuses that your community has been facing since the NCA?

Since the NCA, I have seen that both governments are trying their best to promote peace in communities. It was good because community members can travel freely. For saving forestry, our community prohibits logging and deforestation. In the past, we only have bamboo houses in our village. However, the contemporary situation is a bit peaceful. In this period, our customary leaders are trying to protect community forest. However, our community is facing challenges with both sides of the government. They [armed groups or government] challenged us that, they will wait and see how much we can control the forest. Actually, they should know that civilians cannot protect the forest completely because they have no authority and arms. Authorities should support civilians on this. Our community forests used to have plenty of trees and bamboos because we prohibited logging for business purpose. We only allowed community members to log trees for building their houses. However, our people [Karen armed groups; KNLA] broke the rule and did logging. Following this, the Tatmadaw also stole trees and did logging in the community forest during the nighttime. According to customary practice, local leaders arrested Tatmadaw who stole the logs. Finally, the authorities complained, "why can't the local community protect the forest as they claimed?" How can we completely protect it without the support of authorities? This is the bad impact of the NCA.

Is there any challenge to women during the NCA process?

No. There are only Karen people in our community. So, there is no discrimination on women at all.

Is there any discrimination against ethnic minorities and religious minorities?

No, we are all Karen. We also practice our religions freely. We have Christian and Hpoeh Weh Koh [animism]. We both celebrate and worship in our own way. There is no armed actor or authority that limits our rights in religion.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice means balance and fairness in both sides of the relationship.

What is the local justice system?

As we live in a mixed control area, we have two groups of local authorities which are KNU and Myanmar government. We have village heads from both Myanmar government and KNU sides. Our community also has its own procedures which we mostly adopted from KNU administration system.

Do you trust the mechanism that your community is applying? Do you think the mechanism is just?

Our trust depends on the activities of our government. We trust them if they are good to us. Yet, we cannot say that the problem solving mechanism is completely just.

Have you ever heard of corruption?

Yes, I heard about it but in our community there is no corruption at all. Sometimes people do not even want to take on the position of village head because it is completely free from corruption. However, local people take the leadership role not for their benefits; they are just willing to volunteer for their community. We also follow our community procedures. We do not practice penalty and compensation [through money] as it can lead to corruption.

What is the barrier to justice?

There is no barrier to justice in our community because authorities do not influence us.

What are the human rights abuses in your community?

Logging and deforestation is the only human rights abuse we face in our community. We also heard about proposed gold mining in our community but it was not officially started yet. The gold mining and deforestation carried out by authorities and outsider businesses not only breaks the local procedures, but also damages local forests without benefiting the host community. We do not know if it benefits the authorities and businesses, but not local people.

Is there any justice accountability to human rights abuses happening in your community? Like you mentioned about gold mining and deforestation.

The gold mining has not started yet but the logging has. The logging workers came to our village with their logging materials to do logging. We did not allow them to do logging for business purpose and trade it to the town. They told us that they have an official permission letter from the district level to do logging. However, there was no Township level permission. We reported to the local village tract leader and had a meeting with customary leaders and elders. However, our complaint about the prohibition on logging does not reach the upper authorities such as the Township level, it only stuck with the village tract leader. Therefore, the logging business representative came again with the government and local KNLA. They [KNLA] told us, why would we not allow the business to operate even though the township authorities have allowed it? They also challenged our local capacity to protect the forest. We replied to them that we [local people] might not have enough capacity to protect the forest without the support of soldiers [KNLA]. Then, local elders allowed the logging business to operate. There is no benefit for the community in this case.

Who would be the most responsible to take accountability in justice?

KNU government is more responsible in our community because we have less of a relationship with the Myanmar government.

What would you suggest to eliminate human rights abuses and gain justice in your community?

Both governments should cooperate in a just way.

What other information would you like to share?

I would suggest that the KNU and Myanmar government should obtain federalism in order to promote justice.

Source #62

Source doc #	Source # 62
Log #	18-122-A2-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
<p>Taungoo Interview Naw Ol--- (female, 49), Om--- village, On--- village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Taungoo District (November 2018)</p>	

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children do you have?

I have four children.

Was there any conflict in your village? Have you ever experienced human rights abuses in your village? For example, torture, arbitrary arrest.

My husband experienced those kinds of human rights abuses.

Can you tell me about what human rights abuses your husband experienced?

The [Tatmadaw]operation commander sent a letter to him. According to the letter, he was called to go and clean vegetation as he was a village head. He went there [the place that operation commander lives] with his followers but they did not come back. The next day, the other two villagers were arrested. I just tell you what I know. I heard that they [Tatmadaw] tortured them [villagers]. They [Tatmadaw] did not let them [villagers] go. However, they just let one or two villagers go but they did not let him [her husband] go. One or two weeks later, I heard that they killed him. I felt very sorry when I heard about it. My children were very young. I heard that they tortured him. I felt very sorry for him. Three weeks later, the warrant officer's wife called me over the phone. She told me to come to see her because she said that my husband is still alive. When I went to see her, she did not show me where my husband is. She told me that she did not say anything and she did not do any wrongdoing with my husband's case. I told her that I did not blame on anyone. And she told me, "Do not worry. Your husband is still alive but he is now sent to the detention centre at Division level. If you want to see him, you can go to see him there". Think about it. How can I go to see him? She told me that I need to bribe [Tatmadaw officers] and give money with the envelope and then my husband would not be put into jail. I swear to God. I do not lie. I have never had experiences such as bribing. However, I put money in envelop and gave it to officers in order to release my husband but I cannot go to see my husband. There's an intelligence officer. He told me that he will help me. He said that my husband was beaten and he shouted very loud. He told me to give money to him and he will go to solve the case. I gave him money. Finally, he said that it is not easy to solve the case even though he gave money to the officers. I did not trust him but I just worried for my husband. Again, the intelligence officer told me that my husband was sent to army camp in Shweg neighbouryin town. So I went there but they did not let me see my husband. They said that I need to bribe officers in order to see my husband. Then again, I put money in an envelope. Let me tell you. You cannot imagine the hardship I faced in my life. I had nobody to help me out. They told me to bring money and gift such as durians and honey. Then, I went there and I gave money to the battalion commander and his wife, the captain and his wife and the police officer and his wife. I did everything for the best even though I did not have food to eat. I just thought that everything would be fine if my husband was released. Actually, when I went there, they did not let me see my husband closely. They just let me see him from far away. How can I see my husband clearly when I am far away? I just saw my husband from far away. Then, I came back. Again, they called me over the phone and they said that my husband will be put into jail. Then, I went to see the head of the police office. I asked him how long my husband had to stay in jail.

He said that he just had to stay in jail for four or five years. Because of a pardon [reduction in punishment], he will just have to be in jail for a while such as two or three years. He told me like that. I was happy because I thought it would be fine if he stayed in jail for just two or three years. Then, they put my husband in their car and sent him to Toungoo prison. They told us that we had to take different cars. I told them that I would take the same car with my husband. I wanted to talk to him in the car. They said “no” because they worried that my husband would run away if I took the same car with my husband. I told them that we would surely not be running. Then, they let me go with my husband in the same car but they tied my husband up. When we arrived in Toungoo, he was brought into the prison and I came back home. When I got home, the head of the police office called me over the phone and he said that my husband would be sentenced to 20 years in jail. I felt very sad when I heard it. In the beginning, I went to see my husband one time per week, but I could not go to see him anymore because I did not have money anymore. I told my husband that I could not go to see him [in the jail] every week. I only had 30,000 kyat in my hand. What could I do? It was not easy for me to borrow other people’s money. Therefore, I just sold my properties to get some money. Then, I just went to see my husband one time per month because it cost a lot of money to go to see him. When I went to see him in the jail, they asked me for money so I could see him. I did not understand the process and I also did not have experience. I just listened to what other people said.

Who asked you for money?

The authority in the jail asked me for money. When I first went to see my husband, he told me I had to give him 60,000 kyat. He also told me that I needed to give 100,000 or 200,000 kyat in an envelope to the jailer. I did not understand anything at that time. I followed and did it as he said because nobody followed me to go to see my husband. I mean I had nobody to tell me what I should do. Therefore, I just followed what they [authorities] said. I also went to meet with the jailer in his house. When I met with the jailer, he talked to me nicely. However, I really thank God for everything because the decision was made that he was sentenced to 20 years jail but he was released after two years.

When was your husband arrested?

My husband was arrested in 2011.

When was he released from the jail?

He was released from the jail in 2013.

What difficulties did you face when your husband was in the jail?

I faced livelihood difficulties. It was very hard for me to look after my family. Also, the villagers did not come to support me. I am telling you the truth. They never came to ask me how their village head [her husband] is. I did not blame anyone but I was just angry with my husband because I already told him not to be a village head again as he had already served as a village head for one year. However, the villagers appointed him again to be their village head. He could not reject it because he loves this village. He decided to be their village head. I did not blame anyone but I just wanted to blame him. Because of his decision, our family was in trouble.

For what reasons, did they [Tatmadaw] arrest your husband?

They said that my husband had a connection with the rebels [KNLA]. They said that he supported the rebels because he went to give taxes to them.

Did they call you when your husband was interrogated in the court?

No. They did not call me to go to the court.

Did they in the court tell you that your husband was sentenced to 20 years jail?

They did not tell me in the court but they just informed me over the phone.

Did they call you when they made a decision in the court?

No. They did not call me.

Was there anyone who was an eyewitness in the court when they made the decision?

No. There was no eyewitness.

What did they tell you over the phone?

They said that my husband would be sentenced to the jail so I had to go there the next day.

Where did you have to go?

I had to go to the army camp. They kept my husband in a cell in the army camp.

Did you go to the court?

No. They just informed in the last minutes that my husband will go to the jail. So they said I had to go and see him the next day.

So they [Tatmadaw] did not let you and your family know when they made a decision that your husband would be sentenced to the jail. Is that right?

Yes. They did not let me know but they [Tatmadaw] just told me that my husband would be sentenced to four or give jail. According to reduction based on pardon, my husband will be in jail for just two or three years. I thought they all already knew the case. I mean those who told me [about how many years my husband will be in jail] are just lower Tatmadaw officers.

Do you think there is a transparency in the decision making process?

No. I do not think so.

So it means they did not let you know when they made a decision for your husband's case in the court. Is that right?

Yes. They did not let me know when they made a decision.

Can your children, who were old enough to be able to go to school, study when your husband was in jail?

No. I mean my youngest was just two years old at that time.

I know that your husband was released from the jail after the preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed [between the KNU and Myanmar government]. Can you tell me why your husband was released?

I do not understand clearly why he was released but he was released just after the ceasefire was made.

What do you think about your husband's case such as him being arrested?

He [Tatmadaw] called my husband to go and meet him. I just thought he was honest with my husband as he is an elder person [respected person]. I thought he would discuss with my husband to do something. Actually, he called him because he wanted to arrest him. He saw my

husband as a person who was guilty.

You husband went to see him from Om--- village to Leik Tho town. Is it right?

Yes.

When did it happen?

It happened in 2011.

Do you know that the ceasefire [NCA] was signed in your area?

Yes.

How did you know it? Who told you about the ceasefire agreement? Did villagers, Myanmar government or the KNU tell you about it?

Yes. The elder people told me about it so I knew it.

After the ceasefire agreement was signed, was there any conflict in your area?

No. The conflict did not happen in our area after the ceasefire. We feel happy about it.

Was there any forced labour in your area after the ceasefire?

No. it did not happen.

What do you think about the long lasting peace? What should be done to achieve the long lasting peace?

I just wish to achieve the long term peace in the long run.

What should the KNU and Myanmar government do in order to maintain the long lasting peace?

They should understand each other. They should build trust in order to maintain the long lasting peace.

Do you think that there is justice when they make a decision in the court? I mean for example, they arrested your husband but did they inform you and your husband when they arrested your husband, correct?

No. They did not let us know [why and when they arrested].

So what do you think about it in your husband's case?

I think they cheated us because they called my husband to go and clean vegetation in the land. Then, my husband went there.

Where did your husband go?

He went to Leik Tho town.

Who called your husband to come?

The operation commander.

What is the name of operation commander?

His name is Kar Paw Oo.

How many villagers went together with your husband?

Five villagers

Did they let those five villagers go?

Yes. They let those five villagers go but they did not let my husband go.

Did they arrest the other villagers again?

Yes. They came to arrest the other villagers again. They just came to arrest the other villagers on the day after the day that my husband was arrested. Their names are On--- and Oo---.

How was it different when they arrested other villagers on the day after the day your husband was arrested?

For example, they ordered my husband to go and meet with them that day. Then, they came to arrest the other villagers at night.

So they came to arrest the other villagers within one day?

Yes. They came to arrest the other villagers. They tied the villagers up and took them to their place. I heard that they blindfolded the villagers when they came to arrest them.

Who came to arrest the other villagers?

Tatmadaw soldiers.

Were those two villagers put into the jail later?

Yes.

What reasons did they make and put those two villagers into jail?

The same reasons they make for my husband. They are article 17/1, 17/2 and being a deserter.

After your husband was released from the jail, could he work as before?

He could work a lot before he was put into jail. He was very strong. After he was released from the jail, he got weaker and weaker. Now he cannot work anymore since he comes to stay at home. I blame him every day. Actually he really wants to work in his mind but he cannot work so he feels sorry about it. He just has to stay at home.

Why do you think that he cannot work?

He suffered pain as he was tortured. His back is often painful, he said, because he was beaten by the big bamboo stick. I had to give him a lot of medicine after he was released. I had to pick up tree leaves [that are good for health] and boil them. Then, I had to feed him. I had to look after him like a baby. I was so angry.

What about electric shocks? Did your husband tell you about getting electric shocks?

Yes. He told me about that.

Is his mentality good? I mean what is the difference of his mental condition between before and after?

His brain was really good in the past. Now his brain is not good. I told him that his mentality is not normal. Sometimes I asked him but he got angry and he answered me whatever he wants to say. It happens to him very often. So I always tell him, "Your heart is not good. Your mind is not normal". I wanted to send him to the hospital to get some medical treatment but I worry that it will cost a lot of money. So I just keep him in the house. Even though he cannot work, it is better

to stay at home like this because it will cost a lot of money if he goes to hospital.

Does anyone come to help and support him since he was released?

No. But we received money like one person gets 20,000 kyat. For example, if there are five people in the family, they receive 100,000 kyat. However, this money is provided to everyone in the village.

I mean does anyone come to give him special support as a prisoner?

No. No one came to support him.

OK. Thank you very much. Do you have anything to say? Do you have anything to express your feelings?

I faced financial difficulties [since her husband was put into jail]. I had to leave my property with pawnbrokers because I needed money. Then, I struggled with my life and I tried to save money and give money back to the pawnbrokers in order to get back my property. No one knows my feelings except me. No one solves my problem. I only had to solve my own problems.

Thank you very much for your answer and time. I want to ask you something. Do you allow KHRG to publish this information?

Yes.

Can I take a picture of you?

Yes. You can.

Thank you.

Yes.

Source #63

Source doc #	Source # 63
Log #	18-128-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Ms--- (female, 38), Mt--- village, Mu--- village tract, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

What is your marital status?

I am married.

As you are a community leader, can I interview you about your community situation?

Yes, you can.

From your past experiences during the conflict, have you ever experienced any conflict and human rights violations?

From my personally experiences through conflicts and human rights violations, I always had to

flee [become displaced] from fearful situations, so I could not go to school anymore. When I was studying in Grade #1 and Grade #3, we had to study in in fear because when the fighting happened, we had to run [hide] under school and after the fighting, we returned to our class like that. When I was in Grade #4, I could not go to school or access education anymore because the fighting got worse. This violated my right to access to education. I have thought that it was because this country did not build sustainable peace and unity so its people are driven apart. Even though the country was called one of united ethnicities, we ethnic people had to flee under the governing system. Our rights were violated so we could not access education and we were left behind.

Were there any human rights abuses in your community?

From my personal experience through human rights violations in Noh T'Kaw Township, they happened because the Myanmar government is egocentric and did not consider civilians. They attacked ethnic areas like Noh T'Kaw [Township] area and absorbed the ethnic area into their territory. When they were fighting the Karen revolution they knew that the main strength of Karen revolution was from the civilians, so they defeated civilians in order to cut the source of the Karen revolution.

Do you remember the date?

I do not remember the exact date, but since I was born in 1970, I never seen Myanmar government building peace with ethnic groups. They raid the other ethnic areas and occupy their territory. This country was named as The Republic of Union, but the government practiced [as if it were] a unitary state.

Were you and other villagers in your community displaced?

Since I know have known myself, I always had to run [was always displaced]. I could live in a stable and peaceful situation only after the ceasefire was signed. We are happy because we can enjoy the freedom of movement.

Did you witness any violations during the conflict that you want to report?

I witnessed the "Four Cuts" strategy, which started when I was a baby. The Tatmadaw confiscated all of the villagers' rice and then villagers had to get their rice back from them daily [ration]. I learned about those abuses from the testimony of my grandparents and parents.

How did those violations impact your livelihoods?

The impacts were, we always had to fear them [Tatmadaw] so we could not work on our farm for our family livelihoods. We received information that they destroyed and burnt down the villagers' houses, churches and schools.

How did you and other civilians in your community overcome these challenges?

The human rights violations that I suffered were committed by the Myanmar government [military] because it practiced the unitary state system in the country. It blocked the way to our dreams and objectives for the development of our lives. They even cut our rations by confiscating our food [paddy]. They would like to put us in [a state of] desperation.

Who committed human rights violations?

The perpetrator of human rights violations in our country was Myanmar [government and military].

Have any human rights abuses even been resolved?

I have not seen any resolved, but I heard that people [authorities from other countries] taught them [the government] about how they violated human rights. There are many news reporters and journalists who report about cases of them [Myanmar government] committing human rights violations in order to change their behaviour.

Do the victims of the human rights violations have access to justice?

At the moment, they have not received any justice yet, but the situation is improved because news and reports of the human rights abuses are spreading and becoming known around the world, so they [Myanmar government] pause their strategy for a moment. It is like, they hold their breath for a moment.

What do you think should happen to the perpetrators of human rights abuses?

From my experiences, I heard about the other countries restricting the economy against them [Myanmar government] in a political way. They [Myanmar government] have their own country and they are currently changing their governing system a little bit so the other countries cannot take serious action on them.

Have you ever heard or seen the perpetrators of human rights violations taken to court? For example, did they apologise to you or compensate you? Should they lose their positions of power?

In my personal opinion, the perpetrators are Myanmar government and I want the other countries to pressure them to revise and positively improve their governing system. I do not need an apology or compensation, but I want them to build sustainable peace in the country. When there is peace in the country, there will be no apology, but we will have unity.

What do you know about the peace process? How do you think about it?

As I mentioned above, they [Myanmar government and military] calmed down a little due to the pressure from the other countries, so they called for the ceasefire with ethnics [armed organisations]. The ethnic people [EAOs] also known that civil war is meaningless to the civilians and it is not a fruitful for them [EAOs] and civilians. Due to the fighting, these groups killed and destroyed each other, so there is no improvement or development in the country. Therefore, the Karen National Union [KNU] agreed with the ceasefire process and signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA] for their civilians to be able to live in peace. The government proceeded with the ceasefire because of their faults [violations], so things have calmed down a little bit. According to KNU, I learned from my community, they are certainly resolved to work for the Karen people and for all other ethnic people in the country to be able to live in peace, so they signed the NCA.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

I think this peace process will bring us peace. From knowledge that I have learned and experienced, the ceasefire is the first step toward peace and no more fighting in the country. The further steps will be [to fix] the political solution and build peace in the country. When these goals are accomplished, there will be successful, sustainable peace in the country.

Do you think there is peace in your village?

From my experiences of working in the community and my opinion, civilians feel like there is peace in the community, but they are not completely able to enjoy their rights yet because it is just the first step toward the peace.

How has the peace process affected your life?

The benefit is the improvement in our [ability to] work for our livelihoods and our rights situation because we can communicate and meet with all other ethnic people as much as the Myanmar government. In the past, as we are Karen people, we always had to do whatever [the Myanmar government and the Tatmadaw] ordered from the highest to the lowest position. Whatever they said [Even if we complied], they would still hit our heads. The benefit [of the peace process] is that we can now meet and speak with them.

Due to the peace process, do you feel secure and the improvement in your livelihoods?

If I compare the current situation and the past situation, the current situation has improved by one third because there is more security and freedom of movement for our livelihoods.

What does peace mean for you? For example, do you feel it is sustainable peace for you yet or not?

This ceasefire and peace process is not sustainable peace for me yet, but to build sustainable peace depends on the honesty of the Myanmar government through the process. Currently, I do not think that it is sustainable peace yet because I do not believe in the government yet. Even though I am a civilian, I do not believe the government because I experienced violations committed by the government [and its military] for 48 years; the whole of my life from when I was a baby until now.

If you could change one thing in the peace process, what would it be?

If I have rights to meet, build friendship and talk with them [Myanmar government and military], I would suggest that Myanmar has to be a federal union of ethnic states. There will be peace in the country when they reform the country to be a Federal Union country. When it becomes Federal Union Country, the ethnic groups surrounding the country will be involved in the government body [process] together, and then it will become one Myanmar country.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and the KNU authorities, what suggestion would you like to give to improve the peace process?

During the current situation of calm, I would like to suggest that the Myanmar government is the main cause [of problems in the country] and they are like parents so they should understand the situation in the country and know how to build peace among their children and they should provide rights to each of them [ethnic groups]. The KNU also should try to build peace, as they are like a child, in order to make their parents happy. Parents [government] also should teach [treat] their children the right way so their children not become unruly children.

Which group [including KNU and Myanmar government] will bring justice, do you think?

According to my opinion on the currently situation, the KNU will bring sustainable peace and justice in the country because they work honestly for their people and other ethnic people. They realised that civil war is not beneficial for civilians so they kept themselves humble and support the NCA to build unity. At the moment, the Myanmar government signed the NCA, but their political acts seem untrustworthy because they still form new army bases and they do not reduce their activities such as sending more military materials and soldiers. From what I learned about the NCA from the news, actually they [Myanmar military] should agree to withdraw their army [from EAO territory] and be based in these territories only by request [of EAOs]. If they agree to this part, it will make us trust them. Nevertheless, instead of withdrawing, they gradually send more, strengthen their military camp and enlarge their territory so they are

everywhere now. It seems like they take advantage from the NCA during the ceasefire period, while there is no fighting, to enlarge and occupy more territory, and they strengthen their military for greater everlasting power.

As you are a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

As I am a civilian, if the Myanmar government ask us, "Civilians!! What should we do for peace in our country?", we can give them our suggestions and perspectives. If they accept the right suggestions from civilians, when the right way is practiced in the country then there will be peace in the country.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

The main human rights human rights abuses in my community were rape, [forced] portering and gang torture. If they forced us to be their porters without torturing us and allowed us to return, that would be less brutal [compared to other forms of violation], but they tortured us and killed whole families like in Mt--- village.

How were the human rights abuses affecting the victims' livelihoods?

As we are Karen, the victims' family who still alive rely on their neighbour support because there were no armed groups supporting us.

What have the human rights abuses affected women?

To be honest, women had to survive even though they could not handle the challenges anymore because they had to handle the family livelihoods challenges alone when men were away [either because they were forced to porter or because they fled to avoid this].

What caused those human rights violations, do you think? Is it because of minority groups, religious or ethnic groups?

From my understanding, the government is the root cause of the human rights abuses because they prohibited the cooperation of other [ethnic] people in the government body and they would like to govern alone. The ethnic people could not suffered these [the government violations] anymore so they started their own revolution against them and the civil war broke out.

What does justice mean for you?

Justice is sustainable, correct?

Justice is equality and peace.

So it is the equality and equal rights. What is your question?

What do you understand about the justice?

I understand that there should be equality and peace in the country. Everyone has equal rights.

What is the justice system like in your community?

Some parts of justice system are practiced properly, but some are not.

Do you know why some of the justice systems are not practiced properly?

It is because armed actors have different ideas from us and the country is not peaceful, so they took advantages of this.

Which groups take action [on justice system]? KNU or Myanmar government?

In my community, for the cases that village-level authorities cannot handle anymore, mostly the KNU justice system takes action and handles them. The Myanmar justice system takes action when the cases happen in their pure territory.

Do you trust that justice system? Do you think it is fair?

I think the current [KNU] justice system is two thirds fair for me, but it is not completely [excellent] yet.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

I heard about it, but I am not an eye witness. Sometimes, it happens, but it is not only the fault of the KNU and it is also the fault of civilians because the civilians apply bribery in order to win in negotiation. When they [KNU authorities] face this situation, they also consider both sides [perpetrator and victims] the same civilians so the bribery becomes a bit more obvious.

Have you experienced it [bribery or injustice]? What are the barriers to access justice?

I have not seen any barriers yet.

As you experienced human rights abuses in the past, what suggestions do you want to give for the improvement of the human rights situation.

For the improvement of the human rights situation, I would like to suggest to the government of Myanmar that we would like to hear civilians' voices about their problems and they [the government] should resolve those problems for civilians. There will be none of these problems [human rights abuses] in our country when the government resolves the problems.

For your past human rights abuses, what kind of reparation or justice do you want?

Would you want the case to go to the court?

In the current situation and behavior of the country [Myanmar], the foreign countries that control the small countries should help. For example, there are a lot of villages in one village tract, and if one village cannot accomplish something alone, the other villages support them as cooperation. Therefore, the other big [powerful] countries should consider the Myanmar case and help it build peace in the country. If they cannot help [building peace in Myanmar in lower court], then they should use anything to handle the case in the higher court. Agencies on the ground do not work because they do not appreciate our voices that we raised to them. I hope there will be justice on those abuses in the future.

Do you want justice for the human rights violations? For example, do you want the perpetrator to pay compensation for you? What [punishment] system do you prefer in order to bring you justice?

From my opinion, the Myanmar [government and their military] abuses their own country and they should rectify themselves. If they complete it, it is like they pay for the destruction in the country. Therefore, the most important thing is they should rectify their own behavior by bringing peace to the country. There is still an unsustainable situation in their country. The closest example is their [Myanmar] flag and I saw they changed it around twice already.

In order to access justice for the past human rights abuses, which governments do you think should take responsibility for accountability? Myanmar government or KNU?

Both of them should cooperate in taking responsibility on clarifying the problems and building peace together, but the main actor is the Myanmar government because they were the most powerful in the county and they represent all of Myanmar. Therefore, they should regret and

change their behaviors and then the ethnic groups [EAOs] should cooperate with them for building peace in the country as the one union country. Reflect to the current situation, there are a lot of countries [ethnic states] in one country. I see [believe] that, if the Myanmar government builds peace, the ethnic [groups] might not oppose them.

What is the best way to improve the human rights situation in your village and your community, do you think?

The way to improve the human rights situation in my village and community is the same way I previously mentioned about the government. When there is justice and equality from that way, then there will be peace and improvement in the village and village tracts.

During the conflict period, were you displaced?

As I already told you at the beginning, since I was a baby until I was 13 years old and I was in Standard #4, there was fighting in my village so I was displaced into the forest and could not even finish my school. During that period, I could not bear it [human rights violation] anymore and I knew that if I did not look [fight] for peace, we could not live [in our country] anymore. Therefore, I joined KNU [KNLA] armed group when I was 13 years old. [Due to] the political situation during that period, we were underage but we could hold guns because of the oppression from the Myanmar government against the ethnic people. Therefore, children also had to hold gun in order to defend themselves in the revolution.

How long and where were you displaced to? What [problems] did your family experience?

Since I was displaced and travelling as a single person [a KNLA soldier], I did not meet with my family anymore. When I started my [own] family, there were indescribable problems because we did not even have food or a house. If we showed our houses and location and the Myanmar government military saw it, they would commit violations against us and destroy them all [houses, farms]. Therefore, we did not dare to build houses. My family temporarily had to stay with other people and sometimes had to stay in abandoned houses. My family had to stay in three abandoned houses until the situation become a little bit stable and then I could build my own house.

What was the root cause of the refugees [displacement]?

The root cause was the Myanmar government [military] ethnic cleansing. The fighting and violations caused [people to become] refugees.

For your family and people in your community to enjoy peace, what changes do you want to make and what support do you want?

I want the big countries to help us for sustainable peace and solve the political situation in Myanmar. I want them to try their best to help us until we have sustainable peace, no more suffering, and equality in Myanmar.

Do you have anything to report that I have not asked you about?

Today is the ceasefire period, so we can meet each other and build relationships easier, so I want both Myanmar government and KNU to build close relationships with us. They should offer us an opportunity to participate in discussion [decision-making] on how to build [develop] our country. The KNU should do the same thing. It does not have to be that civilians and the military are separate; that civilians must stay in their own position and military in their own position.

Do you have anything else?

No, I do not have anything more.

Thank you very much for providing information regarding past human rights violations and experiences. Can I use your voice and information in order for people to hear and do something?

Yes, I want them to hear my voice as I reported it now.

Can we [KHRG] use the information that you reported for publication?

Yes, you can. I want this information to spread to the whole world.

Can I take your picture?

Yes, you can.

Thank you very much for giving us your time and providing very good information.

Thank you.

Source #64

Source doc #	Source # 64
Log #	18-127-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Mergui-Tavoy District
Full Text	

Mergui-Tavoy Interview | U Dac--- (male, 49), Dad--- village, Tha Jay village tract, Mergui-Tavoy District (December 2018)

Are you married?

Yes, I have four children. I have two sons and two daughters.

Are your children going to school?

As the situation is getting stable slightly in the village, our children can go to the school.

Did you or your family experience human rights abuses?

Throughout the years of living here, we have experienced the main problem of land confiscation by companies. Land confiscation is the main problem that affected our livelihood because we secure our livelihood by farming. The local populations were intimidated by the companies with the land confiscations. This is distressing to us.

Did the companies commit any human rights violations?

We can say that it [the land confiscation] is one hundred percent a human right violation because we witnessed it personally. People have been living and working on their lands since long ago. They [the companies] didn't even consult about any reparations or compensation. Instead, they immediately expelled us from our lands. That's a very serious human rights violation.

How did they intimidate you and the other villagers?

A company can never confiscate people's lands. Only the union of the country can confiscate lands. In this situation, the union of the country adjured vacant, fellow and virgin land and deliberately confiscated the villagers' lands. It's figuratively intimidating on us. They even threatened us if we didn't want to leave.

The company that confiscated the local population's lands is CKB Company.⁸ The owner of that company is U Bo Saing. His wife's name is Daw Than Than Aye. On August 6th 2009, they were given permission. But they confiscated people's land in the year of 2003. Actually, they confiscated the population's lands 6 years before the permission. They did whatever they wanted regarding the land confiscation, which contrasts with the law of land confiscation. The local farmer whose lands were confiscated reported about the case to the relevant department in 2014. Even though they reported about the case, the solutions for the case were continuing year by year. In these current situations, no solution had been given for the local people.

Where did you live after your land was confiscated?

Before, we were farming in our lands. After our lands were confiscated by the company, we moved to other areas. We faced livelihood and education problems for our children. We struggled for our living condition by working daily random jobs.

Did it affect your livelihood?

We faced livelihood problems after our lands were confiscated. We couldn't farm in our lands which left us in a critical condition. It continued to affect our livelihood along with our children's education if our jobs were intermittent. Unfortunately, villagers had to move because of the land confiscation. At that time, the daily wage of workers was between 2500 and 2700 kyat [between 1.64 and 1.77 USD]⁹. That's the difficulty of the situation we have confronted.

When did this happen?

The company initially confiscated the villagers' lands in 2003. In addition, the situations of these areas were really bad back in around 1984. Villagers faced difficulty in farming. At that period, we had to get permission from the village administrator once every three years to be able to do our farming. Later on in 2003, a company entered into our areas and confiscated villagers' land which implicated their living condition.

How did it affect your livelihood?

Not only was our livelihood condition implicated but also the education of our children was implicated as well.

How many acres of your land were confiscated?

30 acres of my lands were confiscated.

How many people were affected by the land confiscations?

⁸ KHRG has received previous reports of land confiscation by the CKB Company, also known as the Green Dragon Myanmar Company, in Mergui-Tavoy District, "[Mergui-Tavoy Interview: Saw A--. February 2017.](#)" KHRG, 2017, "[Mergui-Tavoy Situation Update: Taw Na Th'ree Township, 2017.](#)" KHRG, 2017. According to the company website (<https://www.greenmyanmardragon.com/about1-c221j>) the CKB Company currently has 20,000 acres of palm oil plantation and an additional 3,500 acres for further planting in Mergui-Tavoy District.

⁹ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the September 4th 2019_official market rate of 1,526.80 kyats to US \$1.

Around 30 acres of lands owned by each villager personals predominantly were confiscated from the villagers. According to the list, the combination of the total confiscated lands was 355 acres.

Do you know the names of the people whose land was confiscated?

We have the name list. I don't know it by heart.

Could you tell me the names you remember?

U Dae---, U Daf---, U Dag---, U Dah---, Daw Dai---, Ma Daj---, Saw Dak---, Naw Dal---, Naw Dam---, Saw Dan---, Saw Dao---, Saw Dap---, U Daq---, U Dar---, Daw Das---, Ma Dat---, Daw Dau---, Maung Dav--- and Daw Daw---. That's all I remember for the names of the people whose lands were confiscated. I will not know the other persons' names unless I look at the names list.

How much compensation would you like to receive from CKB Company for each acre of land that has been confiscated?

For the compensation and reparation, the relevant departments made reconciliation. However, it didn't bring good results. The township land administration summoned farmers at the township office. In the investigation, their lands were witnessed as lands with no documents. The land administration officer asked if they held copy letters. People who had land confiscated asked for the compensation of 300,000 kyat [196.49 USD] for one acre. Instead of compensation, they [land administration officer] pointed out that our lands have no cogent documents. They only consented to compensate us if we had the copy letters.

If you don't receive any compensation, what would you do as a farmer? What kind of reparations or justice do you want?

On June 22nd 2018, 25 farmers were summoned to the township administration office. There, we were told that among 25 people, only nine of us were the owner of their lands. That dissatisfied the rest of the farmers. With enthusiasm to get back their lands, they went to the township administration office later to sue. But it's not easy for them to sue as they don't have official documents. Actually, their ancestors gave these lands to their children and their children had been working on the inherited lands for a long time. According to the constitution section #347, every citizen must have equal rights. The companies didn't confiscate lands according to the law. There are also weaknesses in the local population's understanding of land rights. The law should also think not only partially from the company side, but also for the civilians. However, there was no equality. In the current situation, the country is practicing the law of reducing poor people. They should return the population's lands. The villagers are relying on their lands. For example, the company will be growing rubber trees for 4 years. Within the 10 years the rate of the poor people will be decreasing with the benefit from the company that processing rubber.

Who confiscated the land? Was it the KNU or the NLD government?

Land confiscation has to go according to the 1984 land acquisition act. In addition, they needed to examine the purpose of the land confiscations and explain about this to local people. Instead of giving any explanation, the companies directly confiscated the lands possessed by the local people. It's really bad that they didn't prioritize and consider the population. Actually, they should've done it in equality.

What do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) or peace process?

I don't know so much about the ceasefire as I am not a politician. We do hope that it would bring genuine peace if they follow the peace process.

How is the NCA relevant to you?

I have been living in the conflict period. However, after the NCA, the situation in the country became stable in four or five years. I see it as good results that the peace process brings.

What would you like to say about the peace process?

In the current situation, the civilians could work and travel conveniently.

What differences do you see in Dad--- village after the NCA?

The situation in our village became a lot better compared to the past.

Do you think the peace process will lead to sustainable peace?

I think obtaining sustainable peace will depend on the governments and the ethnic groups.

What types of sustainable peace do you want in the future?

There are things that are unacceptable for the ethnic groups. Actually, the government should consider for the ethnic groups and fulfill their needs. It would bring sustainable peace in the country if they also consider the ethnic groups.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would suggest that they sit together and change the constitution law with the agreement of all. In addition, they also should consider the problems the population is facing nowadays. I am in no doubt it will become a lot better if they follow this way.

Which government could guarantee peace in Myanmar? The KNU or Myanmar government?

I see that if they practice genuine federalism in the country, it will bring peace in the country.

As a Dad--- villager, how would you like to participate in the peace process?

Villagers' inclusiveness is extremely important in the peace-making. That's why the government should accept the suggestions given by the CBOs and CSOs because they are representing villagers' voices.

Would you like to add anything to our conversations?

Every one of us is longing for federalism. That's why the government and ethnic leaders should consider the needs of the civilians.

Source #65

Source doc #	Source # 65
Log #	18-132-A8-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Ni--- (female, 53), Nj---, Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District (December 2018)

What is your religion and ethnicity?

I am Karen, Christian.

During the conflict period between 1995 and 1999, did you, your family or civilians in your community face any human rights violations committed by Myanmar government [military]? If you did, what were the abuses?

In 1997, we were displaced.

Why were you displaced?

They forcibly relocated us to a bigger village.

Where did you relocate to?

I ran to Nk--- village.

If you refused to relocate, what would the Tatmadaw have done against you?

At that period, they threatened our lives and killed a lot of innocent people.

Did you see or receive information [from your neighbours] about the Tatmadaw killing villagers who refused to relocate?

I tell you honestly that I was always in terrible fear [at that time]. Even when Has Doh Htoo [KNLA] came to the village with his soldiers, I was shaking in fear and I left my house and fled to another place because the Tatmadaw always patrolled in the community like Ni--- area [because it was not a secure situation]. The Tatmadaw questioned us Kaw Thoo Lei soldiers.

Did the Myanmar government military murder villagers? Like when they met villagers in the forest.

No. But they tortured a villager, Saw Nm---, to get his gun.

Did Hser Htoo have a gun?

No, he did not have it, but they asked him to provide a gun for them and accused him of having guns. They tied him up and put him under the cart. People who were Set Tha¹⁰ [a kind of porter] told us when they returned to the village.

Was he a soldier or villager?

Maybe he was a soldier.

If he was a soldier, it is not related to human rights abuses when Tatmadaw arrested [opposite] soldiers. I ask you about the villagers.

Okay, I will tell you about [violations against] villagers that happened in Nn---. The Tatmadaw

¹⁰ *Set tha* is a Burmese term for a kind of forced labour, primarily involving acting as an intermediary for messages. This may include sending orders from army officers to village heads, or serving as a messenger stationed at army camps or bases but may also involve other menial tasks.

accused and threatened village leaders of killing their soldier when Tatmadaw soldiers were guiding [for their troop security] in the Set Tha at Nn--- area and one of the Tatmadaw soldiers accidentally fell into the Nn--- River.

Did that Tatmadaw soldier fall [into the river] by himself?

Yes, he fell by himself at Maw No---'s [a villager's] plantation. The Tatmadaw soldiers looked for his body in the river and saw his backpack, but they did not see his body. During that period, we were too much in fear and Kyaw Np--- [a villager] had to do push-ups [as punishment by the Tatmadaw].

You said that the Tatmadaw soldier fell into the river by himself, so why did villagers have to be afraid of Tatmadaw?

Because they were threatening us and accused villagers of supporting Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU and KNLA]. They said that Nga Pway [KNLA] took that dead soldier's body from the river and villagers kept the case a secret. When the Tatmadaw saw the milk cans beside the bamboo trees they said, "Here you see, the Nga Pway [KNLA] drank milk and left the cans here after they got the dead body. How don't you see it [the incident]?" Actually, those milk cans were left by their [own] soldiers after they finished them.

During that time, I was running around and carrying my child with me until I had to flee to another place. I was the first person with my three children to flee from the village.

Due to the Tatmadaw violating [human rights] against villagers, did all of the Nq--- villagers become displaced people?

Yes, all of the villagers had to leave [to the forest or other places]. In 1999, some villagers secretly returned to the villages despite the security risks in order to work on their farms for their livelihoods. Villagers just had to travel from their hiding places to the village on and on [year by year] like that. Later on, some families returned to the village and other families gradually returned to the village.

Did you still face any abuses when you [and other villagers] were displaced to Nk--- village?

We always had to be Set Hta for Tatmadaw twice per month.

What would happen to you if you do not go [for Set Tha]?

They punished us [by forcing us] to pay money in lieu of going for Set Tha.

Could the village leaders speak on behalf of villagers?

We all villagers had to cooperate and work together by rotating [responsibility] from villager to villager like that.

Did they use any strategy in order to prevent villagers from being Set Tha?

During that period, I think they might have talked [to the Tatmadaw about not forcing villagers to be Set Tha], but they could not stop the Tatmadaw so everyone had to go for Set Tha. Even when we did not join the meeting with Tatmadaw, they ordered us to pay one viss of chicken as a punishment.

Did any cases of sexual violations against women happen in your community?

Have you ever ask Muga Nr--- about when the Tatmadaw opened her sarong [sexual assault]?

No, I did not because I did not know about the incident until I interviewed you now.

Tatmadaw soldiers opened her sarong [in order to make her naked]; when she tried to cover the front of her body, the Tatmadaw soldiers opened the back side. It happened when Tatmadaw soldiers were based in my house for three months [in the village], so we were in fear.

Why did the Tatmadaw soldiers try to make her naked?

It happened when she was looking after the cows and a Tatmadaw soldier found her on his way from security guard patrolling outside of the village at Ns--- area [outside of the village]. That aunty took a small machete with her, but the Tatmadaw soldier asked for her machete by claiming that he would cut something. Anyway, that Tatmadaw soldier checked her bags after he got her machete and saw one gold necklace, one pair of gold earrings, and 1,000 kyat. He did not take those [gold and money], but he attempted to rape her she ran away from that soldiers in fear and escaped from him. She said, "If he [Tatmadaw soldier] murders me, he will have to shoot me in the back, so I ran and ran without thinking of living or dying." Later, people [village leaders] reported this case to his [the soldier's] Major named Kyaw Soe Tint, who was based in Muga Naw Nt---'s house, of Light Infantry Battalion [LIB]# 546. The name of the perpetrator who attempted to rape [that woman] is Way Lu Kyaw. He also was based and slept in my house at that night [after the incident]. We always had to live in fear of them. I knew the incidents only when Hpee [grandmother] Nu--- or Hpee Nv--- reported the case [to the Tatmadaw Major].

Did his major give him any punishment for his action?

He did nothing to that soldier [as punishment]. But another Tatmadaw soldier who attempted to rape Naw H--- at night time was punished by beating.

Did he rape Muga Nw---?

He could not make it, but he could take our Muga Nw---'s sarong [make her naked], because she was awake. It was at 1am in the morning, but I do not remember the date.

It was during the same period?

Yes, it was when the Tatmadaw was based in our village for a three month period. Muga Nw--- shouted for help, "the [Tatmadaw] soldier is entering into my house [room]!! The soldier is entering into my house [room]!!" so the other Tatmadaw soldiers came to her house. People [the Tatmadaw major] took action on that soldier after Muga Nw--- reported the case. Later on, some Tatmadaw soldiers who were the friends of the perpetrator came [to her house and] pointed the gun at Nx--- [husband of Muga Nw---]. It was in the morning before they moved to another place and there were a lot of people around there, so they could not do any violent thing against him. If it was during nighttime and when he isolated from other villagers, they probably might have murdered him.

As you said the Tatmadaw soldier who attempted to rape Muga Nw--- was punished, how many times did his major beat him as punishment?

I do not remember how many times he was beaten, but the Tatmadaw major put him in the lemon plantation and in rain at the back of Muga Naw Nt---'s house and he was kept at Muga Ny---'s old [abandoned] house once too. He called me when I was walking past him, but I did not look at him so he got very angry at me. The Tatmadaw was based in our village for three months so they could recognise us [villagers].

There was another time that Tatmadaw soldiers asked to kill my chicken for meat and I had only two chickens; one hen and one rooster. He told his friend, "The upper leader [major] told us to

ask permission [for anything], but we cannot get what we ask for, for you to shoot [the chicken]!!" I replied to them, "I have only chicken and want to breed it [to get more chickens]. You can shoot the chicken, I will report it to your major." So that they did not shoot [my chicken], but they got angry at me a lot with unpleasant actions of shaking and shouting.

When Myanmar government workers [and soldiers] committed human rights violations during that conflict period, were the perpetrators taken to the court?

I never heard about this [in my life]. They [Tatmadaw] were in the front line so they were never reported to the court [for committing human rights violations against civilians] for the justice system.

Another issue was the Tatmadaw firing guns [frightening villagers], without any other soldiers in the village, just beside my house. I can remember the date; it was on September 6th 2011. After that, they shot Muga Nz---'s pigs beside the [village] church and looted Oa---'s golden necklace and earrings.

Did they take those [gold]?

Yes, they did.

Did they pay anything to her?

No, they did not. It happened when villagers were running for their lives [because of the Tatmadaw firing their guns].

When was it?

It was on September 6th 2011 when I was three month pregnant with my daughter. I had to run and hide in the ground [for protection from the bullets] and my knee was injured so I suffered it for very long time. It was LIB# 545 and they fired the gun called a machine gun beside my house. When those Tatmadaw were based in the village, they also wanted to commit sexual violations [against women] too. One soldier told me, "You said you will give [marry] me your niece!" Even though I did not speak much Burmese, I was not afraid of them due to their being based in the village for very long.

I heard from my neighbours that they [Tatmadaw soldiers] were punished [by their commander] after they fired the guns [in the village], but I am not sure whether it was true or not.

In this incident, there were several mortar shells fired into the Ob--- area in the centre of an unpaved vehicle road, and we saw the exploded area.

Did anyone get injured?

No, nobody got injured, but I think they might have shot a villager if they saw any villager while they were firing the guns and walking around from the north to the west of the village. When they returned [from the west], they pointed the gun at Oc--- when we were hiding in the ground and they almost shot her dead.

You mentioned about many [human rights] violations during the conflict period. How about after the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA]? Have you known about any Myanmar government military violations against civilians in your community?

In the current period, they [human rights violations] are decreased compared to the conflict period.

Do you still have to be afraid of the Myanmar government military?

I think we do not have to be afraid of them.

Do you think refugees can return [to their homes] yet?

I think they cannot return yet.

So what do you mean when you said you do not have to be afraid of the Tatmadaw anymore?

Because I do not hear about the fighting happening in my community anymore.

How about in other places?

I hear about fighting still happening in Kachin country [state] last year.

How about in Karen country [state]?

The fighting still happens in District #5 [Hpapun District].

Do you completely believe the Myanmar government that they will build peace and love civilians yet? Why?

No, I do not fully believe in them yet because their actions are different from their words.

Can you give an example?

Even in the community, there is discrimination against repatriated refugees by other civilians who said we are causing conflict.

What did they tell [how did they discriminate against] you?

When we [returnees] return to our own land to get our land back, they [resident civilians] said we are causing conflict with them. Actually, this is our land and they do not have to talk to us like that.

Are there any [authority] mediators for this kind of conflict?

Yes, but some of the mediators have less knowledge [of the justice system].

Who do you mean?

Village leaders are not like leaders in the camp, so when they adjust the case, they [resident people] are right and we are wrong.

What do they do for the returning refugees?

They informed the villagers that land owners [returnees] will take their land back, but they do not manage anything yet.

Do they [village leaders] recognise the lands [of refugees] as virgin and fallow land?

No, it is not like that because those lands were worked by my parents-in-law since a long time ago.

How about other returned refugees?

I do not know. Maybe some of them face the same problem like me.

I would like to ask you about the NCA that was signed between the KNU and Myanmar government: do you think it is sustainable peace?

I think it not sustainable [peace] yet.

When there is conflict in your community, to which authority's justice system do the civilians report the case?

[We report the cases] to our Karen [KNU] people leaders. For me, I believe in my leaders, and I do not believe the Myanmar leaders [government].

Maybe, my questions are not clear so they might have made you confused. Do you have any questions?

I do not understand what you said about people signing that thing.

It is the NCA, which was signed for the ceasefire for peace talks, but there is not sustainable peace yet. It is the first step to move forward for the peace talks.

Is there anything else?

Can we return to our village and live in sustainable peace yet?

Regarding this situation, I would like to ask you: how do you feel when you live in Ya Moo Hta now?

I [we] face a lot of drug [yaba] problems in the community.

I would like to ask you more about this: do you face only drug problems in your community? Don't the other issues cause problems for your livelihood?

The others are health [healthcare services] problems.

For example, health, education, livelihoods and drug problems in your community. When there is no fighting in the community do you think people [authorities' leaders] can handle those problems?

I think they can solve this problem.

What are the most important for your livelihood and justice?

I want prosperity for my livelihood and a peaceful life.

What do you need for your peaceful life?

I need health [healthcare services], and [the ability to] work freely for my livelihood.

I understand that you do not clearly understand my questions so do you have any questions for me?

No

You provided very good information for us [KHRG]. Can we use your information for publication?

Yes, you can.

For the documentation, I will take pictures of you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Source #66

Source doc #	Source # 66
Log #	18-129-A4-I1

Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | Daw Dax--- (female, 42), Day--- village, Mae Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District (December 2018)

Did you experience human rights violations such as forced portorage, land confiscation, burning of villages, torture and other kinds of human rights violations in the past five, ten or fifteen years?
I did not have an experience of land confiscation because I don't have lands. However, I experienced forced portorage and having to send food rations for the soldiers.

Do you still remember what you experienced?
Yes.

Did human rights violations happen in Day---village?
Yes, not only in Dax--- village. It happened in other places and villages as well. If you stay in Karen state, you would experience those human rights violations.

What kinds of human rights violations happened? For example, forced portorage, human minesweeping, transporting rations, etc.
I was forced to be a porter when I was 17 until I was 20 years old.

When was it? Now you are over 40 and it happened when you were 17 so it was 20 years ago.

When you went to be a porter and transport rations, did you experience risks that you had to take or challenges with your life? What were the dangerous things you faced?
I had to go with soldiers and I also had to go without soldiers. If there was fighting on the way when we went with them, we had to hide to protect ourselves.

Did your family have to flee with you?
The ones who went as forced porters in front line areas had to flee or hide, and the family who was left behind had to worry for them as well.

Were you a witness for the experience you had? Did you experience by yourself?
I had to go by myself as a forced porter and I also saw other people going. If I could not go by myself, I had to hire someone to replace me.

How have human rights violations impacted your livelihood situation?
Before, we had to struggle to work for our daily livelihoods, we had to flee sometimes and we had to go as a forced porter doing things for other people [soldiers]. It had impacts on our economic and family situation. We also had other personal injuries and nothing was left for us because everything burnt down. But the situation now is getting a lot better. We don't need to go as forced porters anymore.

Who burnt everything down?

The KNLA set the fire and the Tatmadaw soldiers came to shoot us too. We had nothing to eat, nothing to wear and no place to live. We had to leave our house and everything behind.

Did you have to flee to other places?

Yes, we had to flee because we could not carry and transport the rations. Then they arrested those who did not go to be a porter so my husband went to be a DKBA soldier.

How many years did he work for DKBA?

He worked there for 2 years.

Your husband worked for DKBA for two years. How did it affect your children's future education, your economic situation and your family?

There was no [direct] affect for studying. They just got to study and then had to run when there was fighting. If the fighting cooled down, they got back to their study again. This was just how they studied and we had the same situation like that.

How did fleeing affect your livelihood?

There were not many impacts because we did not leave any work behind when we fled.

Who were the perpetrators that caused human rights violations such as forced portorage , forced laborer and human minesweeping?

The Tatmadaw caused these human rights violations to the whole village.

Did KNU ask for porters and cause these human rights violations?

No, they did not cause human rights violations but they planted mines to attack the Tatmadaw. However, the Tatmadaw heard that the KNLA planted the landmines, and then we had to go in front of them when we went as porters. So if they [KNLA] soldiers could not wait for the Tatmadaw soldiers and attacked them, we would die first.

Did anyone die because of mine attacks?

Yes.

How about people from Way Hsan village?

No, they were not from Day--- village. They were from other villages.

Do you remember any of them?

No, I don't remember because it was a long time ago.

Most of the perpetrators were the armed groups. You had to go as forced porters, carrying heavy things [rice] without getting paid money and some people died. Does the government solve or do anything for the violations that happened in the past?

No, they don't do anything to help us or solve anything either.

The perpetrators were from Tatmadaw and some were from KNLA. Did they get any punishment? For example, one soldier from the Tatmadaw military came to call for forced porters so their Battalion Commander punished them because they caused human rights violations.

No, they did not get any punishment. The smart follower will fill the Commander's stomach. [It means that the follower will try to please the Commander even if he is not given a specific order.] We were afraid to complain about what they forced us to do, so we had to do everything

any time that they forced us.

So there was no punishment.

No, there was no punishment. However, they would punish you if you did not do as they ordered.

Who would they punish?

They would punish the civilians.

Who would give the punishment? Were they KNLA or the Tatmadaw?

The Tatmadaw would punish us when we could not do or finish what they ordered.

What kinds of punishment would they give?

They threatened us when we transported rations for them. For example, they said if there was not a full amount of rice, they would punish us. That's how they threatened us. However, we had to be afraid of them and we also had to work for them in the same way. We had to be afraid of both KNLA and the Tatmadaw.

How should they get punished?

How would we dare to punish them?

Yes, but how should they get punishment from the government?

If other people are satisfied with the punishment, I will be satisfied as well.

Yes, but in your opinion how should they get the punishment? What kind of punishment?

I don't have [an opinion] and I do not dare to think of the punishment for them as well. We will be satisfied when we have peace and freedom to work for our livelihood and travel. It is enough if they don't force us to transport the rations and porter.

Should they be taken to court, or give compensation, or be removed from their position, or apologise?

If we have peace, we won't request anything from them.

What should be done for people who had faced and suffered from human rights violations? The whole village faced and suffered from the human rights violations. What should the perpetrators or the government do for them?

If they come to help us for what we need and what our community needs by themselves, without us having to request them, then it will be better. They should help us with something because they are more educated than us. They hold the weapons because they are educated. The civilians have to suffer because they [the government] hold the weapons. That is why educated people torture and abuse the local people.

What is the foundation of human rights violations, why did they happen in your community? Was it because of the wars, military army camps, or your willingness to do something for them?

Why do we have to do whatever they were asking or forcing us? They forced us so we had to. If they did not force us, we did not need to do anything. They had conflicts and fighting with the armed groups and they used us as human shields to protect themselves.

What do you hear and understand about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)¹¹?

No, I don't understand.

What do you think about the NCA? Is it good or bad?

I think it is good as long as there is no fighting. Then the local people will be able to live in peace without any concerns for travelling and working for their livelihood.

What did you do when there was fighting?

We had to flee, hide and run from the fighting.

Is there any on-going fighting now?

No, there is no fighting in this area now so we can live comfortably and peacefully.

Do you understand and know about the ceasefire and NCA process?

What I know is none of us fight and shoot each other so it will be peaceful.

How much do you already know about the NCA? How many sections and what are they?

I don't know about that.

If there is no fighting between Tatmadaw and KNNLA and there are no more wars, how do you think that will affect you?

I don't know but I think we will be able to live and sleep in peace. Then we will be able to work in peace as well. It will be good if it happens in reality. Even though now we can live in peace, we cannot guarantee that we already got peace and can live in peace forever. There is no sustainable peace yet.

Do you think your village now is in peace?

Now we just have to think like that but we cannot say that we are already in peace 100 percent. We don't know when the armed groups will start fighting again. We also hear something [rumors] from people saying many things so we don't believe fully in the peace process yet.

How is the peace process related to the village? What are the impacts of the peace process and the effectiveness of the peace process?

We don't see any impacts of the peace process yet. We get some effectiveness from it but there are some that we don't get.

Do you think you have more safe than before?

Yes, because we can now work and travel in freedom. Therefore, we think we have more safety.

¹¹ On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups and on-going conflicts in ethnic regions, a [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement \(NCA\)](#) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the KNU, see "[Myanmar signs ceasefire with eight armed groups](#)," Reuters, October 15th 2015. The signing of the NCA followed the January 12th 2012 preliminary ceasefire agreement between the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government in Hpa-an. Karen civilians and the KNU have more recently expressed their concerns about the lack of progress in moving from a ceasefire towards genuine political dialogue. See, [KNU Chair Highlights Weaknesses In The NCA During Anniversary Celebrations](#), Karen News, October 2017 and [NCA signatories urge govt to reboot peace process](#), DVB, October 2017. In February 2018, two additional armed ethnic groups signed the NCA under pressure from the Burma/Myanmar government.

How about the livelihood situation? Do you think it is getting better?

We can now work in freedom and there are no disturbances when we are working. So we can work with satisfaction for our livelihood.

How will you define “Peace” in your own opinion? Is it good or bad?

It is a good way if there is peace. If there is no peace then it is not a good way.

What are the obstacles for the peace process?

We heard that not all of the KNU [armed groups] signed in the NCA. The KNU don't believe in and sign the NCA because they are also a small armed group. However, if all of the KNU sign in the NCA, it will be good.

What would you like to change if there is one thing that you can change for the peace process?

I would like to change the 2008 constitution because I think it will change everything for the peace process. We just want to have peace.

The peace process is just going on within two groups. Is there any group that should be included?

I don't understand that much.

How would you like to advise the KNU and the Myanmar government? What should the KNU or the Myanmar government do?

I don't want to give any suggestions to them because I do not dare to give suggestions or advice.

Which government could be able to guarantee sustainable peace and justice? There are two governments; KNU and the Myanmar government.

I don't know.

Where would you like to participate in the peace process as a citizen? Don't you want to participate?

I want to participate. If there are some people who are leading the peace process, I will be a follower who will support them and work with them. I don't understand the process well enough to do it by myself.

After the NCA was signed in 2015, have human rights violations happened since then? Aren't there any violations or challenges for women?

No, I don't see anything [violations] happen.

Will there be still problems and difficulties for the livelihood if there are human rights violations happening?

If human rights violations happen, it will be difficult for the livelihood situation. But if there are no human rights violations happening, then there will not be livelihood difficulties.

What are the difficulties or problems for women? For example, are you afraid to go here and there and are you afraid to travel?

I am not afraid of anything for travelling. I dare to go everywhere but there will be some people

who are afraid to travel alone. They are not afraid of peace. They have to be afraid of people. If you are a woman and you travel alone, you have to consider and be concerned about, "who will do something to me and who will plot against me?" You have to have concern for something like that.

Yes, women have to be afraid and be concerned for themselves. What are the discriminations or difficulties that minority people have to face now?

I don't know.

You are a minority ethnic group [a small number of people] among the Karen people ethnic group. Do the Karen people respect your rights?

They just live by themselves. If we don't do anything to them, they won't harm us either. I don't say that they respect our rights. However, they won't harm and discriminate against us either. We can stay as we want to stay.

How do you define "Justice"?

I don't know.

Is there any local justice system in your village? For example, if anything happens, will the problems or issues be solved by the village [or village tract authorities]?

Yes.

Do you use the Myanmar government justice system or KNU justice system?

I haven't experienced it myself. But those who live near the main road, they go to the township court.

So it means they go to the Myanmar government court [justice system].

There are some people who go to the KNU court as well. Both justice systems are used here.

Why is there a justice system for people?

If there is a conflict between people and you are not happy, you report it to the court. Then you have to process the case in the court. The KNU decision is also good and fair. However, if you go to the Myanmar government court, the process will be longer.

Do they believe the decision from the judges?

If you can give [money], they will be biased. They will give you a favor. They are not biased and don't do a favor for you if you cannot give [money]. We have to give [money] for processing the case at the court and we have to spend money to win the case.

Is it fair for you if you give money to win the case?

Sometimes it is fair and sometimes not. It is because of different people as well.

That is kind of corruption. What are the obstacles for the correct and fair justice system?

I don't know because I did not experience it.

Did you experience human rights violations?

Yes, I experienced it myself. I was forced to porter.

Light Infantry Battalion #19 and #434 forced you to transport rations on the mountain and

carry four bowls of rice or one big tin of rice. Do you want them to give compensation or what do you want from the justice system? Do you want them to apologize to you or should they be removed from their position? For example, you had to go forced porter for 300 times so if they give you 10,000 kyat [\$0.7 US]¹² per time then it will be 3,000, 000 kyat [\$ 1964 US] that they will have to give you. Which one would you like to do or get?

I don't hope for those because we just need peace.

So you prefer peace than the compensation or punishment.

Yes, we just need peace. Then if our generations or the children don't have to experience and face things as we did, then we will be happy for that.

It is good that there is no hatred. What should the KNU and the Myanmar government do for those who had to suffer and experience human rights violations such as forced portering, people who died from sweeping landmines and those who lost their cows and buffaloes?

We won't ask them for anything. We will try to forget everything because it was already in the past. However, it will be better if the future generations and children don't have to suffer and face these kinds of problems.

What is the best way to stop these kinds of abuses?

If both the KNU and the Myanmar government military make an agreement on peace, then it will be fine.

It is just between KNU and the Myanmar government. How about human rights violations that happen with the other ethnic groups such as P'Laung, Kachin, P'Daung, La Hu? What is the best way to stop violations for the whole country?

Here is just KNU and Tatmadaw so we can just talk about and request for that.

What do you want to add apart from the questions that I asked you? Do you want to add more?

No, it is enough and everything is asked.

Do you want to give advice or criticize our organization?

There is nothing to say.

I recorded our voice but can I take three photos of you?

No, please don't take the photos.

Thank you so much.

Source #67

Source doc #	Source # 67
Log #	19-9-A3-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished

¹² All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the September 4th 2019_official market rate of 1,526.80 kyats to US \$1.

Location	Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	<p>Nyaunglebin Interview U Mv--- (male, 75), Mw--- village, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District (January 2019)</p> <p>Religion: Buddhist Ethnicity: Mixed Karen and Bama Family Statue: Married Occupation: Farming</p> <p>Could you tell me about the human rights abuses you faced in the past? I participated as a member of the previous committee in Mx--- village. During that time, I cooperated with Tatmadaw Battalion #59 led by Captain San Thein on a clearance operation around the Sittaung River. I have worked through days and nights with Captain San Thein. I had much less time to work for myself. After a while, I moved to My--- village after the first contract commitment. In the third time, I worked as the council chairperson of Mz--- village. When I was in the service period, in July 1985, terrorists from the other side of the river caused an explosion in the Mz--- village. We could not report the incident immediately to the Tatmadaw. Therefore, the Tatmadaw battalion 48 commander labeled us as criminals and arrested us. We were kept in the Phyu jail for 12 months. Our lives were very poor in the prison and my family also faced trouble because we had two small babies. We were released in 1986, between August and September, when the case was resolved.</p> <p>What was the worst experience you faced during conflict? Obviously, I was arrested for no reason even when I was serving for Tatmadaw. Actually, local security is the responsibility of Tatmadaw soldiers, not local people. The Tatmadaw were so unfair to blame villagers. They targeted civilians when any issue came up. I was not happy with this but it is the common relationship between Tatmadaw and civilians. We had no power against Tatmadaw, so we had to [could only] console ourselves.</p> <p>Have you ever been displaced? No.</p> <p>What was the consequence on your livelihoods? We had trouble securing our livelihoods. We did not have rice to cook for our meals when we were released. It was really tough.</p> <p>What is the impact in your live and your family? Our family faced trouble because all of our belongings were confiscated [by the Tatmadaw during the detention]. We had to struggle hard to restart our lives from the beginning.</p> <p>How did your community react to the conflict? There were 11 villagers, including two women and nine men, arrested together with me. We all faced trouble together. Among the 11, three villagers were imprisoned whereas everyone faced the court case. The Tatmadaw captain U San Thein sued us and reported us to the Na Ya Ka department office of U Than Htay (the leader of the local court).</p>

Which group of people committed the human rights abuses you have faced?

It was the rebellious KNU [KNLA]; U Htun Ngwe and Ma Hla Hkin. These two KNLA soldiers planted mines in Th'Pyay La village tract. Later, we villagers were arrested because of our inability to report the case in time. When I was not in the service, I served as a village elder in Tha Ya Kon village. In the time of conflict, villagers had to send food to the KNLA soldiers who were hiding in the forest located in Na--- in the west of Mx--- village. When the Tatmadaw came to our village and asked if we know where the KNLA soldiers were staying, we directed them to the forest. So, the Tatmadaw went to the forest to find the KNLA soldiers. However, the KNLA soldiers had already left the forest after eating meals [that villagers sent] by the time Tatmadaw arrived and entered the forest. In that case, the Tatmadaw blamed the village head, elders and villagers for misdirecting them as to their enemy. They kept us in detention for six months with Tatmadaw battalion #48.

How was the justice system during conflict period?

There was no justice at all. We were accused by no means.

How should the human rights perpetrators be punished?

Responsible authorities should punish perpetrators equivalent to the abuses they committed.

What would be the appropriate compensation for survivors of human rights abuses?

Authorities should take care of human rights survivors in terms of livelihoods and social well-being so that they can fairly enjoy their lives.

Do you know about the ceasefire?

I heard about the ceasefire on the radio. I know that some ethnic armed groups already signed the agreement but some have not yet. However, civilians expect peaceful lives because government and ethnic representatives are working for the best result [on the ceasefire]. We cannot yet promise peace in our country but we pray for a successful [peace] process.

How do you see that peace process?

If all relevant stakeholders and governments are open-minded and eagerly strive for real peace in the country, it is not far to go.

Is there peace in your community?

Yes, it is peaceful in 2019.

Is there security in your community?

Compared with the conflict period, I have to say that it is secure.

How is your livelihoods situation?

Our livelihoods situation also improved because we can work on other agriculture plantations and seasonal crops. In the past, we could only cultivate paddy fields. It is a positive change.

What could be done to promote sustainable peace?

National authorities and the government should be faithful and united in approaching peace.

If you had authority, what would you suggest to the KNU and Myanmar government?

I would suggest to the KNU not to over act for their desire [ask for too much]. I would also suggest the Myanmar government to analyze and consider for both perspectives of government

and ethnic [groups]. I see that both governments have a gap in dealing with each other. One side [KNU] wants to gain this but the other side [Myanmar government] can only give this. They should be a bit more flexible for each other.

What is the human rights trend since the NCA period?

There has been no human rights abuse in Mz--- village.

How is the human rights situation for women?

They have their rights.

Is there any discrimination on religious minorities?

We have both Christian and Buddhist in our communities. There is no discrimination against each other.

How do you understand justice?

Justice is truth.

Which government legislation system do you apply in your community?

We apply the national government legislation [Myanmar government].

Do you think the Myanmar government legislation is just?

The legislation is just but people who apply it often break the rules because of corruption and bribes.

Have you ever faced any human rights abuse after the NCA?

No.

Thank you so much for sharing information.

Source #68

Source doc #	Source # 68
Log #	19-14-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Naw Nb--- (female, 56), Nc--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)

What do you do for your livelihood?

Plantation [work].

What is your religion?

I am a Christian.

Are you married?

Yes

How many children do you have?

I have five children.

How old is the oldest one?

35 years old.

What about the youngest one?

22 years old.

Are they still going to school?

No.

What is the name of your village and village tract?

My village name is Nc--- village and it is in Nd--- village tract.

My first question is have you experienced conflict?

I experienced a lot of conflicts in the past during the military period. The Bon rebel group came to our village, followed by Tatmadaw soldiers. At that time, we did not have a proper village head. Men did not live at home and only women stayed at home. At the time Bo Kyaw Ni, he came to me and I told him to move from our village to the other mountain. He scolded me when I told him like that. I said the soldiers from Late Tho come here often and if they see you, it will be trouble. But he replied that they have heavy soldiers and they still did not eat anything yet. Then I told him "I will take the responsibility to cook for you so please move yourself from our village." So, they moved to the other mountain. Then, we women cooked for them with our babies on our backs since there were no men in the village at that time. Even though they moved there, he ordered the soldiers to take rice and curry in the evening when we were not even finished cooking yet. Then, it became a problem for us. The other one was during the summer when the dust was so thick in our village, so I told them not to live in the village. But they said they wanted to meet with the village head. At that time, my older brother was a village head and he likes drinking a lot. So when the Tatmadaw came, I told my brother to hide himself. And I said if there is anything that needs to be done or discussed, I would take care of it. Once during the summer, our Karen soldiers came to the village and their footprints remained in the dust on the ground. So I asked some children to clean it with a broom. As soon as the children swept away the footprints, the Tatmadaw reached our house. But there remained one Karen soldier in my house. When the Tatmadaw came to the village, the dogs barked a lot. So when I heard the dogs bark, I told the Karen soldier to run away. He was behind my house with my two buffalos. When I told him like that, he did not know where to run or what to do so he ran up to the upstairs of my house. I grabbed him and pushed him outside. I also did not know what to do so I grabbed the knife and cut the buffalos rope and I let him run with those two buffalos. The Tatmadaw were right in front of my house. Then I felt like both he and I had escaped from the hard situation.

What did the Tatmadaw tell you when they met you?

As my older brother was a village head, they questioned me a lot. They asked me how much I needed to pay KNLA soldiers. Then I replied that we did not pay anything or meet them. I tried to lie to them as much as I could because if I did not lie to them, I would have been in trouble.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

What I just talked about was the worst experience I had.

Were you or your family displaced?

Yes. When I heard the Tatmadaw would force the villagers to be porters, since I have two sons, I asked my husband and my two sons to go and sleep in the jungle. Only I and my daughters slept at home.

What did the Tatmadaw ask the porters to do after they forced the villagers to be porters?

They asked them to go very far. My husband was unhealthy at that time and he was always unlucky because whenever the Tatmadaw asked the porters to go and carry things very far, he was one of the porters who had to go very far. They had to go until Kyaukkyi town.

Do you remember the year?

It was in 1983 or 1984.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

It affected our livelihood a lot because we had to work today to have food for today [live day to day]. So, when we did not work for that day because we had to run or be afraid of forced porters, we were not able to have anything that day. My children were very small at that time and I was not able to send them school since I faced livelihood difficulties.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of [people in] your community?

Our community mostly did plantation work during that time. We also had some chickens and pigs in our houses. When the Tatmadaw entered our place, they took everything like chickens and pigs with them. They even took the chicken eggs with them. They were very bad.

Who do you think were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

I think the main perpetrators were the Tatmadaw because they were the ones who tortured us a lot back then. When they came to us, they asked us to buy chicken or other things for them even though we did not have that much money. As we afraid of them, we had to ask money from others and buy those for them.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I had to deal with Tatmadaw soldiers a lot. They came to order the porters when the village head was not around. At that time, I used to jump in and solve the problems. I had to give them reasonable excuses. Sometimes, I had to lie to them. Because they came so many times, and I still gave them the excuses, they started to have doubts about the village head or me. I had to do the same when KNLA soldiers came.

Do you think the perpetrators should be sent to court or should they pay reparations to victims or should they lose their positions of power?

We submitted the letters about that too but we did not get any response back. I think they should pay reparations to victims.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

I think that if the organizations can help us in some ways related to our livelihoods, it would be great because we dare not expect anything from other people except our own people's organizations.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

I think the root cause of human rights abuses in our area here is Tatmadaw military land confiscation. When our lands are confiscated, we cannot do anything for our livelihoods.

In which year did they start confiscating the lands?

It started in 2004.

Which battalion confiscated your land?

Battalion #603 confiscated our land at that time.

How many people's lands were confiscated during that time?

In Nc---, three of us had lands confiscated. The lands of Oo Myint Thein, Oo Tin Maung and I were confiscated.

What plantations did you have in the confiscated land?

I planted cabbage, dog fruit trees and mostly there were cardamom plants.

What are they paying for your loss for what they have done?

They have not paid anything until now. They do not have any plan to pay us for our loss.

Now, I would like to ask you about the ceasefire. So do you know about the ceasefire that was signed in 2012?

I have heard about it but I do not understand all of them.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

After the ceasefire was signed, our transportation is getting easier. In the past, wherever we went [traveled], we had to pay taxes and there were always troubles for us. But now, it has become easier for us.

Do you also know about the NCA or peace process? What would you like to know more about? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

I expect that there will be peace in our area. And also I believe that it will come true.

Do you think there is peace in your village now?

It is not that peaceful yet.

How has the peace process affected your life and the lives of people in your community?

It does not affect our livelihoods that much.

So you think this peace process is good?

Yes.

As a woman, do you feel safer now?

Yes because in the past, whenever we went outside, we would always be given trouble by the Tatmadaw. As women, we were afraid of going outside during that time. I feel like the current

situation is better.

Has your livelihood improved?

We had livelihood difficulties in the past but I feel like it has improved now.

What does peace mean to you?

Peace has a very deep meaning for us. Even when we hear the word “peace” it makes us very happy and satisfied. If there is peace in our area, it would be more than enough for us.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier to making sustainable peace?

The biggest barrier in making sustainable peace will be the Tatmadaw military because they do not want to give us sustainable peace. When they mentioned our lands recently, they said “you will not get your lands back”. That said such things. They are not doing things with good will for us. They even threatened us.

Where did you hear those words?

I heard it from Tatmadaw soldiers from battalion #603.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace?

As a woman, I would like to see changes in our community.

So if you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I would like to change the conflict between armed groups into peace.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve peace process?

As a woman, I would like to share my opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities about gender equality. If they could achieve it for us, I would be more than happy because there is no equality between men and women yet. I can still see the discrimination against women.

In which situation you see the discrimination against women?

I experienced the discrimination myself. I went to attend a meeting on behalf of my husband as he was not at home. Then, a village head asked me “are you a widow? Why do you come and attend this meeting? You are a woman. You cannot participate in a meeting that only men have to discuss. So sign your name here.” He told me like that and I felt so bad. I felt so discriminated against so I cannot forget about that until now. I had to sign my name like that twice because of the meeting I attended.

How often do you see the discrimination like that?

I see the discrimination like that a lot. When we go for volunteer service, both men and women can do that. But when women do that, we are jeered at. They tell us “why don’t you ask men to come? Why do you come? This is not work that women can do.” actually, a woman can also do that. They scolded us a lot.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I do not know about that. But I think if the current government can guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar, it will be good.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I am not sure about that. But I would like to contribute to peace and justice as much as I can. For example, if I could contribute to any organization that support peace and justice.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

The main human rights challenge that our community is facing is land confiscation.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

It affects our livelihoods so much because when they confiscated our lands, we do not know what to do for our livelihoods anymore as we depend on lands for our livelihoods.

What are the current human rights challenges facing women?

The current human rights challenges facing women are health and jobs because when we are working together with men, they pay 5000 kyat to men and pay [only] 3000 kyat to women. We are doing the same job and we do not understand why we get different payment. We are still facing that kind of problem.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities?

Minorities are facing the religious challenges as well because there is the discrimination of religions between each other.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

No, I do not feel that my rights as a minority are completely respected.

The next section is about justice and accountability. So what does justice mean to you?

I think there is no justice yet because I am still facing the land issue. I have not gotten back my land yet so I feel like there is no justice for me.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

I think mostly we use our own local justice system.

What do you know about this justice system? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair? Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

The local justice system that we are using now is also not so fair sometimes. There is also corruption and bribery in our justice system. It has not completely disappeared yet.

What are the barriers to get justice?

I do not know.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I would like to receive fair compensation for the value of my properties [that were confiscated].

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

Both Myanmar government and KNU should respect the livelihoods of the civilians.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

The best way is the government should understand civilians and solve the problems in a just way.

Have you heard of the displacement caused by development projects?

No.

What do you know of the current situation in Myanmar? For example security, politics, human rights?

I do not think that the current situation is safe enough for us. We do not get what we want yet.

Do you have a clinic in your area here?

No.

Where do you go if you are sick?

We go to Late Tho general hospital.

How do you get there?

In the past we went on foot, but now we go by motorbike. If we have an emergency sickness, we go by car.

Do you have any question to ask me?

No.

Thank you for your time. Can I use this information for publication?

Yes.

Thank you.

Thank you for coming and interviewing me. I have learned a lot of things from you.

Source #69

Source doc #	Source # 69
Log #	18-120-A4-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	

Toungoo Interview | Saw Ne--- (male, 58), Nf--- village, West of Ng--- village tract, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (December 2018)

Do you have any [special] responsibility in the village?

No, now I don't have any [special] responsibility.

What do you do for a living?

I do plantation farming and hill farming.

Have you ever been [forcibly] relocated from your village?

Yes, we were in 1995.

What was the Battalion name?

I don't know, but it was known as Ya Khaing Battalion #234. There were many commanders but I remember Bo Ye Lin and Bo Ye Min.

Was there any military camp in your village?

No, there was no military camp.

How many times did you have to relocate?

There was once in 1995, 1997 and 2003. They asked us to relocate and they prepared to set up their army camp but they did not. I relocated to Nh--- for one year.

What were the problems of relocating? What did you face?

We had to face discrimination from other villages. There were water and fire wood problems that we faced. We could not sell the fruits from our gardens because people wouldn't buy ours.

How about other issues? What about food?

We did not have enough food to eat. We did not get healthcare service when we were relocated. So I lost one child [one of my children died while we were displaced].

What did you do to live and eat when you were relocated?

We went back to our garden and worked there. Sometimes we just went and came back within a day but sometimes we slept there overnight. If our children were not feeling well, then we had to come back the same day.

Did you have to get a recommendation letter [to travel]? Did you have to pay?

Yes, we had to get a recommendation letter and pay for it.

How much did you have to pay?

We had to pay 200 kyat for one recommendation letter.

Was it for one day or one week?

Sometimes it was for one day and sometimes one week.

Were there any problems for the children to study and to go to school?

Yes, it was a problem for them to stay with us so I asked them to stay with their uncle and aunty in Taw Oo. For us we stayed in Nh---.

Did you get any humanitarian help or support from NGOs or religious groups?

No, we did not get anything from anyone.

How about help or support for education and healthcare?

No, there was no support during that time [while displaced].

How is the situation after ceasefire? How do you feel? How do you think the situation has changed?

The situation got better after ceasefire but it is not a stable situation yet.

How?

It is just ceasefire, but not fully peace yet.

How do you think about it?

If you think it is good, then good. If you think it is bad, then bad.

How is it good?

We can say that now people have more opportunities and can go to their plantation and gardens freely.

How do you think about NCA? Do you think there is peace?

No, there is no peace yet. If you want real peace and full peace, the constitution should be changed.

Are there any human rights abuses still happening?

Yes, I think so. Now they are building a dam on the P'Lae Wa River. They broke our bridge but until now they haven't rebuilt the bridge for us yet. We had to travel with a barge. I think it is a kind of human right abuse.

Is there only the dam? Are there any other things that cause human rights abuses?

I think it is. They said they will build the bridge but they still haven't built it yet. 2018 will be finished soon.

Who controls and makes the policies in this area?

KNU controls it and makes the policies.

Do you think the policies are fair for everyone? Are they just?

I see there are some weaknesses sometimes. There are some [people] that don't follow the policies. For example, in rape cases. Sometimes it [the KNU justice system] fails to punish the perpetrators as [called for by] the policies and they don't use the correct punishment.

Is it only KNU policies? Do you have Myanmar government policies?

No, we don't have Myanmar government policies. We only have KNU.

What do you think KNU should do to have proper policies and to follow them?

They have the laws that they have to follow but sometimes they don't judge everyone in the same way. It means that they are biased sometimes.

Is there any corruption? Does anyone hire lawyers?

Nobody hires lawyers, but the judgments are not fair and just.

Do the KNU distribute their laws in handouts or books to local people?

No, they don't distribute them.

Do the local people understand and know about the KNU laws?

No, they don't understand or know.

Does any organization come to give awareness about the laws to the local people?

I have not seen that happen yet.

How do you want local people to understand and know about the laws?

The local people should be trained and given awareness about the laws. The village leaders and village heads should learn how KNU law looks like during the training.

Are there any people who fled to the refugee camps?

No, there are not.

Are there any people who went to work in other places such as Thailand, Malaysia or Moe Hkee? Why did they go? Do they have financial or livelihood problems?

Yes, there are some people who went to work in other places because the working conditions here are not really good. So they go to those places to make a living.

How about people who are here? Do they get food to eat every day? Do they have enough food?

There is not enough food now because we cannot plant well. The trees cannot produce many fruits because the soil is not good enough. So there are not many fruits from the gardens. It is important for them [villagers here] because they don't have enough food to eat every day.

Do people from other places [villages] come to work here?

Yes, there are some who come and work here. Most of them do trading here and motorbike taxis also come to do their work in the village.

Is there a hospital in the village?

No, there is no hospital.

How about a clinic?

No clinic either.

Where do they [villagers] go when they get sick?

They go to Nh--- hospital.

Is that a government hospital?

Yes, it is.

What are the common diseases that people here get?

Most of them get flu. Only a few people got malaria.

Are there any groups or organizations that come to give malaria vaccines or health awareness workshops?

Yes, A Zin's group comes and gives malaria vaccines.

What is the organization or group name?

I don't know the name.

How many times do they come per year?

They come twice per year. They started coming in 2016. I am not sure but the project is designed to be 5 years long and they come and do a workshop for 2 or 3 days at a time sometimes.

How about other organizations?

Yes, KESAN also came. They had a three year project but now it is done. They came to help villagers access water.

Do you know the coordinator's name?

I heard his name includes "Poe".

How about others?

Yes, there is one called the Mya Sein Yaung Project. They came to give people loans of 30,000,000 kyat.

Did people here take it?

Yes, they did.

How about people who don't have a job, gardens or anything?

Anyone could take it if they wanted to. It didn't matter they were poor or rich.

How much did they have to pay for the interest?

They had to pay 1 kyat for interest.

How many years since they started?

It is already three years since in 2016.

Do they have a project?

No, they don't.

Do they give to other villages?

Yes, they do.

Who built this school?

One of them was built by the villagers and one of them was built by the government.

Were they built many years ago? How many years?

Yes, I think it is over 60 years ago.

How many grades do they have?

They are until grade 4.

Where are the teachers from?

They are from our areas.

Are there government teachers?

No, there aren't. Last year there were government teachers, but not this year.

After the ceasefire, do the primary students get free education? Do they still have to give school fees?

They still have to give them I think. Parents are paying for the teachers [salaries].

Is Karen language allowed to be taught in the school now?

Yes, it has already been taught for two years.

How many teachers teach Karen language?

I think only one.

How much do the teachers get for salary?

I don't know. I am not sure if they get it or not. Maybe they are just volunteers.

Where do they get school materials such as books, pens, and pencils? KNU or KED?

I don't know where they get from.

Do the students get to study well now?

Yes, they get to study well now.

How many students do they have?

I don't know. You have to ask the teachers.

What are the changes in your village compared to the past?

Now, we get electricity from the government. It is not a year yet; maybe 8 or 9 months.

How much do you have to pay per month?

You have to pay depending on the usage.

Where do you get it from?

I think it is from Taw Oo.

Does everyone get it?

Yes, but some people don't use it.

Do you get it regularly all 24 hours?

Umm, in rainy season we don't get it regularly. It is an inconvenience because of the weather I think. But we get more regular [electricity] in summer.

Do you have anything else to talk about or report about?

.....[silent] No, I don't.

Do you give us permission to use this information?

Yes.

Thank you.

Source #70

Source doc #	Source # 70
Log #	18-123-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District

Full Text

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Do--- (female, 39), Dp--- village, Kyaw Hta village tract, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. (November 2018)

Are you married?

Yes, I am.

How many people are there in your family?

There are four people in our family.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Pwo Karen.

What is your religion?

I am Christian.

How many years have you been living here?

I was born in Dq--- village.

Could you tell me more about your past experience working as a KWO [censor position for security]?

We fled from our village when Tatmadaw soldiers came into our village. First, we went to stay in the refugee camp. Then, we went to stay in Htee Saw Hsee village. After that, we returned to stay here [Dp--- village].

In which refugee camp did you live?

I had been living in Dr--- refugee camp.

When did Tatmadaw soldiers come to your village?

It was in 1997.

For how many years did you stay in the refugee camp?

I lived in the refugee camp for two years. Later, I went to stay in Htee Saw Hsee village.

Where is Ds---village?

It is in Thailand.

Why did you have to flee from your village?

My husband [and I] adopted a livelihood with farming. But, his friend accused him of being a Kaw Too Lei soldier who has guns. We dare not to live in our village. That's the reason we fled from our village.

When did you leave your village?

I can't recall the date we left our village.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

I witnessed my nephew being killed by Tatmadaw soldiers. My husband was accused of having

guns. We fled from our village as we were afraid to continue living in the village.

What do you want for your future?

As Karen people, we want peace. I don't want to face any situation similar to the past anymore.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

Taxation was one of the barriers to our livelihood situation.

Does the conflict still affect your lives today?

No, there is no conflict that affects our lives now.

Were you able to work without harassment on your farm?

We couldn't work independently because my husband was accused by Tatmadaw soldiers that he had guns. They often came to find and accuse him.

Did you experience human rights abuses? How does it continue to affect your life?

They [Tatmadaw] couldn't endanger me because I fled from the village.

Did your family experience human rights abuses?

If they were facing serious abuses, they would have suffered a lot.

How did the conflict affect your community?

There were people who suffered severely during the conflict period.

How did your community handle the human rights abuses?

I have no idea. If we couldn't handle some cases happening in the village, we transferred the case to the Township level. But I don't know how the Township tackled the case.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

There was a case of a child raped and killed by a man. This case was being transferred to the Myanmar government.

Who was the perpetrator?

That man came to stay in Ds--- village. He got married there. He is Mon.

Where did the girl live?

The girl also lived in Ds--- village.

What is the name of the perpetrator?

I forgot his name.

What was his occupation?

He is a car driver.

Do you remember when it happened?

I don't remember it.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved?

There was a problem with land confiscation that we have solved. Actually, this land was owned

by poor people [civilians]. They [the poor family] had been here since they were young. They [the poor family] have sold the land now. But one of the other people [villagers] said the land was his or hers. When we solved the matter, we told him or her that this land was the poor guy's land. After we tackled the case, that villager [who claims that land was his/hers] reported the case we have solved for them to the [Kawkareik] Township level. After, a land administrator came. But we don't know how the land administrator would handle the matter.

We didn't know the decision yet. When the land administrator went to the land owner [poor family] last year [2018] in November, they [the poor family] told him [the land administrator] that the land was given to them as heritage by their parents. Later, authorities [the land administrator] asked to them, "Would you [poor family] be able to give the money back [to the people who bought his/her land]? The poor family replied them that they would not pay the money back so they would stay until the case is forgotten.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses?

As we are civilians, how can we punish them [perpetrators]?

For example, do you want the perpetrators to be persecuted in a court of law, to pay compensation, give an apology or reparations[...]?

We want our leaders to give punishment to the perpetrators according to what they deserve [by law]. I would also like to tell our leaders not to intimidate the villagers.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

For example, Like I've just said, a 12 year old girl was killed by a man. We didn't know anything about her. We didn't know how to chase the case either. Her mother is poor. The Myanmar government should consider for child's parents with the money compensation for reparation because the case was reported to the Myanmar government.

After the NCA, how did this case process handle into the court?

Since the perpetrator was taken to them [Myanmar government], we [civilians] do not access any update information regarding the justice process on him. The case got nowhere and it got lost.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area do you think?

I personally think it is because of they [Tatmadaw] wanted to intimidate us. Villagers suffered a lot from their [Tatmadaw] extortion and we could not handle it anymore so we reported the case [of the 12 year old girl case].

What is your perspective on the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement)?

The population was being displaced and suffered a lot before the NCA. But after the NCA, the situation seems stable. However, both government and civilians should obey the NCA code of conduct. In addition, the government should collaborate together with civilians and civilians should be participated [in decision making or NCA process]. As for the civilians, they confronted different kinds of suffering in different ways. Even though there was the NCA, there are a lot of checkpoints by Myanmar/Tatmadaw, PC and DKBA [Benevolent] are increasing in the region. Moreover, there were different kinds of armed groups. So how can civilians work for their livelihoods? Therefore, civilians are shouting [to the authorities to solve the problems for them].

What do you know about the NCA?

We're content with the NCA. We don't want any taxation being collected from the civilians. In addition to that, we don't want any barriers to our transportation.

What do you expect to get from this peace process?

I would like to have improvement with the education for our children. Furthermore, we would like to work in our farm independently.

Do you think your village is peaceful?

I don't know that we have genuine peace in our village. The DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army) and KNU/KNLA-PC ask for taxes from us.

How has the peace process affected or benefited your life?

We could work on our farm. But we had to give tax. I don't feel like I am safe here because there are various armed groups such as KNU, KNLA-PC, DKBA and BGF.

Do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) or peace process?

In my opinion, if the different armed groups cooperate in unity, that would be a great success in bringing peace to the country.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

If all armed groups work together in unity, it could bring the everlasting peace.

If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I would like all armed groups to stay in unity.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would like both KNU and Myanmar government to stay in their place. I would suggest that they love the population in their country without bullying. Also, I would suggest them to stay united.

Have there been any developments regarding the land confiscation issues?

Concerning land confiscation, I would like both KNU and Myanmar government to give us an official land certificate.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

Road construction caused damage to the villagers' land and they didn't receive any compensation.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

Yes. When our land was damaged by the road construction, it became difficult to support our children's education and to secure our livelihood for we depend on our land.

What human rights challenges do women currently face?

As women, we want our children to be educated people. However, it's really difficult when our land was destroyed. As for me, I want real justice.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We use KNU justice system in our village. I would like KNU to think carefully about collecting money from the villagers whenever a festival or event takes place.

Which justice system do people in your village use when a person commits a crime?

We use KNU justice system in our village.

What do you know about this justice system? Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

I don't feel like the judgment has full justice.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system?

Yes. There were corruption and bribery in justice system. The right person became wrong and the wrong person became right after the corruption.

If you have experienced past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

We really want justice. The population wants justice. Civilians don't want injustice. Sometimes, we have seen a matter with gender [base violations] conflicts. They [authorities] threatened that they would order [soldiers] to hit the children of civilians by car or motorcycle so it made the civilians afraid.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I want accurate judgment when the judiciary solves any matter. We don't want partial judgment. It is acceptable to forgive people who commit minor sin if they are sincerely repentant. But, if they committed serious sin, it is unforgivable.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

We have heard and seen how Tatmadaw soldiers killed men in our village tract. They [KNU] went to ask about the killing case that happened. But there was no compensation prepared for the victim's wife.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

According to your question, there's still forced portering in our area. Civilians were forced to be porters by all the different armed groups. I would like this to stop so villagers can work independently in their villages.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

I want the Myanmar government and KNU to rule in their own area without interrupting each other.

Would you allow us to use your photos and interview?

Yes, I want KHRG to use the information to let leaders know so that it could advocate for the villagers.

What would you suggest for KHRG?

KHRG is doing the right thing. They encourage villagers. I hope that they will fulfill their work and obtain the good work.

Source #71

Source doc #	Source # 71
Log #	18-132-A5-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Dooplaya Interview Saw Hn--- (male, 41), Ho--- village, Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)</p> <p>What is your ethnicity? I am Karen.</p> <p>How has the conflict affected your life and the lives of people in your community? We experienced many kinds of problems [human rights violation] until we could not work on our farm for our livelihoods and our freedom of movement was restricted. We faced food shortages. They [Tatmadaw] arrested us and forced us to be their porters. Even if we carried things [ammunitions and military supplies], they tortured us and did not serve us enough food. Due to those experiences, we were in fear and concern.</p> <p>Who were the main perpetrators of human rights violations? As we are in Karen State, the armed group that attacked us and violated our rights was the Myanmar government military. They designated our village as their enemy [black] area, so they killed a lot of innocent civilians.</p> <p>Do you remember when it happened? There were killings, forced portering, arbitrary arrest, and movement restrictions.</p> <p>What human rights challenges do women currently face? When the men had problems, the women were in a risky security situation.</p> <p>Were women the victims of violence? Yes, we got news that the Tatmadaw called women in silence to meet them. Women were afraid of them so they had to follow the Tatmadaw and some of them were raped by Tatmadaw soldiers.</p> <p>When did this happen? I do not remember the specific date, but I remember that this happened after 1997.</p> <p>What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period? The worst problems [human rights abuses] were when the Tatmadaw approached to our village. They arbitrarily arrested us, restricted our freedom of movement and expression, and tortured us. Therefore, we could not freely work [on our farm] for our livelihoods. Those are the biggest problems because they impacted our whole family.</p> <p>What happen after the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement [NCA] was signed? After the NCA, we continued to live in fear because of trauma [from the conflict period]. When the upper leaders [KNU/Government/Tatmadaw] talked talk about the NCA, it seemed like the</p>	

NCA was good [to build peace], but the reality on the ground was different. The actions [of the Tatmadaw and government] towards civilians has not cured the fear of local civilians yet, because sometimes they still abuse their power in the community. We experienced [human rights abuses] in the past, so we have been in fear until now. I would like to urge my leaders [the KNU] to say on behalf of us that the Tatmadaw military should not abuses its power over civilians in word or deed because sometimes they do so when they patrol in the community. We want equality between the military and civilians.

What kind of human rights abuses did the Tatmadaw commit?

They detained civilians who were traveling and forced the villagers to work for them. They are the military, so they have power that traumatizes civilians. And they have a habit of abusing the power of their guns whenever any problems happen between them and civilians. In my opinion, if the Tatmadaw really desires peace, they should not behave like this anymore. I want equality and equal rights between the military and civilians. I do not mean there should be no military, but I just want to highlight that the military should be the defenders of civilians. They should not abuse civilians and abuse their military power. They should not commit violence against villagers either verbally or through forced labour. When a person wears a soldier's uniform and holds the gun, that person is already in power. Therefore, they [soldiers] should not abuse their power over civilians. Instead they should protect the civilians.

Did the Tatmadaw pay the villagers for their work?

I never saw them pay the villagers. They stopped the villagers and demanded that the villagers to help them. We have been traumatized with fear from the past abuses. So these kinds of Tatmadaw activities threaten us.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

I do not say that they should either go to prison or pay compensation, but I want to report that we are all ethnic people in the same country, Myanmar, and the power holder is the government and the dictatorial military. We want them [the government and military] to reform their behavior so as not to repeating the same abuses, such as torture, verbal abuses, arbitrary arrest, abuses of power abuses, and forced labour. Instead, they could protect and defend all ethnic people [in the country]. I want the abolition of arbitrary power against civilians as in the past with the previous abuses that happen in the community.

How has the peace process affected or benefited your life?

In my opinion, and other people also share my opinion, I do not believe that the NCA is reliable and sustainable yet.

Do you know of displaced people who were able to safely return home?

During this period, some refugees who fled from their villages after 1997 to refugee camps returned to their villages temporarily and repaired their farms because the situation still remains too uncertain for permanent repatriation. This is their country and their forefathers' land, so they may want to return home.

Do the refugees know about the NCA?

As I've learned, I think they may know about the NCA. They may not know about the peace process in detail or how effective the NCA is. They may only know that there is not much improvement in Doooplaya District, so that they will have to rely on the protection of KNU leaders

and return to their land in KNU-control areas.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is your area controlled by the Myanmar government or the KNU?

We are in a KNU-controlled area. So mostly we report cases to the KNU.

Do those people have access to justice?

They are the newly repatriated refugees, so I do not know about their judicial situation yet.

What do you know of current services available in the area for returned refugees?

The refugees fled from their village to the refugee camps in fear after 1997 until 2018. They left their land and some of them could not bring anything with them. Therefore, they may need land to farm, houses, education support for their children and healthcare services when they return. When they return to the village, they may face financial problem, so they may be unable to support their children's education at government schools. So they may face depression. People who face long term illnesses and cannot pay the medical costs at the government hospital will have very big problems. Therefore, housing, education, and healthcare services are the most important for the repatriated refugees, because they do not have money to support their basic livelihoods.

Do you think the refugees will return to their village or move to another village?

I think some of them will return to the same places. If schools and hospitals are prepared for them, they will be able to access school. Some will come from far away, and some will be close to the locations of the schools and hospitals.

If those services were available, would more refugees want to return?

If schools, hospitals, housing, and land to farm for their livelihoods were available for them, I think that a lot of them would want to return permanently.

How many families would potentially return?

I think there would be more than 200.

Do you permit us to use the information that you have provided?

Yes, you can use it for the purpose of positive change.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

I do not have any questions. I want to ask you to update me if you use what I've said, because I want to know the consequences and benefits of my statements.

Anything else?

No

Thank you. Can I take your photo?

Yes.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Source #72

Source doc #	Source # 72
Log #	18-129-A1-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | U Hp--- (male, 59), Ka Ma Maung section [censor for security], Htee Th'Daw Hta village tract, Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District.(December 2018)

Now I would like you to interview about human rights violations that have occurred in this area. First of all, I would to know whether would will give me permission to interview you?

If I have to tell you about human rights violations that have happened, there would be a lot to tell. For examples, in social, religious, and administrative aspects there are a lot of human rights violations that have happened. So, what you want to know about in more detail.

What is your ethnicity?

I am Karen because my parents and grandparents are Karen.

What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past?

[...] The main thing that I would like to tell you is, should we say that there has been a lack of humanity? There were also violations that caused disgrace. I myself saw those violation that caused disgrace. Some people who were leaders from an organization violated human rights without any regard. That happened in our community.

What happened?

We can see in our community that people in senior leadership positions have violated human rights and have done some inappropriate things in the community, such as setting up a gambling place [casino]. It was for young people in the area and poor people, and it caused theft and looting and even killing. Those kinds of violations have happened. We can see that situations in our area. We can also see that sexual assault and rape has happened to girls to the disgrace of the leaders' reputation. News of that incident spread out and they had to pay compensation. When the case finished, some of the girls accepted the outcome but others did not accept it. So the case had to go to the court to be resolved step by step.

Did the sexual assault happen in Ka Ma Maung [Town]?

I saw these sorts of violations, but I can't tell you the name of the person and their organization because of their family and community's reputation and dignity. They did not think that it would harm them. So they just did what they wanted to do. It caused a disgrace for their organization and for their relatives. This happened in Ka Ma Maung Town.

Do you remember when it happened??

I guess it was in 2016. The woman was called and raped while she was out walking.

How did they resolve this? Did the elders from the village intervene or did they go to court?

They resolved the problem with the elders from the village and paid compensation. There was a strong witness. However, that woman doesn't live in the village now. It became evident that she was trying to make money by persuading men like that. So some men were falling into her trap unexpectedly. When the local people found out, they didn't let that woman live in the village anymore. I heard that they live in Bilin area, Mon State.

Where there other human rights violations?

There is something else that I think is also human rights violations. And I think it's a sensitive issue as well. It was about building a church without instruction and permission from a religious minister. They just built it with an understanding. However, the administrator did not even know about that. If we count the families from Ka Ma Maung, there are few [Christian] families and a small [Christian] population. There is different treatment regarding the Muslim mosque for the Muslims who relocated from Ta Kwat Poe. Those who relocated had to go to the mosque in Section # [censor for security] in Ka Ma Maung. So there are many people and it's too crowded. So, it became difficult for them to worship because there were so many people. I believe that if the authorities allowed the Seventh Day Adventists to build a church, then they should also give equal rights to the Muslim community. I want to know why the Muslim community was not allowed to build a mosque but the Christian community could build a church. Is that kind of thing considered a human rights violation?

Is the construction of the Seventh Day church almost finished?

I think it's 90 percent completed, or almost done now.

Did the township administrator try to solve this issue?

Yes, I heard that their trustees are negotiating that. The section # [censor for security] administrator said there was no permission letter to build the church. He doesn't know about the building. He only learned about the church and went to see it when it was already half built. So he asked, "Did they get permission from the State religious minister or an instruction from the relevant department to build the church?" They answered that there was no permission or instruction to build the church. So the administrator said he did not know anything about this and doesn't need to take any responsibility for it. Therefore, I'm not sure whether in the end they finally came to an understanding.

Is the church ready to be used?

I think it can be used now.

Was the church build on vacant, fallow or virgin land, or on registered land?

They built it in the Hq--- section and the land is not register yet. We don't even know whether or not the land has a land grant. However, the land was previously a house plot and we're not sure whether or not they bought it. The administrator will know about that.

Should they have used it?

Yes, I think it's appropriate that they built it because it pertains to the people's religion. However, this group of people got to build a church for their religion but the other group wasn't allowed to build [a mosque] for their religion. So there is a concern for people: "Does the law treat people equally?" The other group of people were born, grew up and live on this land, so if they feel

discriminated against by other groups of people, then it's not good.

Are you concerned that this might provoke conflict?

Yes.

Because this is the first sign of conflict?

Yes. That's right.

Do you have any suggestions for KHRG?

In my opinion people should know about the situation of this group.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

I am so happy to meet with this group [KHRG]. Now we can clearly see that the local people from my areas and in other areas want peace. I would like to say more about that. The civilians want peace but why is it really difficult to give freedom and peace? There are so many difficulties to implement the peace process. In my opinion, it would not be too difficult to give people peace in one hour, if they really wanted to give it. However, it just depends on the leaders. If they were really good to the local people, the peace process would happen quickly. There are the obstacles for the peace process in many ways. Many people say, "Politics is a refuge for cunning people." There's another motto that says, "Politics is the greatest philanthropy." I think only a minority of politicians are doing it for philanthropy. There are more cunning people who use politics as a refuge for themselves. If the politicians were working with a good and kind-hearted mindset for the local people, as I said there would be peace and freedom within an hour. It wouldn't take months or years. You can ask me more about peace if I've left anything out of my answer.

How would you define "Peace"?

In my perspective, I define peace as a soft and gentle thing. Everyone should have a desire for peace so that there will be peace in the surrounding areas. For example, if most people want to live in peace, but there is one trouble maker who causes the conflicts and make noise all the time, then a family won't be able to live in peace because of that one person. So peace is a very soft and gentle word. Therefore, it depends on each people who wants to live in peace to create peace. This is just a definition of peace in my opinion.

Is there justice for victims of human rights abuses?

Justice is important for peace. If there's no justice, there will be no peace. It's fundamental to peace. There should be dealings between groups in order to have peace. We can see in the interactions between two groups who is being more kind and generous. So, in my opinion, I believe peace depends on whoever is prepared to make a sacrifice. Now there is less commitment to sacrificing than to getting benefits.

Source #73

Source doc #	Source # 73
Log #	19-9-A4-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Phyu Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Hr--- (male, 73), Hs--- village, Phyu Township, Nyaunglebin District (January 2019)

Have you experienced conflict?

Yes, I experienced in conflicts in 1994-1995. I served as a village head. I was accused by the Tatmadaw of communicating with the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA]. As we are Karen people, the Karen armed groups have communicated with us more or less. However, we have had to deal with the arm groups on both side [KNLA and Tatmadaw]. When the Tatmadaw arrested us, they asked us if we had communicated or sent rations to the KNLA. We had to speak to them wisely so that we would not be punished by the Tatmadaw. They came with soldiers and weapons to threaten us. This was not fair for civilians at all. The Tatmadaw abused their power over innocent civilians. We were local farmers, but they sentenced us to prison. This caused livelihood obstacles for our family because all of our plantations were lost after about two years in prison. I used to have 15 acres of plantations, but it all went then. My wife worked at a church mission and some of my children had to go for further study in town when I was in detention. They had to sell the property our family owned in order to cover basic needs. Otherwise, there would be no other way to earn an income. Since our lives were broken, it was hard to restart over again.

Were there any human rights abuses in your community?

Our Karen people were obviously oppressed because we were illiterates. There were injustices in our relations with powerful actors. Karen ethnic people were also influenced by Bamar people in the local leadership system. Mostly, we did not get to take leadership roles instead of Bamar people.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The worst experience was when my properties were lost and my livelihood was broken. It impacted our family income and my children's education.

How has the conflict period affected your life and the lives of people in your community?

If the persecution and oppression continues, our ethnic people will surely be lost. Now it is time for us [Karen people] to restore our lives.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

It was the people who only pursued their own benefits and interest. They were not nationalists. It was the national [Myanmar] government and their associates.

Was there any justice for you or other victims of human rights abuses?

I worked as a local leader in the community, but the Tatmadaw accused me of supporting the KNLA. Then they arrested, tortured, and jailed me.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights?

Perpetrators should support the human rights victims that they abused, as reparation.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights? And how is it related to you?

The ceasefire is essential for our country. I am already 73 years old now. We have faced conflict

throughout our lives. Prolonged civil war has slowed the country's development and impacted civilians' lives. Therefore, the ceasefire is the best solution to build peace in our country. This is the responsibility of everyone in the country.

How do you know about the ceasefire?

I know about it through the radio. I was so happy to hear about it and I hope that it will last long. Civilians are tired of conflict because they have not been able to permanently establish their lives. Some civilians lost limbs and still displaced. Therefore, the ceasefire is the best solution to promote peace. The governments [Myanmar and KNU] should compromise and be at peace. They should forgive the past and try their best for the future. As there is a time of destruction, there is also a time of restoration.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

No, I do not see the image of peace yet. It is still in the negotiation process. We can obviously see that the national legislations and laws have not yet been reformed. However, this has to be done gradually and slowly. It cannot happen in a short time. Anyway, civilians want it to be done as soon as possible because we do not want to face conflicts any longer.

Has your livelihood improved?

Our livelihoods situation has improved as the political situation is getting more stable. For instance, we can travel easily without requiring permission letters and being questioned [at check points]. However, it is still far to go for real peace.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

Looking forward, promoting national development and democracy will pave the way for sustainable peace.

Who is the most responsible in building peace?

Both the Myanmar government and the KNU government are responsible for maintaining and building sustainable peace. Both governments need to compromise and not be self-centered. Looking for the best side is an effective solution in cooperation.

As a civilian, what can you do to promote peace and maintain it?

We have to bravely stand for the truth.

What are the most common human rights abuses in your community?

Land confiscation is the most common human rights abuse. Lands in some villages were confiscated and resold. Some pasture lands were also confiscated. Such abuses have negative impacts on local people's livelihoods and cause conflicts in the community.

How is the livelihood situation of the local people?

Our community is facing livelihoods challenges regarding the pasture lands. Some people were allowed to cultivate the pasture lands for their own plantation. There is the sign marked as the pasture lands and prohibiting trespassing, but there is no official recognition or obligation of this. Therefore, local people with domestic animals such as cattle and buffaloes are facing troubles when someone trespass into the pasture lands. People are still using animals in farming because machine are not yet popular in our community.

What human rights challenges do women currently face?

There are no issues in our community. Women have equal opportunities as men.

What human rights challenges do minorities currently face?

Also, there is no big issue regarding religion in Hpyu Township.

What do you know about the justice system?

I simply understand that justice is the ability to enjoy our rights and transparency. For instance, when a company carries out development projects in our area, we should be informed about the benefits and disadvantages of the project in advance.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is your area ruled by the Myanmar government or KNU?

We use the justice mechanism of the Myanmar government because our community is under their controlled.

Do you trust this justice system?

I see that the justice mechanism in our community is not transparent or just. For instance, our community has pasture lands. The Myanmar government wanted to cultivate their paddy plantations and they did so. They also dug water channels for the farm. We told them to close the water channel after they cultivated the farm. However, they did not close it but continue to use it. Therefore, we see that justice is not applied to our community. We are oppressed by the majority and the powerful.

Have you ever heard of corruption and bribes in your community?

There is corruption in our community. We also heard about it on the radio message that was share about the administration leaders from the township and village level who were involved in corruption.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable justice?

Everyone has responsibility to obtain justice.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

I think this is the responsibility of the Myanmar government because they are in charge of national governance. They have the mandate and opportunity to develop the country as well as being accountability for any issue.

What is the most effective way to eliminate human right abuse in your community?

According to the bible, you should treat people the way you want to be treated. It means empathy. We will be able to eliminate human right abuse when we have empathy and consider for other's feeling.

What is the most effective way to eliminate human rights abuses in Myanmar?

If we keep fighting one another and seeking revenge against each other over again and again, we might not be able to eliminate human rights abuses. Therefore, the best way is to respect other people's dignity.

Thank you so much for sharing information.

Source #74

Source doc #	Source # 74
Log #	19-9-A4-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Phyu Township, Nyaunglebin District
Full Text	

Nyaunglebin Interview | Saw Cn--- (male, 73), Co--- village, Phyu Township, Nyaunglebin District (January 2019)

Have you experienced conflict?

Yes, I experienced in conflicts in 1994-1995. I served as a village head. I was accused by the Tatmadaw of communicating with the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA]. As we are Karen people, the Karen armed groups have communicated with us more or less. However, we have had to deal with the arm groups on both side [KNLA and Tatmadaw]. When the Tatmadaw arrested us, they asked us if we had communicated or sent rations to the KNLA. We had to speak to them wisely so that we would not be punished by the Tatmadaw. They came with soldiers and weapons to threaten us. This was not fair for civilians at all. The Tatmadaw abused their power over innocent civilians. We were local farmers, but they sentenced us to prison. This caused livelihood obstacles for our family because all of our plantations were lost after about two years in prison. I used to have 15 acres of plantations, but it all went then. My wife worked at a church mission and some of my children had to go for further study in town when I was in detention. They had to sell the property that our family owned in order to cover basic needs. Otherwise, there would be no other way to earn an income. Since our lives were broken, it was hard to restart over again.

Were there any human rights abuses in your community?

Our Karen people were obviously oppressed because we were illiterates. There were injustices in our relations with powerful actors. Karen ethnic people were also influenced by Bamar people in the local leadership system. Mostly, we did not get to take leadership roles instead of Bamar people.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The worst experience was when my properties were lost and my livelihood was broken. It impacted our family income and my children's education.

How has the conflict period affected your life and the lives of people in your community?

If the persecution and oppression continues, our ethnic people will surely be lost. Now it is time for us [Karen people] to restore our lives.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

It was the people who only pursued their own benefits and interest. They were not nationalists. It was the national [Myanmar] government and their associates.

Was there any justice for you or other victims of human rights abuses?

I worked as a local leader in the community, but the Tatmadaw accused me of supporting the KNLA. Then they arrested, tortured, and jailed me.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights?

Perpetrators should support the human rights victims that they abused, as reparation.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights? And how is it related to you?

The ceasefire is essential for our country. I am already 73 years old now. We have faced conflict throughout our lives. Prolonged civil war has slowed the country's development and impacted civilians' lives. Therefore, the ceasefire is the best solution to build peace in our country. This is the responsibility of everyone in the country.

How do you know about the ceasefire?

I know about it through the radio. I was so happy to hear about it and I hope that it will last long. Civilians are tired of conflict because they have not been able to permanently establish their lives. Some civilians lost limbs and still displaced. Therefore, the ceasefire is the best solution to promote peace. The governments [Myanmar and KNU] should compromise and be at peace. They should forgive the past and try their best for the future. As there is a time of destruction, there is also a time of restoration.

Do you think there is peace in your community?

No, I do not see the image of peace yet. It is still in the negotiation process. We can obviously see that the national legislations and laws have not yet been reformed. However, this has to be done gradually and slowly. It cannot happen in a short time. Anyway, civilians want it to be done as soon as possible because we do not want to face conflicts any longer.

Has your livelihood improved?

Our livelihoods situation has improved as the political situation is getting more stable. For instance, we can travel easily without requiring permission letters and being questioned [at check points]. However, it is still far to go for real peace.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

Looking forward, promoting national development and democracy will pave the way for sustainable peace.

Who is the most responsible in building peace?

Both the Myanmar government and the KNU government are responsible for maintaining and building sustainable peace. Both governments need to compromise and not be self-centered. Looking for the best side is an effective solution in cooperation.

As a civilian, what can you do to promote peace and maintain it?

We have to bravely stand for the truth.

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Land confiscation is the most common human rights abuse. Lands in some villages were confiscated and resold. Some pasture lands were also confiscated. Such abuses have negative

impacts on local people's livelihoods and cause conflicts in the community.

How is the livelihood situation of the local people?

Our community is facing livelihoods challenges regarding the pasture lands. Some people were allowed to cultivate the pasture lands for their own plantation. There is the sign marked as the pasture lands and prohibiting trespassing, but there is no official recognition or obligation of this. Therefore, local people with domestic animals such as cattle and buffaloes are facing troubles when someone trespasses into the pasture lands. People are still using animals in farming because machines are not yet popular in our community.

What human rights challenges do women currently face?

There are no issues in our community. Women have equal opportunities as men.

What human rights challenges do minorities currently face?

Also, there is no big issue regarding religion in Phyu Township.

What do you know about the justice system?

I simply understand that justice is the ability to enjoy our rights and transparency. For instance, when a company carries out development projects in our area, we should be informed about the benefits and disadvantages of the project in advance.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is your area ruled by the Myanmar government or KNU?

We use the justice mechanism of the Myanmar government because our community is under their controlled.

Do you trust this justice system?

I see that the justice mechanism in our community is not transparent or just. For instance, our community has pasture lands. The Myanmar government wanted to cultivate their paddy plantations and they did so. They also dug water channels for the farm. We told them to close the water channel after they cultivated the farm. However, they did not close it but continue to use it. Therefore, we see that justice is not applied to our community. We are oppressed by the majority and the powerful.

Have you ever heard of corruption and bribes in your community?

There is corruption in our community. We also heard about it on the radio message that was share about the administration leaders from the township and village level who were involved in corruption.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable justice?

Everyone has responsibility to obtain justice.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

I think this is the responsibility of the Myanmar government because they are in charge of national governance. They have the mandate and opportunity to develop the country as well as being accountability for any issue.

What is the most effective way to eliminate human right abuse in your community?

According to the bible, you should treat people the way you want to be treated. It means empathy. We will be able to eliminate human right abuse when we have empathy and consider for other's feeling.

What is the most effective way to eliminate human rights abuses in Myanmar?

If we keep fighting one another and seeking revenge against each other over again and again, we might not be able to eliminate human rights abuses. Therefore, the best way is to respect other people's dignity.

Thank you so much for sharing information.

Source #75

Source doc #	Source # 75
Log #	18-123-A4-I1
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Dt--- (female, 44), Du--- village, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)

Do you have anything to ask me about our organisation before I ask you questions?

You are now doing research about the views of the NCA from the villagers' perspective. We hope that the government would bring development not only in the town but also in the villages. NCA had been done between the Myanmar government and the KNU, but some cases still affect us. However, our leaders do as good as they can in supporting us.

What is the name of your village tract?

I have no idea.

Are you married?

Yes.

How many children are there in your family?

We have seven people in our family. After one of my children got married there's one more in our family. And they have two children.

What is your occupation?

My husband is a farmer.

Do you have any special position given in your village?

I participate in community affairs such as healthcare and religious services. And also I am a village advisor and vice-advisor in Dv--- village tract.

Have you been living in your village since you were very young?

Yes, I have been living here since I was young.

What have you experienced since you were living in your village from a very young age?

We've suffered a lot because of the fighting that happened in the past. Once the Tatmadaw approached, villagers had to run. Some were arrested and forced to be Tatmadaw porters. That's including my brothers. At that time, I was 16 years old. Then, I left from Du--- village with the desire to work in political affairs. [Karen revolution with KNU]. After that, I registered in the [KNU] military medical department. As I had the desire, I went to work and live in Dy--- and Dz--- areas for three years. There are precise rules for registration there [in the military medical department]. We're being asked if it would be possible for us to work for seven years or forever. When we went there, we had so much enthusiasm to work in the [Karen] revolution. Then I bravely made a firm decision to work there forever. However, the leaders had a better understanding of the period we should have decided.

As young ladies, we are like young bamboos that grow very fast among the existing bamboos, but one day will fall down among the aged bamboos. Leaders knew our eagerness to be involved in the revolution. They encouraged us to register for the seven-year commitment at first. After that, they told us we could not get married during this seven years commitment to the revolution. Finally, we agreed to the seven years of registration working in the military medical department. There's a precise rule that is set in the military camp for those who would not fulfill their obligation. Still, there're over sixty males and females in Paw Daw Mu hospital. In the period I got married, there were seven people who got married but they hadn't fulfilled their commitment. For some people, they got married after they had been working in the military. However, they didn't complete the seven years of their commitment. As for me, when I got married, it had been only three years that I had been working in the military. We knew that we couldn't avoid the punishments: withdrawing a person from the military, exchanging money, corporal punishment, and cooking in the military for three months. All our friends agreed to cook for three months. As we agreed to do cooking in the military, we completed our duty. I got married to a revolutionist [KNLA soldier]. He was attacked and lost one of his hands in P'Nor Kleh Hkee and Noh Cho Nae [fighting]. At that time, there was fighting happening very often. Unfortunately, he was inferior to reach the front line. The same year, the leaders had to stay apart from others. After it had been over a year that my husband lost his hand, he worked in among his brothers. He only went to see his commander, when he was being ordered to go. I resigned from the military by accepting the cooking punishment. After we were married, I told him that we would work on our own. The situation had been difficult for both of us when we had nothing. Some people might think that my husband didn't resign from the military. Nonetheless, the leaders didn't even ask his attitude effectively. His chief-commander was Bo Moo Joe. I forgot the name of the other commander. He was shot by Tatmadaw in fighting in Tha May Ni area. My husband was not sure if his name was removed from the military list. We have never seen that as a handicap, no one came and offered him the support.

We hid in the forest. My parents-in-law told us that we couldn't stay there anymore as the situation escalated. Later, my husband went to meet with the Dw--- village administrator. He asked him for vacant land. We worked very hard until we could extend out our land working. Now, we could purchase other lands. We're not rich but we could live at a normal standard with our children. There was once a time at Martyr's Day in Loh Sha area. Names of the people with disabilities were being collected for commemorating the event. People asked him the date of his resignation and his injury. As for my husband, he doesn't even recognize his age when

someone asks. He dedicated his life when he worked as a soldier. I heard from some people about the gift of 100,000 kyats and a Longyi. But I was not sure if it's true or not. Then I told my husband, "you've been working in the revolution for a long time and lost one of your hands without having any compensation. So now if you want that money, don't come and stay home."

What have you experienced when the conflict happened between the Myanmar government and KNU?

At that time of the conflict, both the KNU and Myanmar governments came into the village forcibly and asked for chickens, rice and also other foods from us. We had to give them everything they asked for.

Do you often think about that kind of situation?

I am unsatisfied with the situation from the past. I would never want that kind of situation to happen again.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

No, there were no human rights abuses in our area in the past [interviewees is confused with the meaning of human rights words due to the lack of human rights knowledge]. Whenever they [Tatmadaw] came into the village, they forced labour on the villagers. That's why men fled out of the village. However, they asked the women who were left in the village about those men. We were so afraid to respond to them.

Could you tell me when did this happen?

I can't recall the date exactly. It happened 27 or 28 [1990, 1991] years ago.

Did conflict also happen in the years after 2000?

No. I left my village in the period between 1997 and 1999. Subsequently, I was not staying in the village until 2000. But in 2001, I got married. And then, I went to live in Dw--- village. That's why I didn't know what've happened later these days.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

I don't remember the date. When I went to live in the DW--- village, they [Tatmadaw] came and tortured the villagers in the village. They [Tatmadaw] also came to arrest my husband. As for me and my three children, we returned to live in the Dx--- village because we were afraid to live in the forest together my husband. They went to arrest my husband in the forest. At first, they wanted to handcuff him. But my husband responded to them that he would not run. And then, he let them ask him the questions that they wanted to ask. The Tatmadaw knew that he was a former soldier. So they asked him if people [KNU] obtained weapons with him. My husband explained to them that he had not been in contact with them [KNU] for a long time since he lost his hand. The Tatmadaw even asked if my husband received support after he resigned from the military. However, they accused my husband of having weapons with him. When they made the accusations, my husband told them to kill him if they found the weapons in his hands.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

Yes, the conflict affected our livelihood situation very much. We couldn't harvest in the harvesting period, because my children were too young and my husband was disabled. We were not able to find anyone to help us. That was really difficult for our livelihood.

How have you overcome the difficult situation?

There is a bit of relief for us after the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement). After the NCA, it's good that we are able to work for our livelihood.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

The perpetrators were mostly Myanmar government staff.

Have any of the human rights abuses have been resolved? Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses? Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I didn't witness individually.

Have you heard about perpetrators being punished?

Yes.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

In my perspective, for the first step, trainings [educate] should be given to the perpetrators. In addition, they should be taught very well about the consequences of committing a crime. For the second step, the perpetrators should be given a punishment he or she should deserve. Finally, the authorities should be uninstalled from their position if they committed a crime.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

Actually, if a person was beaten until he or she couldn't do anything for their livelihood, the perpetrators should compensate for a victim's livelihood. For example, a person like my husband should be given compensation for his loss of livelihood after he lost one of his hands in the conflict.

Who has responsibility?

To my assumption, KNU has responsibility to care for my husband.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

Nowadays, drugs are popular among teenage. These young ones are using the drugs by breaking the rules of law.

On the young ones using of the drugs, do you know where did the drugs export from?

Drugs exported from the other countries [outside of the Karen State]. Without the acceptance of the authorities, there's no way that the drugs could spread around. They could've stop or prevent the exportation. Nevertheless, they accepted it.

What do you know about the ceasefire? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

I have no idea about the ceasefire. Everything about the ceasefire was arranged by the authorities. I haven't heard about it because we were not involved in the consultations for the ceasefire.

What do you know about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

My expectation on the peace process is that I don't want to see any suffering in the future like we had suffered from the past.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

I don't feel like the peace process is genuine. Both Myanmar government and KNU could only bring genuine peace in the country if they work together in unity.

Do you feel safe now? Has your livelihood improved?

The livelihood situation has improved a little bit when they don't have tax collections on our production from the agriculture.

Could you clarify the meaning of this peace process?

I don't know how to clarify the meaning.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

There isn't equal agreement between the government [KNU] and civilians. In addition, the different perspective is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

I do not foresee any improvements better than the current situation. I would say the role of the government is to encourage the population to participate in the necessary affairs. If the government and civilians could work hand in hand in unity, I am certain that the cooperation would bring a better situation in the country.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

We as Karen people live under the KNU governance. The KNU would get more support if they helped and guided villagers in a just way.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I don't see that a Myanmar government could guarantee peace and justice.

Could the KNU guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

I have no idea that the KNU can guarantee peace and justice.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

In my perspective, corporation with the governments is the only thing a person could contribute to peace and justice.

Since the NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

There's no challenge for me alone in 2015 and 2016.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

None.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihood?

Drugs is the thing that is affecting our livelihood. My only son went to tap rubber trees with his father in the plantations. After that, he sold the rubber on the way back home. He then used some of the money for using drugs. In addition, he could have brought me just the money that was left. So, drugs are big challenges for us and it affects our livelihood.

What does justice mean to you?

Concerning justice, I am satisfied not to see drug selling and use in our community.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We use KNU justice system.

Do you trust the KNU justice system? Do you feel that it is fair?

I don't feel like it is completely fair.

Have you ever experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to get justice?

Even though someone is practicing the justice system, they [authorities] do not accept it if it does not make them content with their decision. In my perspective view, there's no justice. They [people in opposite site] are bigoted. When they have power, the populations are afraid to resist because they are armed.

Looking back at past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

Human rights training should be given for the perpetrators. In my opinion, there should be three steps. First, they should be given human rights training and warning. Second, if a person continues to do it deliberately, the person should be given the punishment that he or she deserves. If the person finally violated human rights along with the training and warning, he/she cannot be changed.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

In my opinion, I don't see both governments could take responsibility to get access to justice for human rights abuses.

What is the best way to stop human right violations in your community?

The best way to stop human rights violations is punishing the perpetrators in appropriate ways.

Is there anything not included in my questions that you would like to add?

The only thing that I would like to say is that we are living under the rule of the KNU government. Their governing should make the population content.

What suggestions would you give to KHRG?

We want our information to be contributed in a beneficial and appropriate way.

Source #76

Source doc #	Source # 76
Log #	18-134-A3-I1

Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Naw Daz--- (female, 50), Dbb--- village, Kyonedoe Township, Dooplaya District (December 2018)

What were the human rights abuses you experienced in the past?
We faced with Tatmadaw oppression in the past such as physical violence, forceful confiscation of our household properties and domestic animals, and forced portorage. There was no experience sexual violence in our village.

When did this happen?
It happened in 2011.

What was the worst experience you faced?
Being forced to porter was the worst experience in the past. Now, the prevalence of drugs is the worst. There are many issues that arise because of drug addictions. Some addicted people commit suicide, some commit violence and some lose their senses. Yet, there is no accountability for this case. Parents worry that their children will be addicted to drugs and some drug addicts commit domestic violence and get divorced.

Have you ever experienced displacement during conflict?
Of course, we were displaced. We were afraid to stay in our village because Tatmadaw would kill us when they saw us.

What was the impact on your livelihoods?
Our livelihoods were not so bad but they [Tatmadaw] forced us to go as porters and volunteer in road construction and other works. They forced us to work for them.

Could you go to your plantation freely?
We did not have a plantation in our community because our village was close to the town. However, the Tatmadaw temporarily stayed in our village during the conflict period. The problem that we are facing is that the village heads abuse their power over villagers. People have to follow their orders accordingly. I would like to suggest that leaders are elected by community members. They should promote justice and peace since they have got the opportunity.

How did local people respond to the human rights abuses they experienced in the past?
They did not really confront [perpetrators] for their rights. Our village head was Bamar. Our village was really big so the village also could not easily monitor every case that happened in the village. Some villagers kept silent because they were afraid to report the case.

Who was the perpetrator of human rights abuses in your community?
It was the Tatmadaw.

What kind of judgment would be appropriate for human rights perpetrators?
Court judgment is the best. Otherwise, it will not be fair for the victims.

What are the root causes of human rights abuses?

The Tatmadaw signified our area as a black area.¹³ So, they do whatever they want when they enter the villages.

What do you understand about the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)?

The positive changes after the NCA were having school, road and village clinic infrastructure in our village. However, we came up with a concern after having all these things. We are concerned for our community security. In the past, our area was under Karen National Union (KNU) control. Now, we worry that the Tatmadaw will take control over this area.

What do you expect from the peace process?

I expect the social well-being of community members, freedom of speech and the right to self-determination.

Are you able to enjoy peace and rights completely in your community?

Not completely. Our lives in the past were smooth but now there are many factors that can ruin our lives, such as drugs. Young children should study but they leave school and become addicted to drugs, as well as getting married in their young age.

Do you have security in your village?

Not at all; for example, if someone was killed during the night, you would not know where to report the case immediately. It is not easy to find out who the perpetrator is either.

Do you have any suggestions about this case?

I would like to suggest that every Karen armed group be united in the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The situation might be better if they re-unite.

Do you have freedom to secure your livelihood?

Now, the cash crops such as betel nut and rubber have a very low price. Durian trees were also damaged. So, our livelihoods are mostly backward.

Do you have any barriers to go to your plantation?

We do not have any barriers to go to our plantation because we have no more land.

Do you think the peace process is sustainable?

I dare not swear it is sustainable.

What is the barrier to sustainable peace?

¹³ Tatmadaw expert Maung Aung Myoe explains that the three-phased Tatmadaw counter-insurgency plan, developed in the 1960s, designates a territory as black, brown or white according to the extent of ethnic armed group (EAG) activity. Phase one transforms a 'black area' into a 'brown area,' meaning it transforms from an area controlled by EAGs where the Tatmadaw operates, to a Tatmadaw-controlled area where EAGs operate. The second phase is to transform the area from a 'brown area' into a 'white area,' where the area is cleared of insurgent activities. The final phase is to transform a white area into a 'hard-core area,' during which more organisational works are necessary and the government forms pro-government military units for overall national defence. See Maung Aung Myo, *Building the Tatmadaw: Myanmar Armed Forces Since 1948*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009, p. 31-32; see also *Neither Friend Nor Foe: Myanmar's Relations with Thailand Since 1988*, Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Nanyang Technological University, 2002, p.71.

The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) of the NCA process is clashing with the 2008 constitution. It is in dead-lock. The Tatmadaw claims that every armed group has to be in one military [one Tatmadaw]. What we want is Federalism in which we have self-determination and freedom of expression. It is not happening like this [federalism] now; we do not have freedom of expression and self-determination at all. The Myanmar government wants to implement Burmanisation. I think this political situation will take a long time to build sustainable peace in the country.

If you had authority, what changes would you like to make to build sustainable peace?

I would like to allow involvement of citizens in promoting peace and also women's participation in politics.

Why do you think women are not participating enough in building peace and in politics?

Culturally, women were discriminated against, [and seen] as not being as smart as men and troublesome.

How do you want to recommend the Myanmar government in building sustainable peace?

I would like to suggest the Myanmar government and Tatmadaw to obey the NCA codes of conduct, especially trespassing territory. The KNLA follows the code of conduct and does not trespass into the delimited territories but the Tatmadaw trespasses as they want. If the Myanmar government really wants peace with ethnic groups, they have to be transparent and honest in limiting the territory as well as following the [NCA] codes of conduct.

How do you want to recommend the KNU government?

I would like to suggest that the KNU government have transparency between central and local authorities during consultations and decision making.

Do you think women have justice and equal rights? Why?

No, they are not able to enjoy their freedom and rights completely. We try our best to be involved but sometimes, male authorities are unwilling to give the floor for women. We are not sure what their concern on women is.

Could you explain the trend of human rights abuses and discrimination on women in your community?

It is not common anymore in our community. However, women are still suffering from discrimination and abuses in communities that we cannot reach.

I would like to ask you about justice, what do you understand about justice?

I understand that justice means 'fair'. The national legislation has to influence the country.

How were justice and legislation applied in your community?

If a case happens, for example a woman leaves her husband, local authorities have to investigate the root cause. We cannot punish anyone without finding the evidence of their fault. The case that we cannot solve in the village will be brought to the village tract level authorities.

In the case of judgment, which authorities do you rely on the most, KNU or Myanmar authorities?

We mostly rely on KNU in our community.

Do you think the problem solving mechanism is just and fair?

Some perpetrators want to win when dealing with the court. I want to suggest that they [perpetrators] should not deal with the court if they want to win because the court will decide only what is just. They have to use their own strategy and solve their own problem.

Do you see any bribes and corruption in justice and court?

In the past, bribery and corruption was common practice in the 'more money, win court' system, but it has transformed into a system where [perpetrators are forced to pay] compensation instead of being subject to a penalty. For example, a perpetrator was supposed to give 50,000 Kyat instead of serving 3 months in prison. Some authorities asked for 100,000 Kyat [\$65 US]¹⁴ from the perpetrator [without punishment]. This is beyond the limited penalty.

Do you think the Myanmar government and KNU have responsibility to promote more justice?

The Myanmar government has responsibility but they do not reach our community. We only rely on the KNU. For example, a case will be primarily dealt with at the village level. If the victim is not satisfied with the primary court, the case will be taken to upper authorities.

What would be the best way to eliminate injustice in the country?

The best way to eliminate injustice is to report the abuses. We will report the cases to you [KHRG] and you will share to the world as well as advocate for us. This is a strategy to pressure the government. Now, there is no accountability for human rights abuses.

Thank you so much for sharing information. Would you like to allow us to use this information?

Yes.

Do you have any suggestions for our organisation?

I would like to suggest that you come to our community very often because local leaders need your suggestions in the cases we cannot handle.

Source #77

Source doc #	Source # 77
Log #	19-8-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District
Full Text	
Toungoo Interview Saw Dbc--- (male, 52), Dbd--- village, Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (January 2019)	
What do you know about the ceasefire? What do you think about it? How is the ceasefire	

¹⁴ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the September 4th 2019_official market rate of 1,526.80 kyats to US \$1.

relevant to you?

The nation and villages will improve and the local people will be able to live and travel in freedom if there is peace from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). However, it is not a stable peace and truthful NCA yet. So it causes difficulty for the local people. The situation is getting better in Karen State and improving a little bit in my opinion. If we look at what the government is doing right now it is not a complete peace process and there are no actions being taken and implemented even though the NCA was signed.

To be honest, I don't like this kind of peace process. Every place in Myanmar should be peaceful. It should not be: there is peace in one place and there is conflict in the other place in the same country. So we cannot say that the country is peaceful now. We don't get the benefits and the ethnic groups are facing difficulties. If there is peace in the whole country, it will be great and the whole country will improve. Our country is getting poorer and poorer because there is no peace yet in the country and the civilians also get in trouble. I would like to focus on not only the Karen ethnic group, other ethnic groups also face troubles. The country will improve if the country is peaceful.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected your life? How has it affected the lives of people in your community?

Yes, our village is peaceful now. There is no conflict or fighting happening now. There was fighting in the past but not now.

Do you feel safer now?

Yes, we feel safer now.

Has your livelihood improved? Do you get to work for your livelihood well?

Yes, we can now work well for our livelihood because we don't have to flee like in the past. However, in the past because of the fighting, we had to flee and we had to run to avoid being a forced porter. Whenever the fighting happened, people were forced to porter and they were arrested to be forced porters. But there is no forced portage now so it is better.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

As I told you, there will be peace only if the peace process is implemented and works. Therefore, the whole country will be improved, even the villages, cities and towns. The peace process now is just discussing and talking on the table. It is not implementing yet. If the peace process is not implemented, there won't be peace. There is no witness for the peace process so it is not easy to be peaceful in our village and country. I always listen to the radio and the news that I hear from BBC and DVB [news channels] are true. However, the government says that the news is not true because they want to discourage the news. I said, the DVB news is true because the DVB reporters interview the local people in the villages. They are now doing to the Rohingya people similarly what they did to the people who were living in East of Thaut Yay Kat and East of Klay Wa seven, eight and ten years ago. It is the same like ethnic cleansing. I noticed that because people fled to other places. No more people were in the village and all the houses were burnt down. Therefore, they had to flee to the border and became refugees.

I also talked about that to the pastor and Naw Dbe--- scolded me. I told the pastor as well, "Why don't the leaders report and submit this case?" The Tatmadaw military did [things] to the Karen people such as rape, killing and torturing the villagers. One of their strategies is when doing the

NCA peace process with Kachin, on the other side they were fighting with Karen. Many Karen people died in the fighting. Then they started doing NCA peace process with Karen and went to fight with Kachin again. However, Kachin were clever. When they were doing the peace process, they bought and collected ammunitions. One thing is they can produce jade so they had a way to get money to buy weapons. The Tatmadaw military could not fight them the second time because they had the weapons to fight back as well. It will be great if our Karen people are clever like Kachin as well. This is the strategy of the Tatmadaw military. The DVB said they will do a ceasefire for four months. I would like to say that if they are going to organise a ceasefire, they should do it with the whole country. However, they will fight in Rakhine until they [ethnic groups] surrender. I don't make this up, the VOA also talk about this. The Tatmadaw military is also transporting more rations and ammunition, recruiting and sending more soldiers in Karenni State. We also see their transporting rations with horses in Thandaung [town]. This is kind of like an invasion of these areas. They are going to come back here in these areas after they fight in Rakhine. I see [things] like this and I don't like this as well. We will get to live in peace only when there is a sustainable peace in the area.

So they are using their strategy to fight with the ethnic groups.

Yes, that is what they are doing now.

What are the main human rights challenges your community is facing after the NCA was signed?

There are no human rights violations or challenges that we are facing in our village. But what I told you is the situation for the whole country.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We try to solve the small and simple problems in the village with the village head and leaders in the community. There are no heavy problems that happen as well. But in the past, eight years ago, one villager committed a murder so he went to jail. However, he is now released already. The cases like arguing because of [being] drunk and quarrelling in the community are just solved in the community with the leaders and village head.

In your area and community, do they use the Myanmar government justice system or the KNU justice system?

We are just using the Myanmar government justice system because there is no KNU justice system yet. However, the KNU come to our village but there are no KNU justice systems used in the community.

Do you trust in the Myanmar government justice system? Do you feel that it is fair?

Honestly, I don't like the Myanmar government justice system either. They procrastinate the cases [instead of investigating quickly and solving the cases as soon as possible] so people who are in the cases face the difficulty of having to spend more money in the long process of the case. It should not take longer but they procrastinate so I don't really like their justice system. The other case is when they arrested one young boy with one or two tablets of Yaba [methamphetamine drugs] in their hands, they sentenced him to several years in jail. However, when they arrested [a person who was in] a car with full of Yaba, they did not take action to investigate. They just say that there was no owner of the car and they just conceal the case like that. Then I don't like that they arrest journalists so they cannot report the true news. They don't like the true news spread out so they arrest the journalists. They report the invalid news or untruthful news online or by phone. Then they give the documents and arrest people after that.

That is ongoing so I don't like that too. They arrest people with false news.

Have you heard of corruption and bribery in the justice system? Do they have it?

I don't know if they have it or not because I never experienced processing the case like that. But if we look at other cases, we can see that.

So you heard it but just didn't experience it yourself.

Yes. The government announces a rule for no corruption and bribery but it is still [there]. Then they said "there is no corruption and bribery, you just have to pay only 300,000 kyat [\$196 US]¹⁵". This is how they committed corruption and bribery. That amount of money is nothing for the rich people but for poor people it is a lot to them. If they have to give that amount of money, then where will they get it and even 1,000, 2,000 or 10,000 kyat is worth a lot. So it is not fair. I am not sure that this law was created by the government of U Thein Sein or others.

Do you know anything about the KNU justice system?

No, I don't know anything. But I just heard that they have a justice system when there was training for laws from KNU. I don't see that they implement their justice system. I tell you based on my experience but I am not sure later on if they will implement work on their justice system. I heard they have had trainings in east of Klay Wa and Day Lo many times already. But this is the very first time in our area. They called it "Law Training" but I did not know what it was. So I asked the trainer and she told me that it is "Au Pa Day [law in Burmese]" rules so I understood it. I usually speak in Burmese so I did not think of the meaning in Karen. I speak, read, write and sing in Karen as well. However, I cannot match the Karen words' meaning with Burmese words.

Which organization came to give this training?

As far as I know it was given by the center of KNU because they said they are from the center of KNU.

When did they start the training?

They started from 14 and they will finish on 16 [January 2019]. It is three days training.

Did Thandaung Township invite them to give the training?

Yes, villages from east of Day Lo, Thaut Yay Kat, villages from west of Day Lo, villages from Baw Ga Lee, villages from around 13 miles also joined the training. The villages around Thandaung Township also joined the training. It is a very big training from [KLAC].

How many trainers join?

There are two women trainers and three men trainers. There are some people who joined the training, P'Doh Keh Doh Hku and the Township level officer also joined in the first day of training in the opening ceremony.

Did you participate one day in the training?

Yes, I attended one day as a representative of visitors from the village. There are two or three young people from the village attend the training.

So you got to know the KNU justice system.

¹⁵ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the September 4th 2019_official market rate of 1,526.80 kyats to US \$1.

I got to know and understand more about the KNU justice system. There are some differences between KNU and Myanmar government justice system. There are no lawyers in their justice system. They know their weaknesses. They don't have high educated people to put in this position and they will let the young educated people to participate and to be the lawyers. There are government lawyers and private lawyers [in the government system] so whenever you want you can hire them. But in [the] KNU [justice system] they don't have lawyers to hire. They told us this and I thought I would ask them this question.

What else do you want to add?

I really want to talk about the NCA. There will be no peace and will never be peace if they continue to do like this. Therefore, our Karen people and our Karen leaders should be aware of this. Now they are fighting the Rakhine people and now it is getting closer to Chin State. So the Chin leaders alarm and remind their people to be ready at any time. Now we see and know that they are transporting their rations and soldiers in Thandaung area and Karenni State. Therefore, we cannot believe the Myanmar government in any situation. They are just going around the whole country and fighting with the ethnic groups. However, they don't win and none of them win. But the victims are the local people and civilians. So our country is not developed. The local people have to suffer pointlessly and without worth for them. The peace process is just done in the discussions on the table. It should be implemented with action. Therefore, it will improve the local people's lives and the country. If they just continue like this, I think it is not easy to improve and I don't trust them [the Myanmar government] as well. The local people should know and understand this.

Will you give us permission to use this information?

Yes, you can use it but please don't use my name. Please use it and have concern for my security. However, I am now okay to talk about this because it is in the democracy time. Everyone has the rights to talk and express their feelings.

We don't publish your real name in our publication. We just take a record of it.

Honestly, the Tatmadaw military call us a rebel village. The KNU also cross our village but they come into our village for a short time because of the KNU security laws. The spies are also coming when they hear anything. However, it is getting a lot better now if we compare with the past. They sometimes meet each other in the village now.

Do the Tatmadaw military soldiers come into the village?

Of course, they come whenever they hear anything happening in the village.

Do they have their military camp near here?

Yes, they have their police station so they come here often.

Do they disturb the local people?

No, they don't do anything to disturb the local people. As I told you, they just rest in the village when they travel to Keh Bah village. If they hear any news, they come but they don't disturb the local people.

Thank you.

Source #78

Source doc #	Source # 78
Log #	19-5-A6-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | Saw Gk--- (male, 70), Gl--- village, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (December 2018)

Religion: Christian

Ethnicity: Karen

Family Statue: N/A

Occupation: Farmer/former village head

Have you experienced human rights abuses in the past? If yes, when and what happened? How does it continue to affect your life?

Yes, I had these when I was a village head. They [DKBA] accused us of hiding Ko Per Thoo [KNLA]. We suffered numerous violations.

Who were they?

They were Bo Chit Maung[’s troops] of the Ko Per Baw (DKBA). It was when Tatmadaw buried me together with Ko Per Baw.

Do you remember their battalion and year?

No, it is many years ago so I do not. It must be more than 10 years ago.

What was the worst human rights violation you experienced?

The worst one is "carrying as porters".

Have you or your family been displaced?

We faced displacement for four years around 20 years ago.

Who caused your displacement?

They are DKBA.

Do you remember their battalion?

Before I knew it, but I no longer remember their battalion. The Battalion came to my house and I served them hot tea.

What experiences do you want to report?

When I was away, the Tatmadaw arrested my wife and she had to follow them.

Anything else? You mentioned about portering.

There were so many violations. Tatmadaw entered into our house [checking] and arrested villagers. The Tatmadaw arrested a Sergeant Major [KNLA] once in the house so there were a lot of conflicts.

What did they do after they [DKBA] forced you into displacement?

They burned down the houses and villages. There were fires for several days in the villages.

How many houses?

Almost the whole village, because only one house was left and in the other village also only one house was left. It was around 20 years ago.

How did those human rights abuses impact your livelihoods?

At that time, all of my logs that I'd collected and brought to the village were lost. Maybe the DKBA took them. We could not work for our family livelihoods because we did not have time, and we always had to go [flee for their lives]. Even when we carried rice with us, DKBA confiscated all of ours from us. Several [DKBA soldiers] came to our houses every day [looking for food].

How did the displacement impact your livelihoods and community livelihoods?

Whenever they entered into the village, they forced us to work for them without paying anything to us. They also beat villagers like Saw Zv--- and Saw Zw---. If I was not there [to secure their release], these two villagers would have suffered too dangerous torture. I felt so much pity for them.

How did villagers overcome those challenges?

We could not do anything. We just had to fulfill their demands and their desires like that. They asked for tax on each betel nut tree and farm. For example, for one betel nut tree: 100 kyat. For each acre of farm, 100 baskets of paddy; like that. [These taxes would take a very large portion of a farmer's entire produce]

Who were they?

They were Tatmadaw and DKBA. They tried to destroy the KNU. When we went to see any of their groups [armed groups], we had to say that they are good. We could not say the other group was good in front of the opposing group.

Have any of those human rights violations been resolved?

No, nothing. They only think that they [Tatmadaw] want to defeat us. They've decided that they are the winners.

Has any survivor had access to justice?

No, we've never received it [justice].

What kinds of perpetrators should be punished?

How can we punish them? They [Tatmadaw] committed the human rights violations on the orders of their leaders [upper commanders]. They should face punishment.

What support should be provided during the conflict?

I want to help, but I do not have anything to support or help them. I feel so sorry for them, but I cannot help them [the people who have faced human rights violations]. They [Tatmadaw] said, "If we cannot arrest them alive, we'd better arrest them dead [in Burmese]".

How would you like to help if you can help?

I want to speak on their behalf that those people are villagers [to prevent abuses by making it clear that the targets are civilians, not combatants].

Why did those human rights violation happen in your community?

It started happening when the DKBA was founded and split from the KNLA. We saw a shaven-headed monk come into our village. Those were all tactics of the Tatmadaw. It was more than 20 years ago and I was a village head. Even as a Myanmar [government-recognized] village head, we still had to be afraid of them. Karen village heads had to drive the cart for them. Those village heads have all passed away. If they were still alive, I would like to ask them about it.

Do you know about the ceasefire? How does the peace process relate to you?

I just know that the ceasefire is enabling the Tatmadaw to enlarge their patrol territory and then they will do it again [attack the Karen]. I just know it's like that because in the past, the Ko Per Baw [DKBA] also talked about this. Like when they moved their Centre [capital] to Nay Pyi Daw during the past ceasefire process as an example; after they could control and get established [in that region], they restarted it [the conflict]. The Ko Per Baw, Tatmadaw allies themselves, said that they called the [previous] ceasefire for their plan to move from Way Ta Koo [Yangon] to Pyinmana in order that they [the ethnic armed organisations] would not attack them. After they moved and set up Nay Pyi Daw, they restarted the attacks. Similarly to this ceasefire this time, if they can control enough bases in the targeted region, they might start it [attacking] again. They might do the same thing.

How do you know about the NCA?

I just know that after Tatmadaw gets based and controls their target region, they will restart [conflict] again, and this is not peace. [He keeps repeating this many times.]

What are your perspectives on and expectations from the peace process?

I want unity and peace in the community. We want to enjoy freedom of movement for our livelihoods. The current situation is not peaceful yet.

Do you think there is peace in your community yet?

I don't think this is peace yet.

Are your rights being respected?

I am the only Christian in my community so they do not care about me, and I have to be their Thara [pastor/teacher] so I cannot do anything.

Source #79

Source doc #	Source # 79
Log #	18-123-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District
Full Text	
<p>Dooplaya Interview Saw Dab--- (male, 47), Du--- village, Noh Hpa Htaw village tract, Win Yay Township, Dooplaya District (November 2018)</p>	

Are you married?

I am single. I have three nieces who live with me.

What is your occupation?

I am trading (goods).

Do you have any special position in this village?

I am taking responsibilities in healthcare and education.

Before I ask you questions, I would like you to share your experiences in the conflict period.

Before, I was an ambitious man who wanted to study overseas. After my parents passed away, I intended to look after the rest of my family and keep them in school. I noticed a lot of weaknesses. Now, I would like to improve the quality of education and healthcare services here in the village.

Have you experienced conflict? How? Do you often think about it?

I fled from my village because of the fighting. After that, I had to study in a Karen school at the Thai-Burma border. I had to run twice in the conflict period. It happened the first time when the collapsed of the Waw Lay KNLA army camp. I had to shelter in a refugee camp where I brought along some of my materials [dishes, clothes, bedding items, livestock and etc...]. The second time was in Maner Plaw [former KNU/KNLA headquarter]. I couldn't forget the time when I had to run from my country and stayed in Thailand.

Were there human rights abuses in your area in the past? If yes, when and what happened?

Yes. Tatmadaw soldiers looked for revolutionists' wives to arrest. In addition, one elder's mouth was covered and water poured on it by the Tatmadaw soldiers. The Tatmadaw soldiers also kept them on the ant holes. These are the human rights abuses which happened in our areas.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

There was no worst experience I have had solely.

Were your family displaced?

No. I was the only one who had to be displaced.

What about your parents?

They had already passed away at that time.

I could tell you about my brother. He was farming at Daa---farm, east of Taung Ka Lay. There, he was beaten by the Tatmadaw soldiers. The situation happened to him ten years ago.

How did the conflict affect your livelihood?

We were so frightened to harvest when Tatmadaw soldiers came to our village. That affected our livelihood. As for my brother, he later had the trauma after he was beaten.

How has the conflict period affected the lives of your community?

Actually, the villagers are supposed to get ten baskets of paddy from the harvesting. However,

they could only get six baskets as they had to flee from the danger of Tatmadaw and the fighting.

How have the local people in your village overcome this?

They did the harvesting at day and night times in fear.

Who were the main perpetrators of the human rights violations?

I think they were mostly people who have power and the armed groups, and also businessmen.

Have any of the human rights abuses been resolved? Was there any justice for victims of human rights abuses? Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

I have not witnessed it individually.

What do you think should happen to perpetrators of human rights abuses? Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

The perpetrators should be punished according their sin. If they are given the punishment that they deserve, there will be less violations in the community.

What do you think should be done for people who were victims of human rights abuses during the conflict?

The victims' suffering could become trauma to them. To cure that, they should be given training in ways that can make them satisfied. I think this is the best thing that should be done for the people who were victims in the conflict period.

What is the root cause of human rights abuses in your area?

Maintaining the egotism is the root cause of human rights abuse in our area.

What do you know about the ceasefire? How do you know about it? How is the ceasefire relevant to you?

In my perception, ceasefire is relevant to everyone because there is no one who doesn't want peace. However, we are in doubt that they [men who have power] would live in harmony as they have spoken out. We could only accept if they commit a hundred percent to live in harmony with their talk. As for us, we never believe in the Myanmar government. There are their strategies drawn in the 2008 constitution. They alone would like to have influence on the population. I have comprehension that they recently deflected our attention. I am certain that they would return to what it's written in the 2008 constitution one day.

What would you like to know more about the NCA? What do you expect to get from this peace process?

It will not be easy in peace-making with supreme leaders who have a pessimistic attitude. They don't have things in common and are not united as well. Those are the things that undermine them to achieve peace in the country. If supreme leaders have something in common with their consultation, we as civilians are ready to support them.

Do you think there is peace in your village now? How has the peace process affected the lives of people in your community?

I think the Myanmar government might practice dictatorship again in 2020.

What does peace mean to you? What do you think about it?

In my opinion, peace is something that is very peaceful. I don't really think there is peace. The situation currently is like no one is winning or losing.

In your perspective, what do you think is the biggest barrier in making sustainable peace?

There would be no peace if there is tension between both governments. Furthermore, faking peacemaking will never bring peace in the country.

What improvements would you like to see to achieve lasting peace? If you could change one thing in this peace process, what would it be?

The governments didn't trust one another even though they made a pact to bring peace to the country. Likewise, both governments should accept the guidance or instructions from the International Committee for the Peace Council. In my opinion, if they withhold transparency among them, the tension will never end.

If you could share your opinion with the Myanmar government and KNU authorities, what kind of suggestions would you make to improve the peace process?

I would like to suggest them to accept the International Committee for the Peace Council to collaborate with them without restraint. They should live in harmony with the pact they have made.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

If there is continuing unbending, without the acceptance of international involvement, it will not be easy to acquire peace.

As a civilian, what can you do to contribute to peace and justice?

I would like to be involved in the executive affairs. Though, I prefer to help with education and healthcare.

Since the NCA, what are the main human rights challenges your community is facing?

Land confiscation is the main human rights challenge the community is facing. Likewise, it was such a struggle in requesting to study Karen language. We didn't have the opportunity to teach in our own curriculum but [have to] teach theirs [Myanmar government]. In my perspective, I feel like they discriminated against us with education.

Were you able to teach Karen language at school? What grade does it have?

It has one to four standards [ages 6 to 9]. Nevertheless, all printed curriculums were their [Myanmar government] own. Having to teach their curriculum is one thing that I don't like. We would like to teach the curriculum printed out by KNU.

Are human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

Yes, we are distressed both with the livelihoods and our minds.

What are the current human rights challenges facing minorities?

Having different attitudes and lack of governance are the challenges the minorities are facing.

Do you feel that your rights as a minority are respected?

No.

Can you explain to me the meaning of justice?

Having equal rights is the meaning of justice I understand.

What is the justice system like in your village? Is it Myanmar government or KNU?

We practice KNU justice system.

Do you trust it? Do you feel that it is fair?

I do believe it; but, i still haven't felt that they are qualified enough in judging.

Have you experienced or seen injustice or bribery in the justice system? What are the barriers to get justice?

I haven't experienced individually; and, I didn't feel like they are just.

What are the barriers to get justice?

Men who have power and businessmen are the barriers to get justice.

If you have experienced past human rights abuses, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

If they could help with half the amount of what we have lost, that would be really great.

What do you think is the responsibility of the Myanmar government to give access to justice for human rights abuses? What is the responsibility of the KNU?

The rules that they have written down is acceptable. In contrast to this, they have failed to follow the rules.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in your community?

The communities have lived under the dictatorship for many years. As they are people with a low level of education, the best way [to stop human rights violations] is for them to get education. It will not be easy to bring peace in the country without the collaboration of the civilians.

What is the best way to stop human rights violations in Myanmar?

Avoiding trafficking, child recruitment, and bullying the populations are the best ways of stopping human rights violations in Myanmar. Instead of intimidating the poor people, they should help them willingly.

Is there anything you would like to add?

There are many challenges ahead of us. If possible, the majority should be involved in collaborating.

How would you like us to use your information?

You are allowed to use the information that I have provided. It is my request to you to keep my photos and village name and village tract confidential. Instead, you can use Township and District.

Source #80

Source doc #

Source # 80

Log #	19-5-A5-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District
Full Text	

Hpapun Interview | Saw Ht--- (male, 67), Hu--- village, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (November 2018)

Had you ever experienced any human rights violation in the past? If you have, could you please explain it for me in detail?

Yes, I have had experience. The first abuse was by [Tatmadaw] Light Infantry Division [LID] #44, Column Commander Aung Soe. I do not know the battalion number.

When and what happened?

It was when the KNU [KNLA] ordered villagers to bring unexploded bullets and the Tatmadaw, Aung Soe [troop] arrested the villagers on their way [to the KNLA] and then tortured those villagers. They tied up those villagers. The next day, they trailed them to Hi--- village and then the Tatmadaw ordered me to meet with them. When I arrived to them, they tied me up in their army camp for around ten days long. They ordered me to find guns, bring guns for them as a punishment of being arrested in possession of one bullet. I told them that I could not find guns anywhere. So I gave them money.

How much did you pay?

For one gun it was 500,000 baht. So Hv--- villagers had to pay 250,000 and Hw---- villagers had to pay 250,000.

Who did you give the money to?

We gave it to Aung Soe himself.

What were the names of those villagers?

They were Saw Hx--- and Saw Hy---. Saw Hy---'s father-in-law ran away, so the Tatmadaw arrested him instead.

When did this incident happen?

It was around 10 years ago when we were displaced to Hz---.

Where did they arrest these two villagers?

They arrested them at Htee Hpa Doh Hkee, and Saw Hy--- was arrested at his house. Actually Saw Hy---'s father-in-law was ordered to bring that bullet, but he escaped from the Tatmadaw, so the Tatmadaw arrested his son-in-law as a replacement.

What was the worst experience that you had during the conflict period?

The second issue was LID #44, battalion commander Min Chit Oo.

When did it happen?

I was around 10 years ago.

What happened?

They arrested Saw Ja---, a villager without any reason. They tied him up and beat him heavily and put his head against the house post. [A woman interrupted: They beat his head with the fire wood until the sound came out "Taohhhh!!".] They also arrested me, so I had to follow them.

What about you?

They asked me who Saw Ja--- was and I told them in replay, "He's a villager," and then they did not tell me anything. It was as though the Tatmadaw had received information [from their spy] about Saw Jb---, and they lit a fire on the road and the fire reached the site of Poe Chwee Maw's sawmill.

Was Poe Chit Maw disappointed?

Yes, he let [LID #44, battalion commander] Min Chit Oo arrested those villagers.

Who was Poe Chit Maw?

He was also a column commander.

What was his Battalion?

His battalion was K'Saw Wah [DKBA white elephant] battalion and the battalion commander was Bo Htoo Loo.

Did they torture these villagers?

Saw Ja--- said that the Tatmadaw brutally tortured him so that he screamed due to the painful torture. The next day, they returned to Jc--- village with the purpose of arresting me. It was the time of my child's wedding ceremony and wrist tying. The next day [the day after the wedding], they [Tatmadaw] approached Hw--- and arrested me in my village. They hit my head until the skin on my head skin torn. [His wife said: They also heat your wrist.]

What did they do to you?

After they arrested me, they beat me again and again in the village. It was when I was drunk and they put me in one of the villager's homes, so I fell asleep.

How many times did they beat you?

They beat me with a pistol twice on my head and my wrist.

Do you still have a scar from the injury?

Yes, you can see it on my head.

Was it a big wound?

Yes, I still have it.

What did he do to you?

When they let me take a rest and I [pretended] to sleep. I heard the general say, "Dig his [the village head's] grave this afternoon! And throw his corpse in the ground." When I woke up, that general said to me, "Uncle, go and look for a viss [1.6 kg, of chicken] for me!" And then I went out to look for some chicken. I asked many people for chicken. They did not have any, so I went to the farm and fled to Hi--- and escaped.

Have you and your family been displaced?

No, I have not. After I escaped, they [Tatmadaw] defeated my family and said to my wife, "Your husband is Nga Pway¹⁶!" Actually, it was because of their [Tatmadaw] actions, so I was afraid and escaped.

How did the conflict impact your livelihood?

We have faced losses in our livelihood.

What kinds of strategy did you apply to survive during the conflict period?

We offered them what they demands as they desired. We also gave money to them.

Who were the perpetrators?

They were Na Ah Pa [SPDC, the State Peace & Development Council, former military junta].

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

No, I have never see any.

Do the survivors have access to justice?

I can give the example of the LID #77 troops that buried Ma Kyeh Wah Pa.

Do you remember the name of their Battalion?

The battalion commander was Bo Moo [Major] Than Htet. I do not remember all [of the battalion numbers and names]. I just remember LID #77.

[The interviewee does know the word justice so the researcher explain the meaning for a while.]

Do the survivors have access to justice?

No, they have never gotten it.

Are there any examples of perpetrators being punished?

No, I have never seen them punished or investigated.

Should they go to court? Should they pay reparations to victims? Should they lose their position of power?

I think the best [punishment] is the removal of their power or from their positions immediately because otherwise they will be dissatisfied with us if we report them [for violations they have committed].

What kind of support should be provided to civilians during the conflict?

They should not provide anything because it has already passed.

What are the root causes of the human rights abuses?

These happened because they [Tatmadaw] were accusing and suspecting us.

How is the ceasefire relevant to you? Do you know about National Wide Ceasefire (NCA) or peace process?

I do not know about the NCA. It is good because the situation is improving and we can travel a little.

¹⁶ "Ringworm"; derogatory SLORC/SPDC name for Karen soldiers

Don't you know anything about it?

No, I don't.

Do you think there is peace in your village?

The situation is improving because we can live, travel, sleep, have food, and work.

What does peace mean to you? How is the peace process?

I do not know. We hope that there will be peace, but I do not know in the future. We dream there will be more peace in the future.

Source #81

Source doc #	Source # 81
Log #	19-16-A1-11
Type of report	Interview
Publishing Information	Previously unpublished
Location	Bilin Township, Thaton District
Full Text	

Dooplaya Interview | Saw Dbr--- (male, 62), Dbw--- village, Bilin Township, Thaton District (November 2018)

How many households in your village?

There are around 120 households.

How many family members do you have?

I have seven family members.

Have you ever experienced human rights violations?

When I was working for Karen National Union [KNU]/Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA], villagers and soldiers families came to me and relied on me [for security and food] so I had to look after them. There were a lot of women and children who fled from their villages to me at Dbx--- area. My wife who delivered our young baby also had to run to me. Therefore, we [KNU/KNLA] had to protect them from the Tatmadaw and provided food for them. The Tatmadaw army camp based close to the village arrested women to be their porters and they had to follow them a very long distance to Lah Kyoh Koe area, even during the night time. There were a lot of abuses.

What are the experiences that you think of regularly?

I am sad that my people were suffering from the problems. I will not be satisfied until I die. When we patrolled in District #3 [Nyaunglebin], villagers could not work on our farm and they had to hide from the Tatmadaw. Due to the Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division [LID] #66 and Infantry Battalion [IB] #57 attacking, villagers had to flee and were displaced to my area. Thus, they had to build temporary shelters in my camp compound. They could carry only two to three days of food with them so they did not have food after they finished the food [they carried] with them. [KNLA] soldiers also did not have time to do their work [on the KNLA] because they looked after their families. Villagers had to carry their loads and packages such as their young children,

chicken and pigs into the hiding site. They told me they did not have food anymore, and at that time I had hid around 10 big cans of paddy so I told them, "You should go and get the rice from that I hiding place, but I will ask my soldiers to be your security guards. After you bring the rice, you can have it." They replied to me that they could do it without any complaining. We had to cross mountains to the place I hid the rice and they had to struggle through many problems. They could have food after they brought the rice with them. I told the civilians, "If I am starving, you will be starved too. It is not a problem for me if I am starving [sacrifice]." The Tatmadaw kept approaching the villagers' hiding site. There were around 400 villagers hiding there. I did not know the landmine area so I asked a local villager about the direction of the Tatmadaw troops to predict which way they would come to the IDP sites. That local villager told me that they [Tatmadaw] would come across that mountain and then they would reach us, so I asked him to show me that area and ordered my soldiers to go to the front line [in the direction where the Tatmadaw were approaching from]. I made the landmines which were the handmade landmines and I ordered the soldiers to bring those landmines with them. We stayed here [at the IDP sites] and cooked rice [prepared food for the soldiers].

What was your position in that period?

I was a Township office administrator.

When did those incidents happen?

It was in 1998.

What was your worst experience?

At that time, I felt so sorry for the villagers including children and new born babies. At that time, in District #3, we had a small number of soldiers and we also contacted the other [KNLA] troops to follow those Tatmadaw troops at the back [of Tatmadaw] and my section to wait at the direction of the Tatmadaw. So we met and the fighting broke out. We at the back prepared food for the soldiers with a lot of meat such as pork, wild pork and other wild meat after the soldiers' hunting. Villagers did not allow me to stay far away from them, so I could not go to the front line and I stayed with them. They were insecure without me and my soldiers who guarded them for security.

Where did they get the paddy?

They got it from the place where I hid the paddy. I told them, "You can go and get the paddy. You don't have to pay me back. You can return to your villages after the situation is improved."

What was the worst experience facing villages that you witnessed?

The starvation, when Tatmadaw approached the IDPs' hiding site and villagers were fleeing. A blind man could not see anything so he was left behind. When Tatmadaw arrived to the IDP site, they took all things [they wanted] and then they left. They did not do anything to that blind man. He was hungry and thirsty without water and food so he crawled on and on until he perished from starvation beside the road. We reported all those kinds of issues [to the KNU] through radio message.

Have you and your family been displaced?

Yes, we were. My wife was in Dby--- [Thaton District], I was in District #3, so she did not have to flee. My co-workers and I were displaced and their families also.

What kind of human rights abuses have you experienced and seen?

I heard that they [Tatmadaw] shot on sight villagers on their way from their farms at Meh Kreh Klo river.

How did the displacement impact your livelihoods?

During the conflict period, most of the villagers loved me and they relied on me. They asked us not to leave them. They protected us.

What work did the villagers do for their livelihoods?

They were working on hill farms.

What problems did the villagers face in their family livelihoods?

The Tatmadaw burned down theirs [paddy fields] and looted all of theirs [belongings or food]. Tatmadaw arrived to that place gradually so it happened very often. When Tatmadaw entered into their community, villagers had to run away and left all of their belongings, paddy fields, and animals. They were shot by the Tatmadaw whenever the Tatmadaw saw them. Even us [KNU/KNLA], we always had to be ready so we had to carry our guns and backpacks on us while having rice [meals].

How did the displacement impact villagers' lives and their future?

The Tatmadaw shot villagers on their farms too. They ran to us and said the Tatmadaw shot them while they were harvesting paddy. Civilians had to flee group by group when LID #66 attacked. The LID #66 also rotated their troops once a week. We always had to be cautious so we could not sleep.

How did the Tatmadaw attacks impact the civilians' future?

I hope the situation will improve in the future. It impacted the villagers a lot in education and health for their future so I founded two schools for them [IDPs].

Where was it?

It was in Dbz--- and I [KNU] paid the teachers' salary. There were only two teachers in the two school places and we combined these two schools in the next year.

How did the villagers overcome those livelihood problems?

They could not work on their farms during the conflict. We [KNU] bought rice from the company and asked them to send it to us when the Tatmadaw activities calmed down. We also asked the villagers to help us carrying rice and then we shared it with them. We also shared other food like fish paste and salt with the villagers who lived close to us. We told them, "bring rice to your home as much as you can and then you can come to get more later". Whenever the Tatmadaw came, villagers ran to us.

How did the villagers who did not run to you overcome the problems?

If they did not run to me, they ran to other groups [of the KNU], but mostly they ran to me [my troops]. Villagers from District #3 also ran to me because the other side was blocked by landmines and the Tatmadaw military attacks. Some of them hid in the area not far from their villages or in the places where they hid their paddy. Sometimes, they hid in places different from where they hid the paddy and then they had to secretly return and get their paddy at night. They suffered from those violations for a very long time.

What was the root cause of those violations?

Actually, discussion is better [than fighting]. Without guns would be great because majority groups had more guns causing Burmanisation so they could defeat the minority groups.

Why did villagers have to be displaced?

It was because of the fighting and the violations.

Who committed them?

They might be the Myanmar government.

Have any human rights violations cases been solved for justice? Have you seen any perpetrators being punished?

We want the government to take action against the perpetrators. If they do not do it, the same thing will happen in the future.

Have you ever seen justice, and perpetrators been punished?

No.

What kinds of punishment should be given to the perpetrators? For example, should they pay compensation, or be removed from their position?

If the perpetrators do not change their behaviour after a warning, they should be removed from their position. If they still repeat committing the violation, they should be punished with imprisonment or the death penalty.

What support should be provided for the people who faced the human rights violations during the conflict?

They [stakeholders] should provide them with development for their family livelihoods, roads, schools, hospitals and other needs.

What is the root cause of the many forms of human rights violation in your community?

It is because of the Burmanisation from the majority group; Bamar. It started from the General Prime Minister Nay Win's military dictatorship government; the Burma Socialist Programme Party (Ma Sa La), the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Na Wa Ta) and then State Law & Order Restoration Council (Na Ah Hpa).

Peace Process

Do you know about the peace process? What do you think about it? How is it relevant to you?

Yes, I do. It is relevant to me. Whenever the ceasefire was being processed, there was ongoing fighting. Actually, the ceasefire should bring peace. There will be never peace when the fighting is still on going.

What do you want to know more about the peace process?

I want to know everything about the process of the ceasefire.

What is your expectation from the peace process?

I expect to access development such as hospitals, schools, roads, electricity and water supply in my community. Healthcare and education are the most important because if we are sick, we could not access education and when we have education, we can have good healthcare services. I have many expectations, but nothing happens in reality yet.

Do you think there is peace in your community? What are the positive consequences of the peace process?

There is no benefit of the peace process in my community yet.

Are there any human rights abuses in your community?

No, there are no human rights violations.

What are the positive consequences of the peace process?

I could not think of anything yet.

Do you and other local villagers feel secure in your community? Have villagers' livelihoods improved?

Villagers' livelihoods have not improved yet. They just have to work for their food day by day.

How about transportation and security?

We do not have to worry about our transportation and security like in the past. In the past, we could not bring our rice [food] to our farms. Now, we can bring food to the farms.

What is the meaning of peace for you?

Peace is the rights of self-determination, freedom of movement and freedom to do any work. It is peace when we can enjoy fully the rights to do anything.

What is the barrier to making sustainable peace?

There is a lock [that blocks the way to sustainable peace] and [we need to know] how to unlock this lock.

Can you explain how to unlock it?

It depends on the Military government [Myanmar military] and ethnic armed groups. It is better to have table discussions [to solve the armed conflicts].

If you could change one thing, what would you like to change to achieve sustainable peace?

I would like to change [the governing system to] federal union. If we cannot make the federal union happen, there will never be sustainable peace. Each department under the federal union should be divided in equality and satisfied agreement. When [everyone] is satisfied, there will be sustainable peace. There should not be one ethnic group in a federal union. All ethnicities in Myanmar should be included in the federal union. Each of them [the ethnic groups] will set up their own governing systems and departments from the centre to [each] region, then to the districts and then to states. If they [government] do not build the federal union country like this, it is not possible [to achieve sustainable peace in the country].

If you had the opportunity to give suggestions to the KNU and Myanmar government, what would you like to suggest to them?

The Myanmar government should allow the KNU to govern their own region [state] and the natural resources. The KNU could work on development by themselves. It is better to do it like this. In the current situation in the KNU region, they cannot work on any development projects.

What kind of government could guarantee peace and justice in Myanmar?

A democratic government could do it. Anyway, the current government is a civilian government.

As a civilian, what could you contribute for peace and justice?

No answer.

What are the main human rights violations in your community? Are there any human right abuses happening in your community?

No.

Are there human rights challenges affecting your livelihoods?

No.

What are the current human rights challenges for women?

No.

What does justice mean to you?

Justice is like a scale on the balance; it depends on the weight we put on the scale.

What is the justice system in your village?

The KNU justice system.

Do you believe in the KNU justice system?

No, I do not completely believe in it yet and it is not very just.

Have you ever heard about corruption and bribery?

I have not heard about it, but I suspect it.

What are the barriers to get to justice?

No answer.

According to your past experiences of human rights violations, what kind of reparations or justice do you want?

Even if I speak out about that, it might be in vain because we do not see [do not know where are] the Myanmar military soldiers that killed villagers now.

You can say anything you want to speak out?

In order to stop those kinds of [past] human rights abuses, they [perpetrators] should be prosecuted by law and justice system.

Do you want compensation [for the human rights survivors] or an apology?

It is good if they help them [survivors]. They should apologize but they still have to pay compensation because they committed murders against villagers.

What is the best way to stop the human rights violations in your community?

It [the human rights situation] will improve if there is no more fighting.

What is the best way to stop the human rights violations in Myanmar?

There are so many major calls for help about the land confiscation issues now. Those [land confiscations] are all human rights violations.

Yes, it is correct. What is the best way to stop all kinds of human rights violations?

I think the government should revise the law. The military should be abolished. It is not easy to do it. There are a lot of military and land confiscation issues. To compare the power balance of the military and the government, the military hold the power more [over] the government so to abolish the military is better. If there is not a military, there will be no defenders for the country.

How do you think the military could be controlled?

I do not know [how] to do it. Actually, the military should play its own role or mandate. Unfortunately, the military interrupts by playing around into the government position. The position of the military is to protect the civilians only.

Do you have anything more to add?

You should do more research about the human rights violations that I reported with other villagers through interviews, because they also experienced those kinds of human rights violations.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.