



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, May 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in May 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Dweh Loh Township, Papun District between January and April 2011. It contains information concerning military activities in 2011, specifically resupply operations by Border Guard and Tatmadaw troops and the reinforcement of Border Guard troops at Manerplaw. It documents twelve incidents of forced portering of military rations in Wa Muh and K'Hter Htee village tracts, including one incident during which villagers used to porter rations were ordered to sweep for landmines, as well as the forced production and delivery of a total of 44,500 thatch shingles by civilians. In response to these abuses, male villagers remove themselves from areas in which troops are conducting resupply operations, in order to avoid arrest and forced portering. This report additionally registers villagers' serious concerns regarding the planting of landmines in agricultural workplaces and the proposed development of a new dam on the Bilin River at Hsar Htaw. It includes an overview of gold-mining operations by private companies along three rivers in Dweh Loh Township, and documents abuses related to extractive industry, specifically forced relocation and land confiscation.

Situation Update | Dweh Loh Township, Papun District (May 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Papun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including four incident reports, three interviews, and 484 photographs.²

Introduction

In Dweh Loh Township, the villagers suffered in 2009 and 2010 because the DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army) dug gold mines and built a road.³ The villagers suffered from DKBA demands for forced labour and for villagers' belongings. Many plants [crops] were destroyed and strict control [was imposed] over travel outside of villages. In addition, the DKBA planted

¹ KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma 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 writing situation updates, villagers are encouraged to summarise recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area.

² When these documents have been processed and translated by KHRG and when sufficient information has been compiled and analysed, a full Field Report on the situation in Papun District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Papun District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Southern Papun District: Abuse and the expansion of military control," KHRG, August 2010.

³ For more background on DKBA activity in Dweh Loh Township, see: "Southern Papun District: Abuse and the expansion of military control," KHRG, August 2010; "Central Papun District: Abuse and the maintenance of military control," KHRG, August 2010; "Southwestern Papun District: Transitions to DKBA control along the Bilin River," KHRG, August 2010

landmines along the valleys and mountains to the west of the Bu Loh [Bilin] River. The villagers did not dare to go to work in their hill fields [to the west of the Bu Loh River]. This year, those villagers did not get to harvest their rice. People [those villagers] faced many problems.

Between January 1st and March 5th 2011, the SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers sent a year's supply of rations for their military camps based in Wa Muh, Kuh Thu Hta, Kih Kaw, and Meh Way. Battalion Commander Tin Koh Win from LIB #213, under LID #11, took care of the security [during resupply operations] and forced the villagers, including from M---, P---, Ny---, Gk---, Dt---, and Y--- villages, to carry rice, cooking oil, bean, milk, and many other things. The villagers had to carry these rations and other things until it [the resupply] was finished. Now, the SPDC soldiers are active [around their military camps in Wa Muh, Kuh Hta, Kih Kaw, and Meh Way] and they arrest villagers to carry things if they see the villagers going to do their own work.

In H--- village, SPDC soldiers started sending rations from March 13th 2011 to April 25th 2011 and [as of May 2011] they are still not finished yet. None of the male villagers have dared to go back and do their own jobs because if they go back, they will have to carry [porter] things for the SPDC soldiers. They escaped [avoided forced portering] and they live in other people's villages.

In 2010, the DKBA soldiers changed to [Tatmadaw] Border Guard soldiers. They went back [rotated to different locations] and did not dig gold mines anymore, but companies [private companies from inside Burma] have come and dug for gold. People [villagers] are faced with *htee du* [dirty, dark or muddy water]. They can not get clean water to drink. Buffalos, cows and oxen can not drink the water. Not only people face that problem, but also animals, because the companies are digging for gold.

Then [Finally], in our Bu Loh River area, the SPDC soldiers have a project to build a dam. Now, they have this project. If the dam is built, villagers will face serious problems.

Forced labour and demands

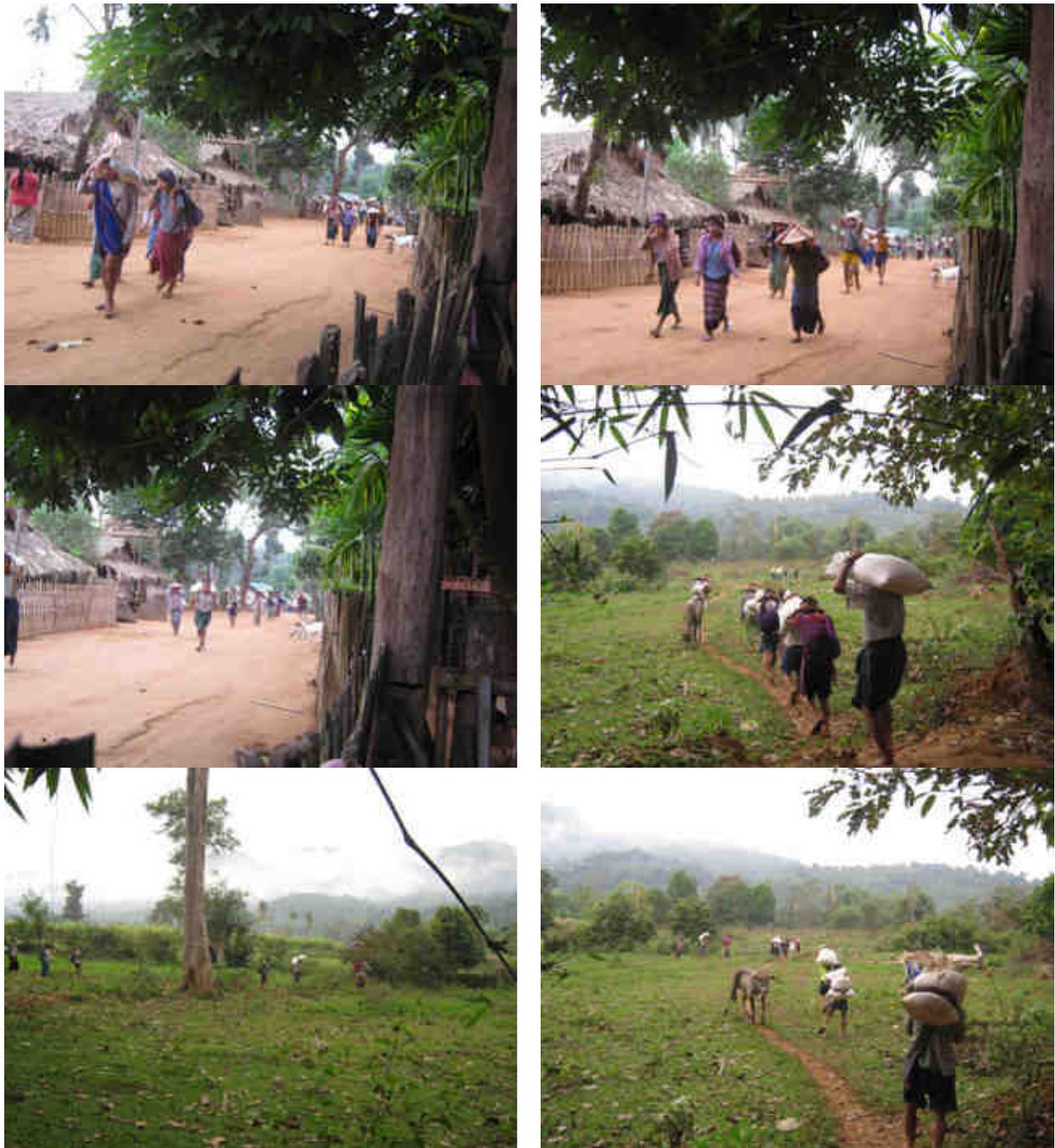
On January 7th 2011, soldiers from [Tatmadaw] Border Guard Battalion #1013 under the command of Kyaw Beh, based in Khaw Bah Luh camp, demanded three villagers from M--- village and ordered them to carry food [military rations] for them from M--- village to the Border Guard camp at Gkleh Muh Hta. The distance takes about two hours [to travel on foot].



This photo, taken on January 7th 2011, shows three M--- villagers, named Saw D---, Saw R--- and Saw K--- [left to right]. On the same day this photo was taken, these three men were ordered by Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1013, under Company Commander Kyaw Beh, to porter military rations from M--- village to a Border Guard camp at Gkleh Muh Hta. The KHRG researcher who took this photo reported that Gkleh Muh Hta is approximately two hours on foot from M--- village. [Photo: KHRG]

On January 9th 2011, Border Guard Battalion #1013 Company Commander Kyaw Beh again demanded fifty villagers from M--- village and ordered them to carry food [military rations] to the Gkleh Muh Hta Border Guard camp. The villagers started to carry [porter] from M--- village [and walked] to Gkleh Muh Hta. Now, the Border Guard soldiers [from Battalion #1013] who used to

live beside the road in Khaw Bah Luh do not live there anymore. They have already moved [rotated] to live in Kaw Baw Hta, which is in the 1st Brigade [Thaton] area.



These photos, taken on January 9th 2011, show M--- villagers portering military rations to Gkleh Muh Htah Border Guard camp from M--- village on the order of Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1013. According to the KHRG researcher who took these photos, Kyaw Beh, an officer in Battalion #1013, ordered one person to porter from each household in M--- village without fail. Approximately 50 M--- villagers, including men and women, portered rations to the camp at Gkleh Muh Hta on January 9th. [Photo: KHRG]

Border Guard Battalion #1013 soldiers based in Baw Kyoh Leh and K'Hter Htee, led by Company Commander Maung Soe Myay, also had to send rations to Khoh Nee on February 4th 2011. [The Company of Battalion #1013 under the command of Maung Soe Myay] had to go to Manerplaw [in northern Pa'an District] as reinforcements, so they asked the villagers living in the

Baw Kyoh River valley to go and carry things for them as porters. On February 4th 2011, [the Border Guard soldiers] ordered the villagers to carry things. [They demanded] three villagers from M--- village, ten villagers from K---, eight villagers from L---, three villagers each from N--- and Gh---, seven villagers from Th---, two villagers from S---, four villagers from B---, two villagers from P---, and three villagers from A---. They demanded those villagers but the village heads would not give them, so they [Border Guard soldiers] arrested as many of them [villagers] as they could, and forced them to carry things for about one month. In addition, they forced these villagers to walk at the front [of the Border Guard column] and step on landmines along the road. Among the villagers, some of them stepped on landmines and their legs were blown off.

The Border Guard soldiers who are based in K’Hter Htee and their Battalion #1013 Commander Maung Soe Myay needed to repair roofs, and Maung Soe Myay ordered thatch shingles from the villagers.⁴ On February 18th 2011, villagers had to send thatch shingles to him. Maung Soe Myay ordered 4,000 thatch shingles from M--- village, 9,000 from E--- village, 8,000 from L--- village, 5,700 from N--- village, 9,000 from O--- village, 4,000 from Th--- village, and 4,800 from B--- village. The villagers had to send the thatch shingles [to Baw Kyoh Leh] on February 18th 2011. See the photos of the L--- villagers preparing thatch below. After villagers prepared the thatch pieces, they put them together in front of the L--- village head’s house. See also the photos below of N--- villagers sending [delivering] thatch after they had prepared it.



These photos, taken on February 15th 2011, show L--- villagers producing thatch shingles in front of the L--- village head's house. The village head is visible standing in the foreground in the photo on the right. The researcher who took these photos reported that Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1013 Commander Maung Soe Myay demand 8,000 thatch shingles from L--- village. [Photos: KHRG]

⁴ The researcher who wrote this report did not mention which buildings needed to be repaired.



These photos, taken on February 16th 2011, show some of the thatch shingles that were produced by L--- villagers and stored in front of the village head's house. The L--- villagers were ordered to have 8,000 thatch shingles ready to be sent on February 18th 2011 to the Tatmadaw Border Guard camp at Baw Kyoh Leh. [Photos: KHRG]



These photos, taken on February 17th 2011, depict three of the N--- villagers who had to carry thatch shingles to Baw Kyoh Leh. According to the researcher who took these photos, N--- village was ordered to produce and transport a total of 5,700 thatch shingles by February 18th 2011. [Photos: KHRG]

Tin Koh Win, the Column Commander of [Tatmadaw] Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #213 under Light Infantry Division (LID) #11, took responsibility to send rations to their [Tatmadaw] camps once a year. They took security in order to send rations. They sent food [rations] to Wa Muh, Kuh Thu Hta, Kay Kaw, and Meh Way camps. They ordered and forced us [villagers] to carry food [rations]. On January 14th 2011, trucks carrying military rations arrived [in Wa Muh village tract] and 50 villagers from Wa Muh village were forced [to porter rations]. They [soldiers from LIB #213] forced villagers to carry food from the military trucks to their camps.



This photo, taken on January 14th 2011 shows a military truck in Wa Muh village tract. The researcher who took this photo reported that trucks containing military rations of rice and milk arrived in Wa Muh village tract on January 14th 2011 and that, on January 17th, villagers from M---, P---, Ny---, and Dt--- villages were subsequently forced by soldiers from Tatmadaw LIB #213 to porter rations to the Tatmadaw camp at Meh Toe Hta, a distance that takes seven days to cover on foot. [Photo: KHRG]

On January 17th 2011, they [soldiers from LIB #213] forced villagers from M---, P---, Ny--- and Dt--- villages to send [porter] rations to Meh Toe Hta. Column Commander Tin Koh Win, from LIB #213 under LID #11, divided responsibilities among different villages in Wa Muh village tract. M--- village had to carry 600 packets of rice, P--- village had to carry 120 packets of rice, Ny--- village had to carry 70 packets of rice, and Dt--- village had to carry 240 dozen tins of milk. They started carrying them from M--- village to Meh Toe Hta, and it took seven days [on foot]. The SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers ordered them like that [assigned quotas of rations for each village to porter], so the villagers again divided [amongst themselves] four packets for one household or three packets for one household. They carried [the rations] together like that until it was done. When the soldiers' food [rations] arrived at Meh Toe Hta, they wanted to send the food again to Kuh Thu Hta military camp. They forced *Htee Phyu Daw* Company [a private business] workers and Kuh Thu Hta villagers to send all of the food.

[The next month] in Gk--- village, Column Commander Tin Koh Win gave villagers the responsibility to carry 545 packets of rice, eight packets of fish paste, seven packets of salt, and two big tins of cooking oil. According to his order, the Gk--- villagers had to carry these rations from Wa Muh to Meh Toe Hta until it was done [all the rations were transported]. One household had to carry at least four packets of rice. Below is the daily schedule showing the number of villagers, including men, women and eighteen year olds, who had to carry food in Gk--- [between February 11th and February 21st 2011]:

#	Number of villagers forced to porter	Date
1	213 people	February 11 th
2	99 people	February 13 th
3	123 people	February 15 th
4	118 people	February 16 th
5	101 people	February 17 th
6	170 people	February 19 th
7	60 people	February 20 th
8	70 people	February 21 st
Total	954 people	---

The SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers ordered people to carry things and people had to carry them even if they were sick. If people carry rice, they should earn 10,000 kyat (US \$13.92)⁵ for each packet of rice. The SPDC soldiers forced villagers to carry things but they did not pay them anything.

⁵ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this bulletin are based on the fluctuating informal exchange rate rather than the government's official fixed rate of 6.5 kyat to US \$1. As of August 30th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 718 kyat.

Landmines

Between 2009 to 2010, DKBA soldiers came to dig gold and took care of their security by planting landmines on the mountains, along the mountain ranges, and in the valleys along the west side of the Bu Loh River. On January 1st 2011, DKBA soldiers became part of the [Tatmadaw] Border Guard battalions and they went back [rotated to a different location] but they did not remove the landmines that they had planted and, since then, the villagers have not dared to go to work in their hill fields or travel. The villagers have faced these problems of not being able to work in their hill fields or travel. Not only villagers, but also animals [could not go to those areas]; the animals could not eat grass [graze] along the mountains. The landmines still exist to the west of the Bu Loh River.

Gold Mining

The *Shwe Poo*, *Shwe Jya Nar Dar*, *Yaw Nee Oo*, and *Irrawaddy Htaw Tah* Companies dug for gold in the Buh Loh River and the forest was destroyed *ht'ler meh kwa* ['end of one's vision'; as far as a person can see in all directions]. There were no more trees or bamboo. People's agricultural workplaces and plants were destroyed. The forest was destroyed. We can not say how wide the land was that became *hta law lor plaw* ['empty land']. All the lands became plains [without trees]. The companies asked for permission from the Karen [KNU] leaders and they dug for gold. For the indigenous people, their children will face problems to do their livelihoods. Old people [our ancestors] said that *pwa k'nyaw may bper tar nay, haw koh k'htaw gaw law* ['the land will be red if Karen people are ruling the land'].⁶ Now is the time when the land is becoming red, because of the digging in the gold mines. The fish drink *htee du* [dirty, dark or muddy water] and can not survive. You will see no more fish because all of the fish have died.⁷

The Baw Baw Loh River

Since January 1st 2011 and until now, the *Htee Phyoo Hsay* Company has also dug for gold in the Baw Baw Loh River. Many people's plants [crops] and lands were destroyed. In addition, the forest was destroyed too. Some people's property [lands and crops growing in plantations] was destroyed and some of them [the property owners] got enough money [in compensation] and some of them did not get anything. As for the Baw Baw Loh River, the soil was destroyed and the environment was destroyed. The land became a plain [without trees]. In the photos below, you will see [where] people [working for private companies] from the city [set up] their houses. I also took photos of a company mining gold at the place called *Shwe Nyaw Bpay* on the Baw Baw Loh River. Before, there was green forest and it was so beautiful. After the companies came, we can see there is just empty land and sand. We can not see the forest any more.

⁶ This proverb likely suggests that power struggles and internal conflict in Karen leadership will cause the land to become metaphorically 'red' due to bloodshed. The researcher is probably implying that the literally 'red' land caused by digging during gold mining is a signal that this conflict and bloodshed is occurring.

⁷ The hydraulic extraction process documented in the photos in this section entails use of heavy machinery and earth-moving equipment, digging of trenches and has serious consequences on riparian environments. These include, but are not limited to: collapse of river beds, increased sedimentation and soil erosion, mercury contamination, spillage of diesel and other fuels, and the destruction of fish stocks, freshwater sources and arable lands. For more detailed information and a useful parallel case study of hydraulic mining in the Shwegyin River, in Nyaunglebin District, see *Capitalizing on Conflict: How logging and mining contribute to environmental destruction in Burma*, Earth Rights International and Karen Environmental and Social Action Network, October 2003, p.54



This photo, taken on April 11th 2011, shows earth-moving equipment belonging to private companies and a vehicle access road to one of the gold mining sites at Shwe Nyaw Bpay on the Baw Baw Loh River. [Photo: KHRG]



This photo, taken on April 11th 2011, shows the clearly-visible name of the *Shwe Poo* [gold tips, buds or shoots] Company across the bumper of this truck at Shwe Nyaw Bpay on the Baw Baw Loh river. [Photo: KHRG]



These photos, also taken on April 11th 2011, provide elevated views looking over Shwe Nyaw Bpay on the Baw Baw Loh River. The extent of damage to the natural environment is visible in all four photos; the field researcher who took these photos reported that the forest was destroyed *ht'ler meh kwa* ['end of one's vision'; as far as a person can see in all directions]. In the top right photo, a convoy of empty trucks can be seen arriving at Shwe Nyaw Bpay [Photos: KHRG]



These photos, also taken on April 11th 2011, show once-arable farmland at Shwe Nyaw Bpay that can no longer be cultivated due to gold mining on the Baw Baw Loh River. [Photos: KHRG]

I took the following photos of a place where the companies are mining gold and their workers from the city have come and set up their homes. It is the second place [where private companies are mining along the Baw Baw Loh River].



These photos, taken on April 12th 2011, show houses at an unidentified second mining site along the Baw Baw Loh River, where workers for private mining companies live with their families. [Photos: KHRG]

I took the following photos at the place where the *Shwe Myat Na Da* Company came and mined gold at Kyaw Koh on the Baw Baw Loh River. It is the third place [where private companies are mining along the Baw Baw Loh River] and also trees, bamboo and a lot of land was destroyed.





These photos, taken on April 13th 2011, show a private gold mining operation at Kyaw Koh on the Baw Baw Loh River. According to the researcher who took these photos, the *Shwe Myat Na Da* Company employs workers to manually sieve the riverbed as depicted in the four photos above. The photos below show blockages of freshwater sources around the mining site. [Photos: KHRG]



The next set of photos show the area around the Baw Baw Loh River at Hsaw Dee Klee Hta. The natural land and villagers' property, including plantations that were owned by the villagers were destroyed and it became a plain [without trees]. The *Yong Nee Oo* Company came and mined gold. It is the fourth place [along the Baw Baw Loh River] that has become deforested and the lands destroyed [by mining].



These photos, taken on April 13th 2011, provide elevated and ground-level views of a fourth mining site along the Baw Baw Loh River, at Hsaw Dee Klee Hta. The photo below left depicts a hydraulic pump, hoses and tubing; hydraulic mining typically utilises diesel-powered pumps to apply high-pressure jets of water to soil and rock, in

order to release gold-bearing sediment. The effects of use of earth-moving machinery at Hsaw Dee Klee Hta are also evident in the photo below right. [Photos: KHRG]



The Meh Toe River

As for digging gold in the Meh Toe River, the *Htee Phyu Hsin* Company asked for permission from the Karen [KNU] leaders and the Karen leaders gave them permission to dig for gold, so people faced many problems. Because of the digging at the Meh Toe River, the water became *htee du* [dirty, dark or muddy water], so the villagers in Ma Lay Ler, Gkwee T'Ma, Nya Hsa Ghaw Hta, and M--- did not dare to drink the water. There was not only *htee du* [dirty, dark or muddy water], but also petrol [in the river]. If the villagers drank the water, it could cause illness. In addition, the cows and buffalos could not drink the water either. Fish could not stay alive. Until now, the villagers still do not have clean water to drink [from the river]. The villagers take water from the mountains with pipes and some of them have dug wells [to get water].

At the Meh Toe River, the *Htee Phyu Hsin* Company dug [mined] gold and the natural environment was destroyed. The villagers' properties and plantations were destroyed and they became plain land [without trees]. The place where the *Htee Phyu Hsin* Company used their machines and the place where [they set up] their houses became plain land.

I took photos of the *Htee Phyu Hsin* Company mining gold in Ma Lay Ler village tract along the Meh Toe River. There is deforestation and villagers' dogfruit plantations and other plants have been destroyed and, moreover, villagers who live to the west of the [Meh Toe] River can not get fresh water. If you look at these pictures there are machines, pumps, pipes and you can see 50 acres of land that has been destroyed. This one company [*Htee Phyu Hsin* Company] works on the Meh Toe River and has destroyed [what can be seen in the photos below].



These photos, taken on April 7th 2011, show an area of Ma Lay Ler village tract along the Meh Toe River. According to the researcher who took these photos, approximately 50 acres of arable land was destroyed due to a gold mining operation that used of heavy machinery, and the development of housing for *Htee Phyu Hsin* Company workers at this site. [Photos: KHRG]





These photos, also taken on April 7th 2011, depict hydraulic pumps, piping and high-pressure hoses used by the *Htee Phyu Hsin* Company to apply high-pressure jets of water to riverbeds and rock deposits in order to loosen potentially gold-bearing sediment, at a mining site in Ma Lay Ler village tract. [Photos: KHRG]



Gold-bearing sediments are channelled through large single or multi-level sluices, as seen in the photos above and right. Sluices are typically lined with liquid mercury, which captures finer particles of gold through a process known as mercury amalgamation. The release of mercury-contaminated slurry into the surrounding area can be highly destructive to local flora and fauna and poses extreme health risks to workers, their families and communities living adjacent to mining sites.⁸ [Photos: KHRG]



The photos above show earth-moving equipment at the *Htee Phyu Sin* Company's gold mining operation on the Meh Toe River. Use of diesel-fuelled hydraulic pumps and heavy machinery in mining operations requires storage of sufficient fuel supplies proximate to mining sites, as shown in the photos below. According to the researcher who took these photos, fuel contamination of the Meh Toe River due to gold mining has contributed to the eradication of fish stocks and prevents villagers living west of the River from accessing fresh water from riparian sources. [Photos: KHRG]



The Meh Gkleh Law River

⁸ See United Nations Environmental Program, Mercury Awareness Raising Module 3: *Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining*, 2008

As for the Meh Gkleh Law River, the DKBA soldiers dug for gold and many people's plants, forests, and lands were destroyed in 2009 and 2010. People always face many problems from the destruction of forests and land, even without the DKBA coming and digging for gold in 2010. You could not see any fish even if you wanted to see them. All the fish have died. The photos below show the Meh Gkleh Law River, the place where DKBA soldiers dug gold in 2010. DKBA soldiers dug for gold in the Meh Gkleh Law River, so the villagers' lands, including plantations, the natural environment and plants [crops] were destroyed and the land became empty.



These pictures, taken on April 8th 2011, show a site along the Meh Gkleh Law River where a DKBA unit mined gold during 2010. According to the researcher who took these photos, the development of mining infrastructure at this site, as seen in the photos, affected the natural environment and destroyed approximately ten acres of arable land, which had previously supported two dogfruit plantations. The researcher also reported that the DKBA is no longer active at this site, but that villagers in the area continue to mine gold. [Photos: KHRG]

Relocation

When DKBA soldiers dug for gold in the Meh Gkleh Law River on August 15th 2010, the villagers who lived in villages around the Meh Gkleh area were forced to live in [relocated to] the place called Meh Gkleh Nee [literally 'along the Meh Gkleh riverbank']. [Currently] they do not dare to go back and live in their old villages even though the DKBA soldiers are not there [any more], because landmines are [still] there. Therefore, they keep living in the relocation site. The photos below show Khaw Klaw village, the relocation place.



These pictures, taken on April 8th 2011, show Khaw Klaw village, which is located beside the Meh Gkleh Law River. The researcher who took these photos reported that villagers living in areas adjacent to the Meh Gkleh Law River were relocated to Khaw Klaw village on the Meh Gkleh Law riverbank after August 2010, when the DKBA commenced gold-mining activities in the river. Even though the DKBA mining operation in the Meh Gkleh Law

River is no longer active, villagers continue to live in Khaw Klaw due to the presence of landmines in their original villages. [Photos: KHRG]

Dam

Since January 1st 2011 and until now, the Burmese government's SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers plan to build a dam in the 1st Brigade [Thaton] area, at Hsar Htaw. They officially announced the plan in Burma and said that they really will build the dam.

Now, people who are building the dam are from China and North Korea. They have not built the dam yet. They have just started measuring the place where the dam will be built. The dam will be built on the Bu Loh [Bilin] River.

If the dam is finished, the water will flood [part of] 5th Brigade [Papun District], in Dweh Loh Township. The dam builders said that the Bu Loh River will flood for about 50 miles [upriver from the dam].

They plan to build the dam [starting] on June 1st 2011. If it is impossible to build it [in 2011], they surely will plan again to build the dam in 2012. If they really build the dam, [Tatmadaw] LID #11 and LID #44 will take responsibility for security. They have organised this already.

If the dam is finished, it will flood 20 villages. Many farms, plantations and many plants [crops] will be destroyed. In addition, the [graze] lands for cows, oxen and buffalos will be destroyed. Much of the natural environment, trees and bamboo will be destroyed too.

The people wonder if other countries can not prohibit the building of the dam. If they [the Burma government] really build the dam, the villagers will have no more places to live. They will have to flee and will face displacement. They will not be able to do their livelihood activities well and will face serious problems.

The villagers heard that SPDC soldiers really will build the dam, so they are trying to sell their lands, places where people build houses, betelnut plantations and dogfruit plantations.

Now, in Dweh Loh Township, along the Bu Loh [river] valley, people face problems from gold mining, forced labour and the [loss of] lands where they build their houses, dogfruit plantations and betelnut plantations.

Livelihoods

In the Dweh Loh Township area, DKBA soldiers came and dug for gold starting from October 20th 2009 until 2010. The villagers faced forced labour. They had to carry food [rations] for DKBA soldiers and they also had to take care of their [own] farms, their plantations and their sugar cane plantations. They had to do forced labour for DKBA soldiers, so they did not have time to take care of their own plantations and many of the plantations were ruined.

The DKBA soldiers went back [rotated to a different location] in 2011, but they did not remove landmines that they had planted in the places where people have hill fields. The villagers can not go there and do not dare to work in their fields in the forests.

Since January 1st 2011 and until now, SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers have sent their rations and the villagers have had to carry things for them, so [some of] the villagers did not have time to harvest their rice and sesame, and the crops were ruined. This year, the rice was eaten by

insects. Therefore, half of the rice was spoiled. The villagers faced problems for their livelihoods and they live in hunger.

Some villagers live in places where people have dug gold mines. The natural environment has been destroyed and the lands have become empty. They can not work in their hill fields to grow rice anymore.

As for doing livelihoods, if the situation carries on like this, the villagers will face many problems for their livelihoods, and famine.

Conclusion

I reported human rights abuses from Dweh Loh Township regarding forced labour, taxation and demands, digging for gold, and relocation.

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

- "Papun Incident Reports: November 2010 to January 2011," (August 2011)
- *Acute food shortages threatening 8.885 villagers in 118 villages across northern Papun District* (May 2011)
- "Tatmadaw attacks destroy civilian property and displace villages in northern Papun District," (April 2011)
- *Self-protection under strain: Targeting of civilians and local responses in northern Karen State*, (August 2010)
- "Southern Papun District: Abuse and expansion of military control," (August 2010)
- "Central Papun District: Village-level decision-making and strategic displacement," (August 2010)
- "Central Papun District: Abuse and the maintenance of military control," (August 2010)
- "Southwestern Papun District: Transitions to DKBA control along the Bilin River," (August 2010)

Recent photos from the area are presented in *KHRG Photo Gallery 2010* and *KHRG Photo Gallery 2010-B*. These and other KHRG reports and maps of the region can be found on the KHRG web site at <http://www.khrq.org>.

