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Toungoo Situation Update: February 2011

The following situation update was written by a villager in Toungoo 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 It was received in February 2011 along with other information from Toungoo District, including 11 forced labour order documents, 71 photographs and researcher photo notes.² This update contains information on Tatmadaw troop reinforcement and camp reconstruction in January 2011, and documents the following human rights abuses: movement restrictions, forced labour, arbitrary taxation in lieu of forced labour and the use of civilians to sweep landmines. It also expresses villagers' concerns regarding food insecurity due to abnormal weather in 2010, rising food prices, the cost and quality of children's education and the use of landmines by the Tatmadaw and non-State armed groups.

Military activities

There is a lot of SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] activity in our Toungoo District. Villagers who live in Toungoo District and Daw Pa Ko [Thandaung] Township are complaining about this issue. Our great-grandparents have had to face offensive attacks by the SPDC Army in the past but this has not happened in our current time.³ Now they will come and be more active in the Toungoo area. Moreover, there is no benefit to civilians from the 2010 election that was held by the SPDC.⁴ Civilians reported that the election just benefits the SPDC military government.

After the election, the SPDC government sent troops and vehicle road construction workers to Toungoo District. They have a plan to construct vehicle roads, set up more camps and put more troops in Toungoo District. Civilians in Toungoo are worried because more SPDC Army troops were sent. In January [2011], they sent more troops from three MOCs⁵: MOC #4, MOC #7 and MOC #9. They also send rations, with 70 trucks. They will come and be more active in the Toungoo area. The SPDC Army closed the road, and didn't let civilians travel while they sent rations. They transported the rations by truck, but they ordered 20 villagers from M--- village to

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 Toungoo District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Toungoo District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

³ Beginning in November 2005, Tatmadaw troops systematically targeted thousands of civilians, civilian settlements and livelihoods in multi-battalion, coordinated attacks spanning Karen State's northern Nyaunglebin, Toungoo and Papun districts. For more on military operations targeting villagers in Toungoo District during this offensive, see: "Bullets and Bulldozers: The SPDC Offensive continues in Toungoo District," KHRG, February 2007. Since 2008, KHRG has reported incidents of remote shelling or limited-range patrols in areas proximate to camps, in which soldiers have deliberately targeted and shot villagers, and burn houses, food stores, field huts and/or fields, but not necessarily as part of a multi-battalion offensive. For more on military operations targeting villagers in Toungoo District since 2008, see: "Forced Labour, Movement and Trade Restrictions in Toungoo District," KHRG, March 2010; "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

⁴ The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) was officially 'dissolved' on March 30th 2011; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term 'SPDC' was used by the villager who submitted this report to KHRG, and is therefore retained in this translation.

⁵ A Military Operations Command (MOC) typically consists of ten battalions. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs), made up of three battalions each.

go with them. These 20 villagers had to walk in the front, as landmine sweepers.⁶ If there are landmines and one explodes, it will hit those villagers and their trucks would not be hit. On January 15th 2011, they sent rations to camps at Buh Hsa Kee, Naw Soh, Th'Ay Hta and Gko Day (48-mile). They also force villagers in relocation sites to work for them. Because of the oppression from the SPDC Army, civilians have no time to do their own work.

Civilian concerns

Civilians have to face problems, and worry because the SPDC Army sends more troops and rations. Villagers in relocation sites are complaining because the SPDC Army forces them to go and carry rations. Villages that are close to army camps have to go and do *set tha*⁷ every day for each person. Villagers always have to cut bamboo for rebuilding the [Tatmadaw] army camps. Villagers who don't go to porter have to pay to hire people to go in their place.⁸ The SPDC Army will punish people who refuse to go to porter. Villagers have to go to porter with fear because there are landmines on the way. Villagers are more afraid when they go to porter with SPDC soldiers, because they worry that fighting will happen on the way and they will get injured. Civilians have to face many problems because the SPDC is sending more troops and rations.

Food

Food is the most important thing for humans. We will starve and die if there is no food. As we are human beings, we have to eat to be able to survive on the earth. The most common job for civilians in Toungoo is [cultivating] plantations and hill fields, and farming. People plant cardamom, betelnut and other plants.⁹ In 2010, the weather did not go well, so many plantations were destroyed in the Toungoo area. Villagers in Toungoo do not have enough food because of the abnormal weather.¹⁰ Paddy plants were destroyed by insects, rats and wild pigs. It became a big problem for villagers who could not farm their hill fields, because they had to buy rice but their plantations were destroyed so they had no income. Food prices are becoming higher and higher.

In January, the SPDC Army closed the road from Kler Lah to Toungoo city while they transported their rations. There is no more rice to buy for villagers who live in shoot-on-sight

⁶ The use of civilians as human minesweepers on roads in Toungoo District during rations transport by Tatmadaw troops has been documented in previous KHRG reports; see: "Forced Labour, Movement and Trade Restrictions in Toungoo District," KHRG, March 2010. The practice has often been reported to KHRG researchers in the months after the rainy season, between October and January, when Tatmadaw forces use roads to transport troops and supplies, and KNLA forces plant landmines and attack Tatmadaw soldiers along the roads.

⁷ 'Set tha' is a Burmese term for forced labour duty as a messenger stationed at army camps or bases and serving as a go-between to deliver orders from army officers to village heads, but also involving other menial tasks when no messages are in need of delivery. The villager who submitted this report is likely explaining that one or more residents of villages near army camps have to go each day for *set tha*.

⁸ Villagers have told KHRG that, although some Tatmadaw units demand payments 'in lieu of' the provision of porters, demands for porters are often issued even after payment demands are met. For more on payments made in lieu of forced labour, see "Militarization, Development and Displacement: Conditions for villagers in southern Tenasserim Division," KHRG, March 2011.

⁹ The soil quality and terrain in much of Toungoo District supports only limited rice or paddy farming. For this reason, most households are dependent on income generated from various plantation crops, such as betelnut, betel leaf, cardamom, durian and dog fruit. The loss of a year's crop can have devastating consequences for villagers' long-term food-security; see "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

¹⁰ Irregular weather across eastern Burma in 2010 contributed to large-scale food insecurity for many communities in the region in 2011. For detailed information on the severe food crisis currently threatening at least 8,885 villagers in Lu Thaw Township, Papun District, which lies immediately south of Toungoo, see "Acute food shortages threatening 8,885 villagers in 118 villages across northern Papun District," KHRG, May 2011.

areas, because M--- villagers can't go and buy rice in Toungoo City to sell to villagers who live in shoot-on-sight areas. They have to buy other food instead of rice. Also villagers who live in SPDC Army controlled areas have to go cut and carry bamboo and build Tatmadaw camps, so they can't do their own work. It is a big problem for people who have kids. The SPDC always calls meetings with village heads [to demand forced labour].

Education

Education is important and everyone must have it. There was no chance to get education when we look back in the past, in the decades of our great-grandparents. They didn't respect education, so they didn't have education and they couldn't read and write.

Nowadays, education is lacking for children who live in Daw Pa Ko [Thandaung] Township in Toungoo District, when we review it. This situation happened because SPDC Army oppression means it is not easy for villagers to found a school. The SPDC has a purpose to make our Karen people extinct so they don't give us the opportunity for education. Four standards is the highest [available] standard [of education] in Toungoo District. The schools are administered by the government but they don't receive enough materials, like books. The government doesn't support fully, so it becomes a problem for our Karen people.

Students who graduate four standards have to go and attend school at M--- village. It costs a lot when they go to M---, because they have to live in a dormitory and take extra classes. Some students have to leave school even though they want to study because of money problems. It is very difficult for students who graduate school to get work in the city. Some students have to go back to their own villages and do [rural] livelihoods for work, because the quality of education is poor.

Village Agency

There are two groups of villagers in Daw Pa Ko [Thandaung] Township in Toungoo District. One group lives in the SPDC Army controlled areas, in relocation sites, and another group lives outside of the controlled areas, in shoot-on-sight areas. They are separated into two groups. For villagers in the SPDC Army controlled areas, the SPDC Army always forces them to go and carry rations and do *set tha*. In the M--- area, villagers have to go and clean the army camp compound, cut bamboo and do *set tha* [messenger] every day.

The villages in the M--- area are P---, D---, H---, M---, B--- and N--- villages. The SPDC Army asked them to report the list of households but on the list they didn't report every household to the SPDC Army. For example, if there are 40 households in their village, they just report 30 households. So if the SPDC Army demands villagers to go and work, not as many people need to go because they didn't report all of the households to the SPDC Army.¹¹ M--- villagers who own cars also have agency.¹² They [*action censored*]¹³ so that the SPDC Army is not able to ask them to carry rations with their cars.

¹¹ Military demands for forced labour and taxation are often proportionate to the village population or the number of households. Underreporting and lying about this number allows villages to reduce the burden of demands and minimize the amount of labour or taxation requested. See *Village agency: Rural rights and resistance in a militarized Karen State*, KHRG, November 2008, pp. 97 – 99.

¹² 'Agency' is a direct translation of the Karen phrase *tha thay da ba*, which means 'able to do something'.

¹³ This information has been censored in order to allow villagers in Toungoo District to continue to employ this self-protection strategy. For more general information on the ways in which villagers protect themselves from human rights abuses and related threats, see *Village agency: Rural rights and resistance in a militarised Karen State*, KHRG, November 2008.

Villagers who don't live in SPDC Army controlled areas have many abilities to do something. They are not educated but they have their agency. To avoid attacks from the SPDC Army, they have contact with villagers who live in SPDC Army controlled areas; they have contact in order to be able to know information ahead of time, before the SPDC Army is going to attack their villages, or [attack] the KNLA, or send rations.¹⁴ The villagers prepare food and secret places to stay, and store food before the SPDC Army comes and attacks them. They also have communication with the KNU army [KNLA]. They cooperate with the KNU to be able to know the activities of the SPDC Army ahead of time. This is village agency.

Landmines

A landmine is a dangerous thing for humans. It is something that can kill and destroy people. A lot of landmines are still used in Burma. This is a kind of human rights abuse. Landmines are not good for humans, but they are still being used. We can say that there is no peace in our country because the government uses landmines. At the same time, landmines are also used among our Karen armies. They use landmines because the SPDC government army attacks. There would be more oppression by the SPDC Army if they [Karen armed groups] didn't use landmines. They use landmines for this reason. Some [KNLA] leaders report that they don't want to use landmines.

Conclusion

The information that we provided above is the current situation that is happening in our Toungoo District about SPDC Army activities and village agency.

Thaton Situation Updates: May 2010 to January 2011

This report includes two situation updates written by villagers describing events in Thaton District during the period between May 13th 2010 and January 31st 2011. The villagers writing the updates chose to focus on issues including: updates on recent military activity, specifically the rebuilding of Tatmadaw camps, and the following human rights abuses: demands for forced labour, including the provision of building materials; and movement restrictions, including road closure and requirements for travel permission documents. In these situation updates, villagers also express serious concerns regarding food security due to abnormal weather in 2010; rising food prices; the unavailability of health care; and the cost and quality of children's education.

Thaton Situation Update: Bilin Township, February 2011

The following situation update was written by a villager in Thaton 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.¹⁵ This update was received along with other information from Thaton District, including three interviews, 67 photographs and photograph notes.¹⁶

¹⁴ Locally-developed early-warning systems include: sharing information via radio communications; monitoring troop movements and maintaining general states of alertness to signals of attack; posting lookouts; and establishing agreed-upon signals to warn communities of impending attacks. These warning systems have, in at least one instance documented by KHRG, facilitated strategic temporary displacement and prevented injury or death to villagers during a direct attack against civilian settlements. See "Tatmadaw attacks destroy civilian property and displace villages in northern Papun District," KHRG, April 2011.

¹⁵ 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

In Bilin Township in 1st Brigade¹⁷ [Thaton District] villagers are still facing many problems and the Tatmadaw occupies army camps in many different places. Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #701, led by Htun Htun Naing under Military Operations Command (MOC) #4, came and stayed in Ht--- village in Bilin Township. To rebuild their army camp, they [LIB #701] demanded bamboo from the villages that are close to the army camp. Each village had to give 1,000 bamboo poles; the bamboo poles had to be the same length as 5 fingertips to elbow [five cubits long]. Villagers did not get paid the price of the bamboo, and had to give the bamboo free. When the Tatmadaw asked for the bamboo poles, they said they were to rebuild a new fence for the school. In addition to that, they also call the village heads to meet with them and send news to them once a week, so the villagers are annoyed.

In the same way, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), which is working with the Tatmadaw, also asks the villagers to provide roofing thatch every year. The villagers have to send the thatch to Myaing Gyi Ngu, so villagers face suffering. The DKBA asks for 1,000 thatch [shingles] from each village, and villagers do not get paid the price of the thatch. What is more, if villagers don't provide thatch, they have to give 10,000 kyat (US \$12.15) for each 100 thatch [shingles] that they do not provide, and 100,000 kyat (US \$121.50) for each 1,000 thatch [shingles] that they do not provide.

This year [2010] villagers have faced one more problem because there has not been much rain. There was not much rain, so the paddy fields did not have enough water and farmers could not plant their fields full of paddy. The same thing also happened for people who farm hill fields. Their paddy became yellow and some was destroyed. In Burma the price of rice is so expensive for the coming year that villagers do not know how they will face this problem and are very worried.

The villagers are also worried that the SPDC¹⁸ will come and abuse their rights. For example, they need education and ask the SPDC government, and then the government comes and occupies the school. Villagers have a problem getting education because the villages that are close to Ht--- village only have government schools. The government sends a few teachers but the villagers need more teachers and have to find some themselves. The teachers sent by the government get a salary from the government. They teach the children for one month and then go back to their homes for a month. When the government teachers go back, the teachers from the village have to try to fill in for them. This is one problem. Also some children who should attend school do not attend school. We know that it is because the parents of those children cannot cover the school fees. The reason they cannot afford it is because the SPDC government requires them to pay fees for school admission and for books.

We see also many health problems. Nowadays, we see that many diseases are happening and villagers cannot afford to buy medicine to cure themselves or to send patients to the 1st Brigade [KNU] clinic because the distance is very far. Because the villagers see these problems, when KHRG comes to give training, many of the villagers are eager to attend.

issues that they consider to be important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area.

¹⁶ 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 Thaton District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Thaton District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Exploitative abuse and villager responses in Thaton District," KHRG, November 2009.

¹⁷ Villagers, particularly those living in areas beyond government control, often refer to geographic areas by Brigade numbers corresponding to the number used by Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) units. Use of this phrase does not imply membership in a non-State armed group.

¹⁸ The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) was officially 'dissolved' on March 30th 2011; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term 'SPDC' was used by the villager who submitted this report to KHRG, and is therefore retained in this translation.

Villagers hope that, in the future, these problems will become less. If not, villagers will lose their personal rights and will continue to live with many problems. The biggest problem is the military government that governs the country. We need other countries to pressure the government more, and then they will govern in truth.

Situation Update | Bilin Township, Thaton District (Received by KHRG in February 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Thaton 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. This update was received along with other information from Thaton District, including two interviews, 24 photographs, and 1 forced labour order document with research notes.

This is the situation in the military-controlled areas of Bilin Township of Thaton District that the Tatmadaw occupies.

This year, villagers have to face many restrictions on their food supply. This is especially because in 2010 the weather was not normal. During the time when it should have been raining all the time [the rainy season] there was no rain, and it was so hot and dry when people needed to work on their farms. In order to plant paddy [in flat fields] there needs to be water in the fields, so villagers had a problem to plant paddy because there was no water. In some places, we saw that farms had to use a machine [water pump] to get water. In other places, some people planted paddy and, because there was no water in the beginning [of the rainy season], that paddy died later. Also, in other places, when it became the time to harvest the paddy, we saw that the paddy seeds had not matured¹⁹ and could not become rice. A paddy field in which we originally plant two to three baskets (43 – 63 kg. / 90 – 135 lb.) of paddy seeds as the input, usually should give an output of 80, 90 or 100 baskets of paddy (1672 – 2090 kg. / 3606 – 4508 lb.). This year, from the same field that should produce 100 baskets, we will only get 30 to 40 baskets (627 – 836 kg. / 1352 – 1803 lb.). In these areas, villagers are facing a big problem.

In our Thaton District, we see that there are two areas. The first area is the flat places on the plains where there are many farms, and people mostly work for their livelihoods on these farms. To support their families with food and other basic needs, we see they work a little on bean plantations and a little on sugarcane plantations to fulfil their households' needs. On January 7th 2011, I met with the M--- village tract leader and he said: "*This year it was raining when it wasn't the rainy season [after the rainy season, during the harvest period] so our paddy was destroyed because the plants grew a lot [the rain caused ripe paddy grains to fall onto the ground and sprout]. What is more, we saw that the bean plantations were growing very well but they did not give [produce] bean seeds.*"

In the mountainous areas of Bilin Township, villagers are mostly farming hill fields. The irregular rain meant that villagers there also got fewer paddy seeds. The villagers also farm betel leaf plantations and sell betel leaves but, since January 1st 2011, soldiers from the Border Guard Force battalion stationed at K--- village in Noh Ber Baw village tract, led by Bo [Officer] Soe Myit, were stopping villagers from carrying betel leaves, food, rice and paddy seeds. Because they were stopped from carrying things, villagers who live in Noh Ber Baw village tract, Bilin Township, are facing big problems. Villages in Noh Ber Baw tract, such as P---, Gk---, Bp---,

¹⁹ The KHRG translator explained that when a paddy seed fails to mature correctly, it is not firm but instead crumbles easily. This prevents it from being harvested in the customary method, which is to dislodge the seeds by beating the paddy stalks.

Kh---, Kl---, Ky---, T---, S--- and B--- villages cannot go and buy food and rice so villagers have to face problems in the coming year. On January 21st 2011, we heard from a K--- villager, who said: "Now travel has opened again but everyone who travels has to go and get a permission document. One permission document costs 2,000 kyat (US \$2.43), whether people are doing trade or not doing trade. If people carry things that weigh about 100 viss (160 kg. / 352 lb.), they have to give them [the BGF soldiers] 10,000 kyat (US \$12.15)."

Tenasserim Situation Update: Te Naw Th'Ri Township, April 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in April 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division between June 2010 and April 2011. The report details abuses related to land confiscation by Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) officials; forced labour, including forced USDP membership; and attacks on villages in hiding, including the burning of houses, food stores, a school dormitory and supplies by Tatmadaw forces. This report also contains updated information concerning active Tatmadaw units in five areas of Tenasserim Division and relates health and education concerns of villagers in hiding in three areas of Te Naw Th'Ri Township.

Situation Update | Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division (April 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Tenasserim Division 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.²⁰ This report was received along with other information from Tenasserim Division, including 363 photographs.²¹

The local SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] situation

Starting from June 1st 2010 and until now, there are five areas of Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division in which SPDC Army forces have been active.²² These areas are Te Keh, Gkay, Ma Noh Roh, Pewa and Gkaw Hser.

Te Keh area

The SPDC Army force which has been active in Te Keh is IB [Infantry Battalion] #561 and it is led by Battalion Commander Aye Lwin. The battalion headquarters are based in Hton Ton.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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 Tenasserim Division will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Tenasserim Division can be found in the recent Field Report, "Militarization, Development and Displacement: Conditions for villagers in southern Tenasserim Division," KHRG, March 2011.

²² In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the researcher and informants, and 'SPDC' is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

Gkay area

The SPDC Army forces which have been active in the Gkay area are: LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #594 led by Battalion Commander Lwin Ko Aung; and LIB #585 led by Battalion Commander Nay Hteh Aung, Company Commander Heh Thu Aung and Deputy Company Commander Aung Ko Lin.

Ma Noh Roh area

The SPDC Army forces which have been active in the Ma Noh Roh area are: IB #224, which is 50 soldiers strong and led by Major Aung Aung Oo; IB #17, led by Battalion Commander Kyaw Naing; and IB #560, led by Battalion Commander Ko Ko Maung. Military Operations Command (MOC) #1 controls these forces and is led by Colonel Myit Soe.

Pewa area

IB #103 has been active in the Pewa area and is led by Battalion Commander Win Myit Naing and Company Commander Pyo See Thu.

Gkaw Hser area

A company of IB #103 led by Battalion Commander Win Myit Naing has been active in Moe Daw. A Company which has been active in Tha Poe Min is led by Deputy Battalion Commander Tha Tun. A company led by Soe Win Htway has been active in Ler Gker. At Point 3000 [a military location], a company led by Aung Lwin Myint [is active]; and a company led by Lieutenant Aung Kyaw Myit is active in Moo Koh Paw.

Human Rights Abuses

Land confiscation

I received the information that a Union Solidarity and Development Party [USDP] representative, U Than Htay from Pee [Kyunsu] Township, started confiscating 250 acres of land from a village named Hsay Gkuh on January 4th 2011. He plants rubber trees on the land he confiscates to create business for the military government, according to a [KNU] leader in the Pewa area. A few days after [the information about land confiscation in Hsay Gkuh was received], this Pewa [KNU] leader reported that U Kya Maung from the USDP has a plan to plant rubber trees in the A'Neh village [area]. The land [where U Kya Maung plans to plant rubber trees in A'Neh village] covers 200 acres.

"There are incidents of land confiscation. A Burmese company confiscated many villagers' lands. Some of the landowners were given nothing [in exchange for their lands], but some received compensation money, but the money was not as much as the real price [equivalent to the market value of the land]. Every year, villagers cultivate plantations on the lands that were taken. Some of these [previous] landowners [now] have to work jobs for daily wages and some have moved to work in other places after their land was taken."

-KNU representative, Kyunsu Township, Tenasserim Division

Forced labour

SPDC Army soldiers forced villagers to go and porter rations to W--- army base. People who did not go had to pay 40,000 kyat (US \$54.20)²³ each. I received information from the Kh--- area of Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division, that SPDC Army Battalion Commander Aye Lwin of IB #561, which has been active in the area, ordered the Kh--- village head on December 19th 2010 to go and meet him [and other village heads] at his army camp in Hton Ton. He ordered these village heads to organise villagers to go and porter rations for him to Gk--- army camp. The villages that had to go were S---, T---, L---, M--- and other villages. One person from every household had to go. People who did not go had to pay 40,000 kyat each. This information was reported by a leader of the Kh--- village area who does not want his name to be made public. A few days later, I received information from one of the H--- village leaders about portering rations from N--- to W--- [Tatmadaw] army base. Each person from each household in H--- village has to go. For sick people and people who do not want to go, they have to pay 40,000 kyat.

All villages in Te Naw Th'Ri Township have to go and porter rations. For the sick people and people who cannot go or are not able to pay [the fine of 40,000 kyat], village leaders told them that they would *ask pyi thu sit* [local civilian militia groups]²⁴ to come and arrest them. So they [villagers] have to go because they are afraid, according to a local village head who does not want to his name to be made public.

Forced USDP membership

I received information from Kyunsu Township that U Soe Thu, a USDP official, ordered I--- and other villages on December 27th 2010 to join the USDP. Now 12 villagers from I--- village have joined the USDP. They were given a membership card. People who join the USDP are given home finishing [wall] plaster and *hta htee lay* [mattocks]. To get people to join the USDP, they persuade people in many ways.

Attacks on hiding sites

SPDC Army soldiers burned down 15 houses and five barns belonging to villagers in an IDP [Internally Displaced Persons] hiding site.²⁵ I received the information that SPDC Army soldiers from IB #224, led by Aung Aung Oo, and 50 soldiers from IB #17, led by Battalion Commander Kyaw Naing, as well as IB #560, led by Battalion Commander Ko Ko Maung, which are all active in the Ma Noh Roh area, became active in IDP areas [before] February 2nd 2011 and burned down 15 houses and four barns. On January 24th 2011, SPDC Army IB #224, led by Major Aung Aung Oo and 50 soldiers strong, entered L--- village [a hiding site] and burned down six houses belonging to villagers. Also, on January 27th 2011, SPDC Army IB #17, led by Battalion Commander Kyaw Naing and IB #560, led by Battalion Commander Ko Ko Maung, joined forces and attacked P--- village [a hiding site]. According to the Ma Noh Roh area [KNU] Township officer who reported this information, at about 8:00 am, they [Tatmadaw IBs #17 and #560] burned down eight houses belonging to P--- villagers, a school dormitory and six barns, as well

²³ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this interview 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 September 14th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 738 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

²⁴ KHRG has previously reported that villagers in Te Naw Th'Ri Township have been forced to attend unpaid military training with Tatmadaw officers and heads of police for 30 days at a time and have been threatened with violence if they fail to form their own local militia groups. A KHRG researcher reported that the purpose of this training was for villagers to "defend their own places", suggesting that were being forced to create local militias to resist non-state armed groups, including the KNLA. See *Militarization, Development and Displacement: Conditions for villagers in southern Tenasserim Division*, KHRG, March 2011.

²⁵ A Backpack Health Worker Team (BPHWT) medic interviewed by a KHRG researcher in August 2010 also reported this incident. He reported that the number of houses burned was 17 and, while indicating that he was uncertain as to the exact date of the attack, thought it had occurred near the end of January 2011. Both the KHRG researcher who wrote this situation update and the Backpack medic implicated Tatmadaw IB #224 in this attack. See "Tenasserim Interview: Saw K---, August 2011," KHRG, September 2011

as 202 baskets of paddy (4222 kg. / 9308 lb.) and 11 baskets of rice (352 kg. / 774 lb.). The Township officer, who does not want his name to be made public, reported:

“The SPDC Army [troops] planned to go and become active [conduct military operations] in IDP areas. Now, the IDPs live in fear. The IDPs whose houses and barns were burned down now have to hide in the jungle. They face problems, such as health problems and food shortages.”

-KNU Township Officer, Te Naw Th’Ri Township, Tenasserim Division

The names of owners of the houses, barns and other structures and supplies that were burned by SPDC Army soldiers are displayed in the table below:

#	Name	# Houses	# Barns	Paddy (# baskets)	Weight	Others
1	Saw H---	1	1	90 [unmilled]	1,881 kg. / 4,138 lb.	n/a
2	Saw Th---	1	1	12 [unmilled]	251 kg. / 552 lb.	n/a
3	Saw K---	1	1	80 [unmilled]	1,672 kg. / 3,678 lb.	n/a
4	Saw L---	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5	Saw A---	1	1	10 [unmilled]	209 kg. / 460 lb.	n/a
6	Saw B---	1	1	11 [milled]	352 kg. / 774 lb.	School documents
7	Naw U---	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	One school dormitory building, including all materials inside.
8	Saw P---	1	1	10 [unmilled]	209 kg. / 460 lb.	n/a
9	Pa R---	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	All household items
Total	9	8	6	213	4,574 kg. / 10,082 lb.	n/a

The General situation in IDP [hiding site] areas

There are three IDP [hiding site] areas in Te Naw Th’Ri Township. These areas are: Y— village tract in the Ma Noh Roh area; Gh--- village tract in the Te Keh area; and D--- village tract in the Pewa area.

[Updated] situation in Y--- village tract, Ma Noh Roh area

Currently, the SPDC Army soldiers have been carrying out attacks in IDP areas and burning down villagers’ houses in Y--- village tract in the Ma Noh Roh area. So villagers have had to flee and hide in the jungle. On January 24th 2011, the SPDC Army IB #224, led by Major Aung Aung Oo and with 50 soldiers, entered an IDP [hiding site] location at L--- village in Y--- village tract, and burned down six houses belonging to L--- villagers. Then on January 27th 2011, SPDC Army soldiers from IB #17, led by Major Kyaw Naing and IB #560, led by Ko Ko Maung, joined forces and entered another IDP [hiding site] location at P--- village, in the Y--- area, and burned down eight houses belonging to villagers, a school dormitory and six barns. There are 30 households and a population of 156 villagers in the Y--- area. Now these villagers have to hide in the jungle. They do not have medicine or enough food. They are facing illness. The disease that they have to face is malaria. They live in fear and face a difficult situation.

Children could not complete their school year because of the SPDC Army’s attack, the burning down of their school dormitory and the destruction of their homes. They have already been living in the jungle for over one month. The SPDC soldiers are [staying] close to them.

[Updated] situation in Gh--- village tract, Te Keh area

Now, an SPDC Army unit plans to attack IDP [hiding sites] in Gh--- village tract in the Te Keh area. The SPDC Army unit which will make the attacks is LIB #585. This battalion entered the Te Keh area on February 26th 2011. Now, the villagers there have to stay alert and live in fear. Children cannot complete their studies because there is no teacher to teach them.

[Updated] situation in D--- village tract, Pewa area

Villagers in D--- village tract in the Pewa area have to stay alert and live in fear because the SPDC Army troops plan to attack them. Children in D--- village cannot go to school because there is no teacher to teach them.

Pa'an Situation Update: April 2011

This report contains a situation update submitted to KHRG in April 2011 and written by a villager describing events occurring in Lu Pleh and Dta Greh townships in Pa'an District between February and April 2011. It contains information on incidents of forced labour by the Tatmadaw, including the use of villagers to build huts, deliver palm leaves for thatching buildings and provide unpaid forced labour during gold-mining and logging operations. It also documents the forced relocation of villagers from upland areas, and relates an incident in which a Tatmadaw deserter, who was later summarily executed by Tatmadaw troops, shot and injured a 53-year-old woman in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District. In response to human rights and related humanitarian concerns, including access to health care, the researcher reported that villagers travel covertly to seek medical care from cross-border groups, sell betel leaves to supplement incomes and laminate currency in plastic to prevent it from becoming damaged. This situation report also contains updated information on military activity in Pa'an District, specifically the defection of Tatmadaw Border Guard soldiers in February 2011 to a breakaway faction of the DKBA that had previously refused to transform into Border Guard battalions, and to the KNLA.

Situation Update | Pa'an District (April 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Pa'an 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.²⁶ This report was received along with other information from Pa'an District, including 185 photographs.²⁷

Introduction

There are many groups of the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw]²⁸ and [Tatmadaw] Border Guard soldiers operating and they are not stable, because of the fighting that is occurring.²⁹ Sometimes, they [Tatmadaw units] rotate after staying only for one month.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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 Pa'an District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Pa'an District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Functional Refoulement: Camps in Tha Song Yang District abandoned as refugees bow to pressure," KHRG, April 2010.

²⁸ In Karen, the Burmese phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) and *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not

SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] operations and locations

Since the beginning of February [2011], the army [unit] operating at Raw Ta in Dta Greh Township is LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #591 and the Battalion Commander is Thet Lwin Tun. This battalion operates beside the Salween River, on the border between Gka Teh and Bpaw Bpa Htar. This military unit is about to rotate with a new one based in Bpoo Lu Tu.

In Lu Pleh Township, the operating army units are from a column of LIB #547, and column LIB #339 based in Kler Day army camp. IB #81 operates in Gklaw Gka Htee and soldiers under MOC [Military Operations Command]³⁰ #12 operate in the Maw Plo Gklah area. They always rotate quarterly.

[Tatmadaw] Border Guard operations and locations

The Border Guard troops operating in the Htee Bper area of Dta Greh Township are [under the command of] Captain Maw La Wah, who is based in Htee Bper army camp. The amount of soldiers under his command is 15. The ones who patrol are Second Lieutenant Pah Lay Koh along with ten soldiers and Officer Tun Myint Tun along with seven soldiers. The Border Guard unit operating on the border is [under the command of] Officer Sah Gka Leh. The battalion which operates from Meh La Ah Kee to Bpoo Lu Bplaw is from Border Guard Battalion #1016. Border Guard Battalion #1015 operates in Htee Bper.

In Lu Pleh Township, the battalion operating is from Border Guard Battalion #1016 under Captain Kyaw Nyein, based in Wa Kaw Lu. He [Captain Kyaw Nyein] controls all the Border Guard soldiers [between Wa Kaw Lu and] Meh Ta Ree. The total [number of soldiers in Battalion #1016] is about 30. Border Guard Battalion #1011 has around 35 soldiers under the command of Captain Pah Daw Boe and Officer Pah Ta Gkee, and they operate in the Ta Ree Poe Kwee area. They [Border Guard units] operate and rotate as the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] does. These units are controlled by SPDC officers, as needed.

Border Guard deserters join DKBA and KNLA forces

[This paragraph has been redacted in its entirety for security purposes.]

officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the interviewer and interviewee, and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this interview.

²⁹ For background on instability and conflict in Pa'an and adjacent Dooplaya District, and associated human rights concerns for civilians since November 2010, see: "Displacement Monitoring: Regular updates on protection concerns for villagers in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts and adjacent areas in Thailand," KHRG, August 2011

³⁰ A Military Operations Command (MOC) typically consists of ten battalions. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs), made up of three battalions each.



These four photos were taken in February 2011 by a villager trained by KHRG to document human rights abuses. According to this villager, a group of Tatmadaw Border Guard soldiers defected to a breakaway faction of the DKBA that had previously refused to transform to Border Guard battalions, and to the KNLA. The photo above left shows two non-uniformed men sitting and smoking with an armed KNLA soldier in the centre. The photo above right shows a DKBA soldier, on the right, putting his arm across the shoulders of a man wearing the uniform of Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1015, on the left. The two photos below, also taken in February 2011, show assorted weapons carried by defecting Tatmadaw Border Guard soldiers. The photo below right shows a deserter wearing the uniform of Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1015 holding an RPG-7 rocket-propelled 40 mm grenade launcher. [Photos: KHRG]



Forced labour

Saw B---, aged 45, from Gk--- village, T--- village tract, Lu Pleh Township, Pa'an District, reported that in the beginning of March 2011, [Tatmadaw] Border Guard Battalion #1011 under Captain Pah Daw Boe logged in the G--- River area and forced villagers, including Saw B---, to go there to work and then carry [porter] things for them. Therefore, he [Saw B---] did not have time to take a rest and hurt his back, but he did not receive any payment and had to work for free as he was ordered. His back got hurt, but he did not receive any payment for medical treatment. He had to find treatment by himself.



The photos above show Saw B---, 35, a resident of Gk--- village in Lu Pleh Township. Saw B--- told the villager who took these photos that his back was injured while performing forced labour, including forced portering, for Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1011 troops under the control of Captain Pah Daw Boe, at a logging site on the G--- River. The villager did not further describe Saw B---'s injury, however the photo above right shows what appears to be scarring on Saw B---'s lower back, suggesting that he may have sustained abrasions while portering. Saw B--- told the KHRG researcher that he received neither payment for his labour nor compensation or medical assistance for the injury he sustained. [Photos: KHRG]

Gk--- villagers have to carry palm leaves to Border Guard Battalion #1011's logging sites in order to build field huts to use as shelters. Every man and woman has to find and collect palm leaves, and has to send them every day to the places where the Border Guard unit is logging. Moreover, they also have to make thatch, build field huts, and roof the huts. They can take a rest only after they have completed building the huts. There are only a few households in Gk--- village, and the villagers often have to work for the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] and Border Guards and do not have time to relax.



The two photos above show residents of Gk--- village in Lu Pleh Township carrying loads of palm leaves to logging sites operated by Border Guard Battalion #1011. According to the villager who took these photos, Gk--- villagers transport the palm leaves to the logging sites, where they also have to build huts, make thatch shingles using the palm leaves, and roof the huts with the thatch shingles. [Photos: KHRG]

Border Guard Battalion #1011, under Captain Pah Daw Boe and Officer Pah Ta Gkee called Burmese villagers who work in mines to mine for gold in the Meh Gka Taw River. The villagers started doing this [gold mining in the Meh Gka Taw River], and have been doing it since January 2011. Regarding this gold mining project, the Border Guard officers arranged it and Burmese bosses [private businessmen from Burma] arranged [to supply] the machines. For building huts there, Border Guard soldiers ordered villagers in Gk--- and T--- villages to help, but they did not pay them any money. They ordered the village heads to arrange the villagers for them.



The eight photos above document a small-scale gold-mining operation on the G--- River controlled by Captains Pah Daw Boe and Officer Pah Ta Gkee of Border Guard Battalion #1011. According to the villager who took these photos, the mining equipment depicted in the photos was supplied to the Border

Guard captains by private businessmen from Burma.³¹ [Photos: KHRG]

Border Guard Battalion #1011 Captain Pah Daw Poe and Officer Pah Ta Gkee did commercial logging at some places in the forest in Mae Ta Woh. Trucks were used as needed. The villagers had to do all the other work; if something was needed, they always forced and used the villagers to do it. The villagers had to saw the wood, carry the wood to the trucks and put the wood in the trucks to take to the sawmill, but they did not get anything for their daily work. Some SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers worked with the Border Guard officers and they shared money evenly until the logging was done.



These two photos show a logging site in the Mae Ta Woh area controlled by Captains Pah Daw Boe and Officer Pah Ta Gkee of Border Guard Battalion #1011. The KHRG researcher who took these photos reported that villagers in the area were forced to provide unpaid labour at this site, performing duties which included sawing wood and transporting it to lumber trucks. [Photos: KHRG]

Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1011 soldiers who did commercial logging around M--- and R--- villages, in P--- village tract, Lu Pleh Township, clear cut the forest. When they looked for trees to cut, they used villagers to help them. The villagers had to work for the Border Guard soldiers for free. If the Border Guard soldiers needed help, they asked a village head to arrange for villagers to cut and carry wood and build shelters as necessary.



³¹ For more information on small-scale gold-mining operations operated by armed groups in eastern Burma, see "Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township," KHRG, May 2011; and "Southwestern Papun District: Transitions to DKBA control along the Bilin River," KHRG, August 2011.



The four photos above show more logging operations carried out by Border Guard Battalion #1011 in the area of M--- and R--- villages, P--- village tract, Lu Pleh Township. The researcher who took these photos reported that villagers in this area have been forced to serve as guides to help Border Guard soldiers locate trees suitable for felling, to cut and carry trees, and to construct shelters. *[Photos: KHRG]*

[2009] Attacks in 7th Brigade [Pa'an District]

In 2009, villagers from B--- village, Kwee Law Plo village tract, Lu Pleh Township in 7th Brigade, had to flee fighting in the area and hide in their rice barns in the forest.³² Now, in 2011, a lot of villagers have gone back to their homes. They farm hill fields and go to sell betel leaves, and they work for their livelihoods during the dry season and when the time is good [when there is no military activity].



The photo above left shows houses in B--- village, P--- village tract, Lu Pleh Township that were abandoned when villagers fled fighting in the B--- village area in 2009. The villager who took these photos reported that many B--- villagers have now returned to their homes, and supplement their incomes by selling betel leaves. The photo above right shows a villager packing betel leaves that have been steamed, which allows them to be stored for up to a year. *[Photos: KHRG]*

Attacks on villagers

³² While the KHRG researcher who wrote this report did not specify when the fighting occurred which prompted villagers in B--- village to flee, villagers across a wide area of Pa'an District fled their homes following heavy fighting in the vicinity of Ler Per Her IDP camp in June 2009. See: "Over 700 villagers flee to Thailand amidst fears of SPDC/DKBA attacks on a KNLA camp and an IDP camp in Pa'an District," KHRG, June 2009. For full background on the fighting in June 2009 which displaced thousands of villagers in Pa'an District, and on the circumstances surrounding their return to Burma, see: "Abuse in Pa'an District, Insecurity in Thailand: The dilemma for new refugees in Tha Song Yang," KHRG, August 2009; "Functional Refoulement: Camps in Tha Song Yang District abandoned as refugees bow to pressure," KHRG, April 2010.

We received the information that the SPDC [Tatmadaw deserter] shot 53-year-old Naw H---, the wife of 65-year-old *Pa Dtee* [Uncle] C---,³³ the former head of P--- village, Tantabin Township, Toungoo District, with a gun. An SPDC deserter came [to P--- village] searching for food and asked *Pa Dtee* C--- to cook rice and buy wine for him. After he was drunk, he shot Naw H--- with his gun, and the bullet went through her right thigh. After that [*Pa Dtee* C---] had to send his wife to the hospital in town. He did not get anything for payment. After this, he went and told the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw soldiers] stationed in Camp 73 [where IB #73 is based] and they searched for the deserter. After that, his friend killed him [another Tatmadaw soldier shot the deserter]. The SPDC deserter's unit was MOC #17.³⁴ Saw G---, 46 years old, a P--- villager from Tantabin Township, Toungoo District provided the information about the SPDC deserter who shot *Pa Dtee* C---'s wife. This incident happened in March 2010.



The photo above left shows *Pa Dtee* [Uncle] C---, 65, the former head of P--- village, Tantabin Township, Toungoo District. *Pa Dtee* [Uncle] C--- told the villager who took these photos that his wife, Naw H---, 53, had been shot in the leg in March 2010 by a Tatmadaw deserter from MOC #17, who was later captured and summarily executed by Tatmadaw troops from IB #73. Saw G---, a 46-year-old P--- villager, seen in the photo above right, also confirmed this incident to the villager who submitted this report to KHRG. [Photos: KHRG]

New town in T---

There is a big hilltop army camp at T---. On March 7th 2011, before the rotation of SPDC [Tatmadaw] MOC #19, TOC [Tactical Operations Command] #2, under Colonel Zaw Win, they [the Tatmadaw soldiers] called the villagers and told them that they would rebuild T--- as a new town. People who did not have a house in T--- had to pay 300,000 kyat (US \$407)³⁵ for a place [land] for a new house. People who already had houses had to pay 150,000 kyat (US \$203). Everybody had to stay within a limited area, and could not stay in the mountain [upland] areas. Now the government has started to build a hospital and will also supply it with medics. I do not yet know exactly how many villagers they will include in the new town.

³³ The Karen term *Pa Dtee* or 'Uncle' is a familiar term of respect attributed to an older man; it does not signify any actual familial ties between the researcher who wrote this report and *Pa Dtee* C---.

³⁴ While the villager who wrote this report referred to MOC #17, KHRG's most recent field report from Toungoo District notes that, on December 26th 2009, Tatmadaw troops from Military Operation Command (MOC) #5 were rotated out of Toungoo District after two years of operations, and replaced by units from MOC #7. See "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

³⁵ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this situation update 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 September 12th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 738 kyat. These figures are used for all calculations above.



The photo above left shows a Tatmadaw camp situated on an elevated location near T--- village, which is depicted above right. The villager who took these photos reported that on March 7th 2011 Colonel Zaw Win from TOC #2 of Tatmadaw MOC #19 ordered villagers living in upland areas adjacent to the camp to relocate to T--- village. Villagers who did not have land to build a house in T--- village were ordered to pay 300,000 kyat (US \$407) while all residents of T--- village were ordered to pay 150,000 kyat (US \$203) for a plot of land on which to build a house in the relocation site. [Photos: KHRG]

Healthcare

When R--- villagers in Kwee Law Plo village tract, Lu Pleh Township face health problems, they have to search for ways to get medicines. They [the villagers] went to see the KNU medics who were active there and they asked them to provide medicines to cure their diseases. They have to go secretly to see the KNU. Furthermore, some people carry betel leaves with them to sell and get money to use. They had to go [travel] secretly by the mountain path to reach the medics' station. That they did this shows that some villagers work for their livelihoods by selling betel leaves, after which they buy rice.



The photo above left shows residents of R--- village, P--- village tract, Lu Pleh Township receiving medicine from KNU medics, with KNLA soldiers providing security. The villager who took these photos explained that these villagers had to travel covertly to access medical assistance provided by the KNU. The photo above right shows villagers who also travelled covertly outside of their village, carrying baskets of betel leaves; they told the villager who took this photo that they intended to sell the betel leaves and purchase rice with the income earned. [Photos: KHRG]

The use of Burmese currency

In Burma, in the villages that I have been, they use the monetary denominations of 200, 500 and 1,000 kyat (US \$0.27, \$0.68 and \$1.36, respectively) and the difference [from previously] is that now they put the money that is torn in plastic film and singe it with fire [to laminate the bills]. People who do this do not need to take the plastic off. They can go and buy things at the market and it is acceptable. You cannot tear the money. If the SPDC [Tatmadaw] soldiers see that you

have torn money, they arrest you and put you in jail immediately. The Burmese government does not accept the torn money. Civilians use [laminated] money like this everywhere. For the places that I have not been, I asked people and they said that they use it like this everywhere. It is the truth that nowadays Burmese citizens use torn money covered in plastic.

Conclusion

For the information above, I worked together with *Pa Dtee D---* to make the situation report and ensure the information is correctly detailed. I truthfully reported the information as I heard and understood it.

Toungoo Situation Update: April 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in May 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Toungoo District, during the period between 2006 and April 2011. It contains updated information concerning military activity, specifically the replacement of Tatmadaw battalions under MOC #7 with MOC #9. It also details the following human rights issues: movement restrictions, including road closures and travel restrictions, and the requirement that villagers purchase permission documents to work and travel; restrictions on the transport of medicine and staple food items to civilian areas; forced labour, including portering, production of building materials, messenger duty and road maintenance; the use of civilians' vehicles to sweep for landmines; civilian injuries resulting from the use of landmines by the Tatmadaw and non-state armed groups; and the prohibition of Karen language education in government schools. This situation update also documents villagers' responses to abuses, including negotiation with Tatmadaw officers, false compliance, and lying to avoid complying with forced labour demands. This report also discusses concerns regarding limited access to health care; limited access to quality education for children; and food insecurity due to abnormal weather and limited availability of essential commodities.

Situation Update | Tantabin Township, Toungoo District (April 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Toungoo 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.³⁶ This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including five incident reports, six interviews, and 700 photographs with researcher notes.³⁷

Introduction

In our Toungoo District, 2nd Brigade area, villagers farm plantations for their livelihoods. When we look in Tantabin Township, in the plains [in lowland areas] villagers cultivate [paddy] farms and also bean plantations. In the Gkaw Thay Der, Maw Nay Bpwa and Khoh Kee areas, for the villages which are based in the mountains, we see there are just plantations. We plant

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 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 Toungoo District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Toungoo District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2011.

cardamom, betelnut, coffee, mangosteen and durian. Now we cultivate cardamom plantations and, after three years we can get an output [the crops become productive]. For our work, we villagers *ma daw ma gka* [cooperate with] each other.³⁸

As for armed groups' activities, we see that they [the Tatmadaw] are based in Bpyin Ma Na, now called Naypyidaw, which is close to our Toungoo District. We see their troops and their activity a lot. We see also that their army camps are based along the road. There are 12 total army camps based along the road between Toungoo and Kler La, and the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] soldiers who live in those camps charge a gate [checkpoint] fee of 500 kyat (US \$0.64)³⁹ [at each checkpoint] to villagers who have to travel on the road. If a motorbike taxi wants to go to Toungoo Town, he has to get *hsin kwin* [a travel permission document] from Kler La Town. Motorbike taxi drivers have to face SPDC [Tatmadaw] pressure along the way.

When we look at Toungoo District, it is necessary that villagers be healthy because medicine is very expensive. The SPDC government⁴⁰ [authorities] closes [restricts] medicine from Toungoo Town to Kler La Town. We are not allowed to bring medicine, but some villagers bring medicine in secretly so that, if medicines do get to our living places, they are very expensive. As for education, if we look in our Toungoo District, we see that children mostly can study only up to fourth standard because further study is very expensive for them. So there are problems for children's education too.

Food problems

If we look in our Toungoo District, villagers farm plantations for their livelihoods. They grow cardamom, betelnut, mangosteen, durians and other fruits. If we look at Tantabin Township in the plain [lowland] areas, villagers mostly cultivate [paddy] farms and peanut plantations. Villagers who live in Toungoo [mostly] do not farm [paddy] hill fields and farms so if the SPDC comes and attacks them and destroys their food, they have to face problems to find more food.

Because of this, villagers have to face food problems because their main food is rice. They have to go to Toungoo Town to buy rice and we saw that, in 2008, MOC #5 under LID [MOC] commander Brigadier General Kaung Mya came and, since that time, villagers who live in Toungoo District have faced a problem to get rice. In Toungoo, it was the first time this happened in our villages so it was one of the biggest problems for our villagers. MOC #5 commander Brigadier General Kaung Mya closed [restricted] selling rice along the Kler La road, and villagers could only work in their own villages [villagers could neither leave their villages to perform day labour nor purchase rice along the Toungoo to Kler La road]. They didn't have rice so they had to go to Toungoo Town and stay there. We saw that people who didn't have houses in Toungoo Town borrowed rice from friends who cultivated [paddy] farms or hill fields. Some villagers bought [enough] rice for one year so they could stay in their villages. We saw that most villagers from the Kler La area faced large food problems, because the transport cars [used to] go and come every day so they could buy rice day by day [before Kaung Mya ordered the road closed]. Rice is the main food that villagers eat, so they could eat only *dta gka bpor*

³⁸ *Ma daw ma gka* refers to when community members cooperate on agricultural tasks such as planting, rotating from one household's agricultural project to the next.

³⁹ 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 June 9th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 782 kyat.

⁴⁰ The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) was officially 'dissolved' on March 30th 2011; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term 'SPDC' was used by the villager who wrote this situation update, and is therefore retained in this translation.

[rice porridge with mixed vegetables]⁴¹ and *kaw naw* [noodles]. Some villagers could not do that anymore so they went to Toungoo Town. For this reason, villagers who live in Toungoo District have faced food problems.

In 2010, we saw that villagers who live in the Gkaw Thay Der and Khoh Kee areas of Tantabin Township faced problems on their plantations from the SPDC soldiers who were taking security at Ko Day [Tatamdaw camp]. We saw that, at that time, they destroyed villagers' cardamom plantations. In 2010, villagers who live in Toungoo District had to buy rice and fish paste as their main food. They reported many problems, such as that some of their cardamom plantations were burned and, at the same time, some cardamom plants were destroyed because it was so hot and the plants were dry. For cardamom, we have to wait for three years [after planting] and we can get benefit [harvest the plants]. First, we have to use a lot of money and pay people to grow the cardamom plants. When we can get the seeds, we have to take care of the plants and clean the grass [in the plantations]. For our occupations we cannot work alone, so when we grow cardamom plants or betelnut, we have to go and help each other. Villagers' occupations [livelihoods] are not all perfect, and we see some are like that because they have a big family so they cannot provide for themselves. Some are also not in good health so they face a large problem with their livelihoods. Some cultivate large cardamom plantations but, at the time when they can get benefit [harvest], there is also SPDC [Tatmadaw] activity and they destroy and burn the plantations. Also the weather is [sometimes] not normal, so in Toungoo District it becomes so hot and the land becomes dry and cracked. We live under SPDC control in many ways so we civilians face problems for our livelihoods.

SPDC soldiers' activity

If we look at SPDC soldiers' movements in our Toungoo District since 2006, Tatmadaw Light Infantry Division (LID) #66 troops came and were active in our area. Villagers faced SPDC attacks on their villages so they had to flee to the forest and some fled to Thailand to the refugee camps. Villagers who live under SPDC control always face forced labour and [have to serve as porters when the Tatmadaw] attacks villages. In 2008, the villagers had to face a problem because they didn't have enough rice. MOC #5 Operation Commander Kaung Mya closed the road between Kler La and Toungoo so villagers who live in Toungoo District could not buy rice. Due to the SPDC attacks [military activities] at this time, villagers could eat only *dtah gka bpor* porridge and noodles.

We also saw that, in 2010, the SPDC government had an election and, after the election, they sent a lot of their troops to Toungoo District. SPDC soldiers were active in the Toungoo area. We saw they patrolled around and burned villagers' cardamom plantations and betelnut plantations. Villagers faced forced labour again and again. In 2010, the SPDC soldiers active in Kler La were MOC #7, under Operation Commander Myo Aye. They were based in Kler La. We saw SPDC soldiers' were active in our area, and they demanded villagers who are under SPDC control to go and carry their loads and food [porter supplies]. On September 15th 2010, SPDC soldiers forced [the following] villages to go and carry food from Ko Day to Th'Ay Hta camp: Wa Thoh Koh, Gklay Soh Kee, Klaw Mee Der, Maw Koh Der, Gkaw Soe Koh, Kler La and Ler Koh villages.

MOC #7 was replaced by MOC #9, based in Kler La, and MOC #4 came and took security along the road for MOC #9 and MOC #7 [when these units rotated]. Because SPDC troops changed places [rotated], villagers had a problem and it disturbed villagers' work and travel. As villagers face SPDC attacks, they always abuse villagers' rights. In October 2010, they [MOC #9] came and changed places with MOC #7. They sent their food by trucks and they forced villagers to

⁴¹ *Dtah gka bpor*, while an effective way to stretch declining food stores, is also a dish traditionally eaten by many Karen in upland areas. When food stores are limited households, and entire communities, may eat a basic *dtah gka bpor* or *may klaw*, a more basic thin rice gruel mixed with salt until more food can be procured.

go and porter from the road to villages such as Kler La, Gkaw Soe Koh, Ler Koh, Wa Thoh Koh, Gklay Soh Kee and Gkaw Thay Der. Those villagers had to go and cut bushes to clear the road between Kler La and Gkaw Thay Der. The SPDC bulldozer came to make [repair] the road, and was damaged by a landmine between Gklay Soh Kee and Gkaw Thay Der in September [2010]. Since this event, we saw that wherever they saw villagers they arrested them and took them to the Kler La army base. Therefore the villagers who live in Gklay Soh Kee village and Kler La villages were disturbed and were arrested when they came back from their betelnut plantations.

When the SPDC sends food to the Buh Hsa Kee army base they ask for villagers' trucks and, more than this, they ask for the villagers' trucks to go in front of them. The SPDC soldiers force the villagers' trucks to go and send food, and every year we see villagers' trucks are damaged by landmines. On December 22nd 2010, a truck belonging to Kler La villager Ga--- went and took SPDC soldiers' food to the Naw Soh and Buh Hsa Kee army camps and when he was coming back, the truck was damaged by a landmine in old Le--- village [where Le--- village used to be]. They [the Tatmadaw] did not help [to fix] this truck, and the villager had to repair it and pay for it on his own. These are the things that villagers in Toungoo District have to face. Because of the SPDC activities such as transporting the soldiers' food and changing their places [rotating]. Villagers have to do this every year.

Table: SPDC troop rotations in Toungoo District in 2011:

MOC #9 (rotated in)	MOC #7 (rotated out)	Area of Deployment
TOC #3	TOC #1	Kler La
TOC #1	TOC #2	Buh Hsa Kee
LIB #539	IB #102	Play Hsa Loh
LIB #541	IB #250	Gkaw Thay Der; Naw Soh; Bplaw Moo Der; T'Kwee Soh
LIB #378	IB #261	Buh Hsa Kee; Buh Loh
LIB #375	LIB #366	Gkaw Soe Koh; Maw Pah Der; Bpeh Leh Wa; Kyaw Koh
LIB #377	LIB #425	Th'Ay Hta; Ko Day (48 Mile); Maw Kee
LIB #376	LIB #423	Ker Weh; Ker Der; Gk'Thaw Bpweh; Ker Der Kah

Health

If we look at health, it is the most important thing for every one of our civilians. We see in our Toungoo District that most villagers have to face many health problems. In 2010, for villagers who live in Toungoo District, we saw that the most common disease that was happening was *hsin dtoh kway* [literally 'elephant disease'].⁴² This disease is a very bad disease for villagers. Villagers who get this disease have a problem to cure it, because they cannot bring the medicine to their villages. The SPDC does not allow villagers to take medicine between Toungoo Town and Kler La. For this reason, in our area, medicines are very expensive. If the villagers bring medicines they have to do it secretly. If the SPDC sees anyone doing that, they will arrest them and put them in prison. In our Toungoo District, we have a hospital in Kler La. Kler La hospital was set up by the SPDC government, so for villagers to cure ourselves [receive treatment] we have to pay money.

In Toungoo District we have two groups of villagers. The first is the villagers who live under SPDC control and the second is the IDPs [villagers in hiding from the Tatmadaw in upland and shoot-on-sight areas]. If the villagers who live under SPDC control face health problems, they have to go to Kler La or to Toungoo Town. If we have to cure our diseases, we have to deal with travel costs, food costs and medicine costs. The villagers who are not under SPDC control face big problems also, because they live in the forest and we see that their children are not

⁴² 'Elephant disease' refers to *elephantiasis*, also called *lymphatic filariasis*, which is a parasitic infection transmitted by mosquitoes that causes the skin and tissue of the lower half of the body to swell and thicken.

clean or well-cared for [healthy], and they don't have adequate food and shelter. For curing diseases, the KNU set up a clinic and other organizations come in and give out medicines.

For these reasons, in our Toungoo District, villagers have to face a lot of health problems in many areas.

Education

If we look at education, we see that every single human should attend school and should try to study. If we try very hard, we will be educated and valuable people and, furthermore, other people will respect us.

Nowadays, we see our Karen people can attend school but we are not allowed to study our mother language [Karen], so we still cannot write our mother language. In the students' education, the Burmese government does not allow our mother language to be taught so it has become a problem for our Karen people.

In our Toungoo District, we can see that education for civilians is very weak. We have two groups: villagers who live under SPDC control and villagers who live in the forest, not under SPDC control. In villages under SPDC control, children can study up to fourth standard and then move to Kler La or Toungoo Town [for further education]. We see the problem happening in the SPDC-controlled areas, that children who finish school don't know where to go and continue their studies. The villagers who cannot provide enough food for themselves have the biggest problem to send their children to continue attending school. Because their parents cannot support them, these children lose their opportunity to continue attending school and studying.

We see many children go and study in Toungoo Town and there are many students who have attended school, but only a few who have passed tenth standard. The reason why is that, in Burma's schools, starting from kindergarten to the end of seventh standard every student has the right to pass even if they do not qualify to pass. If children fail an exam, they can have the chance to do the test again and then pass. Students who pass [the early standards] are passing without qualifying step-by-step, so we see that when they arrive to tenth standard, it is not easy for the students to pass. So they have to stay two or three years to study [repeat standards], and then pass. We see some quit school, go back to their villages and work in plantations and hill fields. Mostly we see children from the mountains [upland areas] in Toungoo study for two or three years in the tenth standard but do not pass, so they come back and work in their villages on plantations.

If we look back to villagers who are not under SPDC control in Toungoo District, they have to hide in their plantations, betelnut plantations, and in the forest. We see that these villagers work with the KNU and set up schools for children so they can study in the forest. We see that the Karen Education Department (KED) comes and gives teachers training in the IDP areas so that the children can learn. We see also that they try hard for their people. But, the children cannot study smoothly [without disruption] because there is SPDC activity around their areas, so the children have to study in fear. For teachers, when they teach, they always have to be aware and worry. If there is heavy SPDC activity the teachers have to close the school, and when there is a good [security] situation the teachers start school again.

For both villagers who live in the areas that the SPDC attacks and villagers in the areas that they control, we see our Karen people do not have the right to study freely. If we look, our Karen students are not allowed to study or write in their own language. That is the situation now, so they cannot write and read their own language. It is the aim of the SPDC to disappear our Karen language. Because of this, our Karen villagers who live in the mountains have faced

oppression and are looked down on by the SPDC government. We have no opportunity to seek education so it is the biggest problem for us.

Landmines

About landmines in Burma, we know the Burmese government and the KNU have not signed the *Baw Muh Ser Pwoh Gk'Rer* [UN] Treaty on landmines. Landmines are the biggest danger to our civilians' lives. We see that, in our Toungoo District, Burmese government [Tatmadaw] troops have come and are active here and, moreover, they plant landmines and villagers get hurt. We see that many people get injured by landmines and become handicapped in Toungoo District. Landmines are the most dangerous kind of weapon to our lives. Furthermore, it [a landmine] is a thing that can damage the human body. Landmines are not good for people and they destroy people's lives.

Burma is included in the countries that use the most landmines. Civilians in Burma don't want the government to use landmines. Toungoo District is close to the Burma government's headquarters [in Naypyidaw] so the SPDC troops have come and built their camps in our Toungoo area in many different places. Not only do the SPDC soldiers use landmines, but also they don't let civilians know whenever they plant landmines. Furthermore, they plant landmines around and beside the villages, so the landmines hurt villagers' pigs and other animals. We can say that because villagers don't know where the landmines are, when they go to the wrong place where the SPDC has planted landmines, villagers surely can step on landmines by accident. Wo--- village is close to an SPDC Army camp. Last year, SPDC soldiers planted landmines close beside the village and two of the Wo--- villagers stepped on the landmines. One was a man and one was a woman. One of the villagers who stepped on the landmines is a woman named Naw Le---, who is 40 years old. She stepped on the landmine when she went to collect firewood in front of the village beside the vehicle road. The second one is Saw Pu---, who is 46 years old. He stepped on a landmine in the A--- area.⁴³

If we look in our Toungoo District, people of our own ethnicity who work for revolution [KNLA soldiers] use landmines too, and the landmines that they use are made by hand. One of the Toungoo District [KNLA] leaders who didn't want to give his name, said:

"We know that landmines aren't a good thing. We know they damage the human body. Because of this reason, we don't want to use them but it's also impossible if we don't use them because we don't have enough weapons. Also, we're an armed group against the SPDC military [Tatmadaw] oppression so we use them to protect our people, civilians and ourselves. In Burma, we're the biggest ethnic revolution group in the country. We use landmines and, wherever we plant landmines, we let the villagers know. We tell the villagers: 'Don't go to that place because we planted landmines, so if you go you'll step on a landmine and it'll hurt you. If you have some important reason to go [to an area mined by the KNLA], come and let us know and we'll go and send you.' If our people don't listen to us and go, it depends on their luck because we already informed them."

Villagers' reports about the abuse of their rights

When we had a discussion in the second place [we visited] in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District, one of the villagers from Go--- village called Naw Ya--- reported about people [Tatmadaw soldiers] coming and abusing her rights when they demand forced labour and messengers. The SPDC demanded 100 villagers to go and porter for them; one villager from each household to go and cut bushes to clear the road; two villagers to go every day for

⁴³ KHRG published a report about these incidents in October 2010. For more information, see "Villagers injured by landmines, assisted by neighbours in southern Toungoo," KHRG, October 2010.

messenger duty; and asked villagers to cut 120 bamboo poles for them. Villagers face these human rights abuses, as shown above. As the villagers already do, if the SPDC asks for 100 villagers to go for forced labour, only 70 villagers go. If they ask for one person from every household to go and cut bushes to clear the road, they [villagers] don't send a person from every house; just half or more than half will go, but not all. When they ask villagers to go and cut 120 bamboo poles, villagers only cut 80 bamboo poles. If the SPDC asks villagers to go and take rice on five motorbikes, the villagers have to go and take the rice but only send three motorbikes. If the SPDC asks for two messengers every day from the villagers, the villagers tell them they will go, but only send one messenger every two days. As described above, this is what villagers already do.

For the future, villagers have discussed that they will make their plans stronger about what to do if the SPDC asks them to go and clean the road, to porter, to cut bamboo, to do messenger duty, or to go and take rice. They said they will discuss it with their villagers and village heads, and they won't go and will not do it [forced labour] for the soldiers anymore. [They said] *'We'll apologize and refuse bravely, and we'll do our own work in our workplaces. If the SPDC asks us, we'll ignore them. We won't care about the SPDC forcing our villagers anymore.'* That is the villagers' way to make a strong arrangement, and plan how they will be stronger in the future.

About the villagers' suffering, a Go--- villager named Naw Ya--- reported the ways that they [the Tatmadaw] are hurting the villagers' rights, the things that villagers are already doing and, what they will do in the future to be stronger. She reported this when she came to a discussion in Dt-- - area, Tantabin Township, Toungoo District. As she reported what she had suffered and experienced.

Villagers' strong and weak points

Among the villagers who came and attended the discussion, one villager from Th--- village named Naw Wa--- reported her village's strong points and weak points as follows:

"In our village, villagers have many strong points because most villagers love their own ethnic [Karen] people, and work for their village and for their villagers. Even villagers who aren't educated, they try as much as they can to give themselves for their ethnic people and not complain about working for their people. They work with all the energy they have. Furthermore, they try the best for their children and try to send them to school, like other very clever people. They also want their children to be clever and work for their people, to help to develop our ethnic people. [Sometimes] nowadays, we have people who pass school and then graduate. But we don't see people who finish school and graduate come back and help to develop their village or do something to benefit their people. We see that they're working in plantations for their own benefit."

Naw Wa---, Th--- village, Tantabin Township, Toungoo District

About the villagers' weak points, they say they cannot read and write their own mother language, so that is one weak point. The reason is that the SPDC does not allow villagers to study and learn in their own Karen language. About villagers' strong points and weak points, Th--- villager Naw Wa--- reported her village's strong points and weak points as she had felt and experienced. The information that is shown above is true from villagers, so we write and report it.

Abuse of villagers' rights and other problems that are not human rights abuses

There are many ways that villagers' rights are abused. The SPDC Army destroys villagers' workplaces [agricultural projects], shelters, education, travel, farm animals, religion and, much more than that, kills villagers and breaks apart [separates] villages. Villagers have to face many difficult consequences. Because of SPDC Army activities that hurt villagers, villagers do not

have enough food and are not healthy. They cannot work and cannot travel or leave the village, so it is not easy to find food. Because of this, the villagers are hungry and, therefore, villagers *gkaw wee gkaw say* [cannot eat until they are full] and eat boiled rice or porridge. It is the most difficult problem for villagers.

The things that are not [caused by] abuses of villagers' rights are that villagers could not take care of their workplaces well, and the weather was not good and there was irregular rain. So villagers could not work well anymore or get enough benefit [harvest] from their work as in the past. There are many things that are not abuses of villagers' rights but we report only this one. It is what the villagers themselves reported carefully.

A villager's report about abuses of villagers' rights

When we went and had a discussion in the second place [Tantabin Township] we saw villagers came to the discussion meeting and reported about human rights abuses happening in their villages, and how they protect themselves. One of the villagers who reported what human rights abuses are happening in her village was Naw Wa---, who lives in Th--- village, Tantabin Township, Toungoo District, in the Gkaw Thay Der area. This is the information that the villager reported about human right abuses happening in her village and the problems that villagers face:

The SPDC asked 100 villagers to go and carry [porter] their food

"If we look at human right abuses happening in our village, there is forced labour. We saw that the SPDC asked 100 of our villagers to go and carry their food. When MOC #9 came and replaced MOC #7, at that time they asked our villagers to go and carry their food, such as rice, sweet milk, beans, cooking oil and other things. Starting from So--- to Da--- army camp, we went on March 12th 2011."

The SPDC asked for 50 motorbikes belonging to villagers to send their food

"We saw that when SPDC soldiers came and changed places [rotated] with each other, they asked for our villagers' motorbikes to go and take rice for them. They asked for 50 motorbikes, and one motorbike had to take three sacks (150 kg. / 330 lb.) of rice, starting from Go--- to Da--- army camp. Our villagers had to take three sacks of rice so they faced problems along the way."

The SPDC asked for one person from each house to go and cut bushes to clear the road

"When the SPDC soldiers send their food, we see that they send their bulldozers. As their bulldozers come to make [repair] the road, they also ask us villagers for forced labour. For forced labour, the SPDC soldiers asked for one person from each house to come and cut bushes to clear the road. We had to start from Go--- and clean the road to So--- village. We face this whenever SPDC soldiers' trucks come. We, the villagers, have to go and cut bushes to clear the road very often. The SPDC soldiers attack [are active] and ask for forced labour from us. We don't get any payment and also we have to bring our own food."

The SPDC asked villagers to cut 120 bamboo poles

"We face SPDC soldiers when they come and are based beside our village, and they force our villagers. This happens a lot. We see they come and base their army camp beside the village and ask our villagers to cut 120 bamboo poles for them. Because they come and are based close to our village, our villagers face problems to travel, and there are more and more disturbances."

When villagers go to Toungoo Town they ask for a 1,000 kyat (US \$1.28) gate [checkpoint] tax from each person

"When we look at the Kler La area, whenever people come and go [travel] we face SPDC soldiers' demands a lot. Villages face this when they travel. When we want to go to Toungoo, we have to go down to Kler La army camp on motorbike to get a permission document. Whenever we go, we have to pay 1,000 kyat [for permission to travel] from Kler La to Toungoo. The distance between Kler La and Toungoo passes a total of 12 gates so, when our motorbikes go down we have to pay 500 kyat (US \$0.64) at each gate. From Kler La army camp along the Kler La road, we see a total of 12 gates so villagers face demands."

Villagers have to get written permission to work in plantations and it costs 100 kyat (US \$0.13) for one person.

"We face SPDC soldiers when they come and are based close to our village and the villagers face big problems. Furthermore, they order villagers who go to their workplaces, like plantations and fields, to get written permission. One permission document can be used for one week and, if it one week has passed, we have to go and get another and give another 100 kyat. So for villagers' occupations they face problems [restrictions]."

How the villagers already try to solve problems that happen in their village

"We see SPDC soldiers force villagers to go and carry their food, to clear the road and to cut bamboo. We see that they asked us to porter but we didn't go completely [with as many people] as they asked. Our villagers protested and we only sent 80 people. The village head went and told them that 100 of our villagers couldn't go because some villagers weren't healthy, some had gone to stay and sleep in their plantation fields, and that there were mostly only old people left in our village who couldn't walk anymore. We and our village heads discussed together and we protected ourselves this way."

For the villagers' motorbikes that have to go and take rice, we and our village head discussed and advised each other. We went and told them: 'Thu Koh [Officer]! You asked for 50 motorbikes to go and take rice, but we can't find 50 motorbikes because some of our villagers' motorbikes are broken and they've gone to repair them in town, and they haven't come back yet. Also, some motorbike owners have gone to their betelnut plantations.' So we went and told them we could find only 40 motorbikes. That's one way that our villagers solve the problem and protect themselves."

If we have to go clear the road, our village head goes and tells them: 'You asked my villagers to go and clean the road, one person from each house, but they can't because some of my villagers have gone to the town.' Because our village head went and apologised to them, we only sent half of the amount of people they asked for. The people who were left could go and do their own work."

About their demands for villagers to go and cut 120 bamboo poles, we said to them: 'In our village, we rebuild our houses every year so there;' only a little bamboo left.' Because we explained to them this problem, they asked our villagers to cut only 100 bamboo poles."

For the demand that one motorbike has to give 500 kyat at each gate if we go to Toungoo Town, they say it [the payment] is for the gate so we have to give it, but we tell

them: 'We'll give it to you after we come back, now we haven't had anyone hire the [motorbike] taxi yet, so we don't have any money in our hands.' From Kler La to Toungoo Town, there are 12 gates. We can't give money at every gate, so we have to protect ourselves like this."

The information that villagers reported above is the real situation happening in their villages, about the pressures that villagers face and how they solve them.

Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, April 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in April 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Bu Tho Township, Papun District, during the period between January and April 2011. The villager describes the embezzlement of funds earmarked for road repair by government officials; increased taxation on vehicles, road use and the transport of goods; and demands for payment in lieu of forced labour levied by Border Guard Battalion #1013.

Situation Update | Bu Tho Township, Papun District (April 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.⁴⁴ This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including three incident reports, nine interviews and 63 photographs.⁴⁵

Incidents that happened between January 2011 - April 2011:

The incidents that I am going to report happened in Meh Gklaw and Meh Mweh village tracts, Bu Tho Township, Papun District. The incidents started happening in February 2011 and continue to cause problems now. The problem has been that villagers have to pay portering fees [in lieu of sending villagers as porters], and ox-cart and motorbike taxes. A Papun Town labour group also lied about the reconstruction of a vehicle road. The people who caused the problem were [Tatmadaw] Border Guard soldiers from Battalion #1013, a Papun Town labour group and the Papun Town Municipal Department.

These people don't have a great reason for doing this. They lied to and manipulated villagers to be able to get money for free from them. If I have to describe the problem in detail: a unit of the DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] who agreed to become Border Guard Battalion #1013, led by Battalion Commander Maung Chit and based in Myaing Gyi Ngu, came to Meh Nyaw monastery to hold a meeting on January 15th 2011. Every village from Meh Mweh Hta [Meh Mweh village tract] and Tee T'Daw Hta village tract had to come and attend the meeting. In the meeting, Battalion Commander Maung Chit from Battalion #1013 decided that Meh Mweh

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵ 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, and more specifically, in Bu Tho Township, can be found in the recent Field Report, "Southern Papun District: Abuse and the expansion of military control," KHRG, August 2010.

Hta village has to pay money [in lieu of providing] two porters and the total amount of money is 200,000 kyat (US \$271).⁴⁶ The village would have to pay this every month. There are about 50 households in Meh Mweh Hta, so this has become a big problem for the villagers.

Another problem involves the labour group [public department responsible for road maintenance] in Papun Town. They went around and lied to people about road reconstruction. On February 2nd 2011, they announced that they would start rebuilding the vehicle road from Papun [Town] to Ma Htaw village. They said they were going to construct a road and repair a bridge. In reality, they did not even repair the entire road. They just covered the holes in the road. Maybe, it is true that [high-ranking] leaders in the labour group above asked for the whole road to be rebuilt, but the builder in charge just made small repairs. We know that the contractor for road construction cut off the money in the middle [embezzled funds earmarked for road construction].

On February 6th 2011, the Papun Town Municipal Department said [announced] another thing. They said: '*The road has been repaired, so carts and motorbikes are not allowed to drive on the road for free. If they want to drive, they have to hold a card [travel permission document].*' As this is what they said, cart owners and motorbike owners now have to go and buy a card [travel permission document] from the Papun Town Municipal Department. For a motorbike card [permit], they have to pay 3,000 kyat (US \$4.07) and for carts, 5,000 kyat (US \$6.78). This issue causes a big problem for villagers who live between Papun Town and Ma Htaw village. Daw Htike Yin Win is the Director of the Papun Town Municipal Department. We know this because we got information from a cart owner from H--- village; he told us and that is how we know this information.

I thought this kind of problem and situation would change and disappear when the new government came [into power]. We have waited to see but we see that nothing has changed, and problems have not disappeared. The problems will not decrease or disappear if the situation stays the same as before the election.

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)

⁴⁶ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this interview 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 31st 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 737 kyat. These figures are used for all calculations above.

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.⁴⁷ This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including four incident reports, three interviews, and 484 photographs.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ 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 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

⁴⁷ 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.

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ 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

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.⁵⁰ 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.

⁵⁰ The researcher who wrote this report did not mention which buildings needed to be repaired.



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]



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)⁵¹ for each packet of rice. The SPDC soldiers forced villagers to carry things but they did not pay them anything.

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'].⁵² 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.⁵³

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

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² 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.

⁵³ 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

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.



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.⁵⁴ [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]

⁵⁴ See United Nations Environmental Program, Mercury Awareness Raising Module 3: *Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining*, 2008



The Meh Gkleh Law River

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.

Toungoo Situation Update: April to July 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in August 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Toungoo District between April and July 2011. It describes a May 2011 attack on villages and the destruction of paddy and rice stores in the Maw Thay Der area of Tantabin Township, previously reported by KHRG, and relates the following human rights abuses by Tatmadaw forces: restrictions on movement and trade; including regular closure of vehicle roads and levying of road tolls; forced production and delivery of thatch shingles and bamboo poles; forced portering of military rations; and the theft and looting of villagers' livestock. This report also explains how community members share food when confronting food insecurity, and attempt to ensure that children receive education despite financial barriers and teacher shortages.

Situation Update | Toungoo District (August 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Toungoo 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.⁵⁵ This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including, 40 photographs.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ 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

Introduction

When I review the situation in Toungoo District, citizens have had to face many difficulties due to the oppression of the SPDC military government,⁵⁷ such as movement restrictions, difficulties for villagers' livelihoods, forced labour and rape. These things are still happening, even now. Villagers in the area can live [here], but they have to live with worries, fears and insufficient food, so they have to share food with each other.

Villagers' occupations

Villagers in Toungoo District cultivate plantations and hill fields for their livelihoods. There are two types of villagers in Toungoo District. Most villagers within areas controlled by the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw] either cultivate plantations or drive motorcycle taxis. The plantations are of cardamom, betelnut, coffee, durian and mangosteen. The villagers who do not live within areas under SPDC Army control cultivate hill fields and cardamom plantations. This year, we saw that the villagers who cultivate hill fields faced problems burning their hill fields, because of the abnormal weather which caused a big problem for their work. Some people could burn their fields and they could work in their fields [without problems].

Most villagers within areas under SPDC Army control cultivate plantations for their livelihoods. Year after year, we can say that villagers who cultivate plantations for their livelihoods do not do well. The plantations do not provide sufficient fruit because of the abnormal weather. This year, in 2011, the plantations like durian and mangosteen provided less fruit [than in previous years]. This causes a problem for villagers to sell [the fruit] in order to buy food. Moreover, motorcycle drivers always face toll collections by the SPDC Army on the road. There are seven [major] checkpoints of the SPDC Army on the vehicle road from Kler La [Bawgali Gyi] to Toungoo [Town]. A motorbike has to pay 500 kyat (US \$0.60)⁵⁸ at each checkpoint. On July 9th 2011, SPDC Army MOC [Military Operations Command] #9 which is based in the Kler La army camp closed the road from Kler La to Toungoo [Town], so motorbike taxi drivers faced serious difficulties. When the SPDC Army closes the road, villagers in the area face problems to trade, and cannot sell produce from their plantations.

Villagers within SPDC Army controlled areas have to face oppression [by Tatmadaw forces] in many ways. They complain about all the work that they have to do.

SPDC Army activity and forced labour

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.

⁵⁶ 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 Toungoo District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Toungoo District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

⁵⁷ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the researcher and informants, and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

⁵⁸ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 October 6th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 830 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

In Toungoo District, villagers always face [demands for] forced labour from the SPDC Army. On July 6th 2011, SPDC Army LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #539 from Klaw Mi Der [Yay Dta Gone] army camp, led by Saw Lay Tun, forced four Burmese village women, and 26 Burmese men and 15 [Karen] villagers from Maw Pah Der village to go and carry rations from Klaw Mi Der to Bpeh Leh Wah army camp. On April 8th 2011, SPDC Army soldiers from LIB #539, based in Klaw Mi Der army camp, forced Klaw Mi Der, Ler Kla Der, [Hoo Moo Der] and Burmese villagers to go and carry rations. There were 23 men and 24 women from Klaw Mi Der village; one man and woman from Ler Kla Der village; five men and nine women from Hoo Moo Der village and three Burmese men. The SPDC Army rations that villagers had to go and carry were 40 sacks of rice (1,920 kg. / 4,224 lb.), five tins of cooking oil, and 200 cans of meat. Villagers had to carry these from Klaw Mi Der army camp to Bpeh Leh Wah army camp.

On April 11th 2011, SPDC Army soldiers from IB [Infantry Battalion] #73, based in Yay Shah army camp, forced Shah See Bo, Yay Shah, Zee Pyu Gone and Taw Gkoo villages to provide building materials. Shah See Bo village had to provide 200 thatch shingles and 50 bamboo poles; Yay Shah village had to provide 500 thatch shingles and 50 bamboo poles; Zee Pyu Gone had to provide 500 thatch shingles and 50 bamboo poles; and Taw Gkoo village had to provide 50 thatch shingles and 30 bamboo poles. These villages had to deliver these building materials to Yay Shah army camp.

On April 21st 2011, SPDC Army soldiers from LIB #535 who are based in Play Hsa Loh army camp demanded 300 thatch shingles from Play Hsa Loh village, 200 thatch shingles from Ya Loh village, 250 thatch shingles from Plaw Baw Der and 250 [thatch shingles] from Lay Ho Law Paw Pa village. Soldiers from SPDC Army IB #73, who occupy Shah See Bo army camp, forced Shah See Bo villagers to go and carry rations from Ta Bpay to Shah See Bo army camp.

SPDC Army soldiers from LIBs #376 and #541 entered the Maw Thay Der hill field area on May 15th 2011 to rotate with LIB #278⁵⁹ and LIB #380, based out of the Naw Soh and Buh Sah Kee army camps. Villagers in the hill field areas had to flee into the jungle and faced many difficulties. After they fled, the SPDC Army soldiers entered villagers' hill fields and burned down villagers' huts, food stores of paddy and rice, and destroyed everything.⁶⁰ Villagers whose huts were burned down by the SPDC Army soldiers are Saw S--- (30 years old) with five baskets of paddy (104.5 kg / 230.4 lbs) lost; Saw P--- (55 years old) with five baskets of paddy lost; and Saw K--- (56 years old) with five baskets of paddy lost and all of [his] pots and plates, too. Saw C--- (55 years old) lost five baskets of paddy and all of his pots and plates. Saw G--- (52 years old) had 12 baskets of paddy (250.8 kg / 552.96 lbs) destroyed by the SPDC Army soldiers. This attack poses a big problem for the villagers because their main food supplies were destroyed. As for Saw A---, the SPDC Army soldiers took six [of his] chickens and three ducks.

On July 1st 2011, SPDC Army soldiers from LIB# 539 which is based at Hs--- forced villagers from Hs--- and Ba--- villages to make and send 50 thatch shingles. This is forced labour that villagers face. On July 9th 2011, an SPDC Army Commander under MOC #9, based in Kler La, had the vehicle road from Kler La to Toungoo [Town] closed. The SPDC Army closed the vehicle road and villagers who live in Gkaw Thay Der [Yay Tho Gyi] village tract, around Gklay

⁵⁹ Although the villager who wrote this update specified "LIB #278" in Arabic numerals, he was likely referring to LIB #378. LIB #378 operates under MOC #9, as do LIBs #376, 380 and 541 mentioned by the villager above. Infantry Battalion (IB) #278, however, operates under MOC #14 in southern Shan State; see: *Protracted Displacement and Chronic Poverty in eastern Burma / Myanmar*, Thailand Burma Border Consortium, November 2010, p.65. Note that the numeral used in Karen and Burmese for the number "3" closely resembles the Arabic numeral "2", which may lead to confusion when transcribing numbers.

⁶⁰ This incident was previously reported by KHRG on June 2nd 2011. See "Joint Tatmadaw patrol burns field huts and seed stores, displaces six villages in Toungoo District", KHRG, June 2011.

Loh and Maw Nay Bpwa, face livelihood problems related to [reduced] trade. The main problem they face is that prices go up [when the road is closed].

Education

For the education situation in the Toungoo District area, there are many difficulties for children to get an education. To be able to enter school, a student has to pay a school fee and other fees that cost a lot. As we know, seven percent of the [Burmese] government's national budget is used to support education. The Burmese government spends more money on military equipment. Children who study in Burma and graduate primary and middle school have no qualifications, so they face problems when they go to high school. Higher fees have to be paid when students go to high school. Students in the ninth and tenth standards have to pay for and go to private tutoring because, if they do not, they cannot keep up with their lessons. There are many problems that students have to face and the costs for students to get an education and to be able to go to school [are high].

Karen people living in the mountainous regions encourage and support their children to go to school and to read and write. For some parents who do not have strong feelings about sending their children to school, later we see that their children grow up and become bad people.

"Our school is a primary school and has 150 students. There are four teachers; two are male and two are female. There are 50 students in the kindergarten class. It is not easy to teach them with one teacher. I requested the education department [to send teachers], but they sent none to us. We can do nothing. When I saw the village head, I asked for help from him. He discussed with villagers, and they made agreements and sent us a female teacher. We see that the Burmese military government has no motivation in education, so we will have to work together for our children to be able to go to school."

-School teacher, Wo--- village, Tantabin Township, Toungoo District

Toungoo Situation Update: May to July 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in August 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Toungoo District between May and July 2011. It describes a series of trade and movement restrictions imposed on villagers in June and July 2011, due to frequent clashes between Tatmadaw and non-state armed groups, and road closures between Toungoo Town and Buh Sah Kee. The report also examines in detail the serious impacts the road closures have had on the livelihoods of villagers who have been unable to support themselves by transporting and selling agricultural produce and purchasing rice supplies as usual. The report further describes incidents of human rights abuse by Tatmadaw forces, including the summary execution of two civilians in July 2011 by soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #379; forced labour including the portering of military supplies, the production and supply of building materials, guide duty and sweeping for landmines; and an attack on a village previously reported by KHRG and the subsequent destruction of villagers' homes and food stores.

Situation Update | Toungoo District (August 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Toungoo 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.⁶¹ This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including one other situation update.⁶²

Introduction

In Toungoo [Taw Oo] District there are two townships: Tantabin [Taw Ta Tu] Township and Than Daung [Daw Pa Koh] Township. The people who face human rights abuses are civilians who live in areas under the control of the military SPDC Army [Tatmadaw]⁶³ and people who live in IDP [internally displaced person] areas. As there are ongoing human rights abuses, civilians who live in the [Toungoo] area remain poor and cannot obtain a higher standard of living.

Forced labour and demands

At the places where SPDC Army bases are close to Karen villages, they [Tatmadaw soldiers] order villagers to serve as set tha [messengers].⁶⁴ Every day, each village has to send one person to serve as a messenger. Moreover, whenever they need help, they force villagers to go and carry things for them from where the vehicle road ends to their army camps.

During the SPDC Army columns' patrol operations they force villagers to go [with them] and show them the way. Villagers have to walk in front of them. They also use villagers to walk in front of them as landmine sweepers.

For example, Klaw Mi Der [Yay Dta Gone], Play Hsa Loh, Yeh Loh, Lay Ahoh Loh, Plaw Baw Der, Bpaw Pa, Shah See Bo, Yay Shah, Taw Gkoo, Zee Pyu Gone, Kler La [Bawgali Gyi], Gkaw Thay Der [Yay Tho Gyi], Gklay Soh Kee, Maw Pah Der, Gkaw Soe Koh, Ker Weh and Ka Thaw Pwe are those villages that always face forced labour demands by the SPDC Army, because those villages are close to SPDC Army bases.

The SPDC Army bases located close to the villages demand chickens, vegetables, fruits and other things from villages. Moreover, for repairs for their camp, they always demand villagers to supply them with bamboo, thatch shingles and wood.⁶⁵

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² 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 Toungoo District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Toungoo District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

⁶³ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

⁶⁴ *Set tha* is a Burmese term for forced labour duty as a messenger stationed at army camps or bases and serving as a go-between to deliver orders from army officers to village heads, but also involving other menial tasks when no messages are in need of delivery.

⁶⁵ For the full translated contents of 86 forced labour order letters sent by Tatmadaw officers to villagers in Toungoo District between January and October 2010, see *Civilian and Military order documents: March 2008 to July 2011*, KHRG, October 2011.

Between Toungoo and Kler La [Bawgali Gyi], motorists travelling by car or motorbike have to have a written travel permit. They have to pay for the travel permit in Kler La at the SPDC Army base. They have to pay at the SPDC Army base for different types of permits, ranging [in cost] from 500 kyat (US \$0.60)⁶⁶ and up to 10,000 kyat or 100,000 kyat (US \$12.05 to \$120). A motorbike travel permit costs 1,000 kyat (US \$1.20) and has to be paid for at the Kler La SPDC Army base. Checkpoint costs depend on whether you are driving a car or motorbike. You have to pay more at a big checkpoint, while you have to pay less at a small checkpoint. There are many checkpoints along the vehicle road and each checkpoint costs at least 500 kyat to pass. Even when the villagers are only transporting vegetables or fruits by vehicle or cart the SPDC Army soldiers [at checkpoints] still demand payment. If villagers are returning from town, they have to bring snacks, fish, vegetables, alcohol and other things to give which they [Tatmadaw soldiers] demand at the checkpoints. Checkpoints are located in Kler La, Bpeh Leh Wah, Gkyaw Koh, 20-Mile, 6-Mile, Pya Sakan, 4-Mile and close to Toungoo bridge. There are other checkpoints along the road too.

The latest situation in the area

In the month of May 2011, SPDC Army LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #376 and LIB #541 deployed from Kler La and Gkaw Thay Der to Naw Soh and Buh Sah Kee in Tantabin [Township]. When they arrived, they went to an IDP area and burned and destroyed Maw Thay Der villagers' huts, paddy stores and other possessions: everything they could find in the village.⁶⁷ Also, villagers who live in the eastern part of Gkaw Thay Der village tract are now afraid of the soldiers from LIBs #376 and #541. Even in the rainy season, they [villagers from eastern Gkaw Thay Der] moved [fled] to another area. Moreover, because they moved in the rainy season many children and adults became sick. Some villagers left rice crops that they had grown. They have not grown any more rice this year in the place they moved. Some villagers returned [to Maw Thay Der] and saw that their paddy fields and stores had been destroyed by rain, rats and other animals. Because villagers could not work as normal and because of the damage [to crops], there is now not enough food. Some villagers have fallen sick and cannot work, and the consequences of this are making the problem worse and worse.

Fighting and road closure

On June 19th 2011, there was fighting on the vehicle road. Following that, the SPDC Army closed the road between mountain areas and Gkaw Thay Der, Kler La and Toungoo towns. In the plains areas, the stretches of the vehicle road between Toungoo, Tantabin and Zayatkyi were closed for a week. If people went out, they [SPDC Army soldiers] checked people's bags: men and women alike, they checked them all. Before the end of June there was a bomb that exploded in Toungoo Town, so the SPDC Army closed the vehicle road [again].

On July 8th 2011 there was fighting in Bpeh Leh Wah, Maw Pah Der, Gkaw Soe Koh, Kler La and Buh Sah Kee. At this time, SPDC Army soldiers ordered villagers not to travel, especially by car or motorbike along the vehicle road.

Villagers who live in the Gkaw Thay Der village tract depend on this vehicle road for their livelihoods. They go to sell fruits and vegetables they harvest in Kler La and, with the money that they get, they buy rice and other things they need. The food that villagers buy comes from Toungoo Town and the fruit and vegetables villagers sell in Kler La are sent to Toungoo Town to be resold.

⁶⁶ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 October 25th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 830 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

⁶⁷ This incident was previously reported by KHRG on June 2nd 2011; see "Joint Tatmadaw patrol burns field huts and seed stores, displaces six villages in Toungoo District," KHRG, June 2011.

Because the SPDC Army closed the road, villagers could not go and sell their fruits and vegetables, such as durian, dog fruit, betel leaf, mangosteen and others. They did not allow [villagers] to go, so, day by day, their incomes were negatively affected, costing some of them hundreds of thousands [of kyat]. As they could not go and sell things [their agricultural products] anymore, they have faced problems buying rice. Some have not been able to buy enough rice, so this has become a worry for them.⁶⁸

Table 1: Average output and plantation profits when road is open

Type of plantation	Average units produced per plantation	Market value per unit (kyat)	Average income
Durian	5 fruits	1,000	5,000 (US \$6.02)
Mangosteen	50 fruits	100	5,000 (US \$6.02)
Dog fruit	8 bowls	1,000 per bowl ⁶⁹	8,000 (US \$9.64)
Betel leaf	30 viss (48 kg. / 105.6 lb.)	3,000 per viss	90,000 (US \$108.44)

There are an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 households engaged in agriculture in the area [affected by the road closure].

Villagers' occupations

Villagers that live in mountain areas cultivate plantations such as betel [areca nut] trees, cardamom, durian, dog fruit, mangosteen, coffee, banana and other [crops]. Few people farm [rice].

In the plains areas the SPDC Army does not allow villagers to sleep at their farms or other workplaces. When villagers go to work at their farms or workplaces they are only allowed to take two milk tins of rice (0.5 kg. / 1.1 lb.). If they take more than two milk tins, the Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] soldiers will punish them however they want.

Villagers who have harvested their fruits and vegetables cannot go out and sell their fruits and vegetables any more [because of the road closure]. Their fruits and vegetables have become ruined [rotten] and they have lost income. It will be difficult for villagers to survive in the area in the future. When we look back, we can see clearly that the SPDC Army soldiers deliberately planned to close the vehicle road and starve the villagers; they knew there would not be enough food for the villagers to eat. The civilians here can no longer maintain a decent standard of living. In the future, this [closure of the vehicle roads] could mean that civilians will not be able to live in the area anymore. As they have lost income, families do not have enough food and so the villagers' health declines; as for education, it is not easy for the parents to plan for their children. If this case continues, there will be many civilians who will move to other places. This is a worry for this area and for its future.

The Burmese Army closed the vehicle road and made demands, making it difficult for civilians to work [without disruption]. They [civilians] have been living in fear for a long time now.

Killing of villagers

⁶⁸ The soil quality and terrain in much of Toungoo District supports only limited rice or paddy farming. For this reason, most households are dependent on income generated from various plantation crops, such as betelnut, betel leaf, cardamom, durian and dog fruit. The loss of a year's crop can have devastating consequences for villagers' long-term food security as can the breakdown of local market dynamics due to the closure of trade routes and roads, as explained by the villager who wrote this report; see: "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

⁶⁹ A bowl is a unit of volume normally used to measure paddy, husked rice and seeds. KHRG is unaware of any standard weight measurement for a bowl of dog fruit.

On July 13th 2011, SPDC Army soldiers from LIB #379 of MOC [Military Operations Command] #9, led by Company Commander Soe San Moe, arrested two S'Ba Law Kee villagers: Saw K---, 48, and Saw W---, 33. The SPDC Army soldiers arrested these two people and killed them at the road to Ler Ghee Koh Der Gkay village.⁷⁰ Because columns from SPDC LIBs #374 and LIB #379 are active in Than Daung Township, west of the Day Loh Kloh [River], [the roads have been closed and] the local people are now faced with difficulties day after day. As already mentioned, they cannot go and sell their [agricultural] products, such as durian, mangosteen, dog fruit and betel leaf.

Table 2: Tatmadaw Southern Command, MOC #971 units in Toungoo District as of August 2011:

MOC #9	Area of Deployment
MOC #9 Commander	Lives in Zayatkyi
TOC #1	Kler La
TOC #2	Buh Sah Kee
IB #39	Thaw Yay Kat - Tun Boh Dam
IB #73	Yay Shah, Shah See Bo; Gk'Ser Doh
IB #124	Than Daung Gyi
IB #440	Htee Tha Saw
IB #603	Lay Tho Ya Bridge
LIB #374	Ker Weh; K'Thwee Dee; Ka Thaw Pwe
LIB #376	Buh Sah Kee; Lu Thaw Township (Papun District)
LIB #377	Gkyaw Koh; Bpeh Leh Wah; Maw Pah Der; Gkaw Soe Koh
LIB #379	Gkaw Thay Der; Naw Soh (Point 2906); Ker Weh; K'Thwee Dee; Ka Thaw Pwe
LIB #539	Play Hsa Loh; Klaw Mi Der
LIB #540	Th'Ay Hta; Ko Day (48-Mile); Kler La
LIB #541	Buh Sah Kee (Point 3919)

Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Ler Doh Township, May to July 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in August 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Ler Doh [Kyauk Kyi] Township, Nyaunglebin District, between May and July 2011. It provides details on human rights abuses committed by Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #345 including: demands for forced labour clearing vegetation around Tatmadaw camps, serving as set tha at Tatmadaw camps, and collecting and delivering building materials and firewood; the imposition of movement restrictions and the requirement that villagers purchase travel permission documents to access agricultural workplaces; arbitrary demands for food and payment; and an order to dismantle field huts. This report also notes that villagers were directly ordered by LIB #345 Captain Thet Zaw Win not to discuss or report demands for payment, and describes cooperation between public and military sector officials to levy demands for payment. This report also mentions that some villagers have responded to abuses by negotiating with Tatmadaw officers to avoid orders to dismantle their field huts, and by moving to areas beyond consolidated Tatmadaw control to access humanitarian support and pursue livelihoods activities.

⁷⁰ The villager who wrote this report did not provide any further information as to why Saw K--- and Saw W--- were killed.

⁷¹ A Military Operations Command (MOC) typically consists of ten battalions. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs), made up of three infantry battalions (IBs or LIBs) each.

Situation Update | Ler Doh Township, Nyaunglebin District (August 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Nyaunglebin 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.⁷² This report was received along with other information from Nyaunglebin District, including two interviews and 70 photographs.⁷³

Introduction

In my area, the Tatmadaw⁷⁴ commits many different kinds of human rights abuse. Tatmadaw soldiers always demand tax and force villagers to labour. The [November 2010] election changed nothing and, as for the situation here, nothing has changed. The soldiers still force villagers to work for them and demand things from the villagers.

Forced labour, taxation and demands

In May, Tatmadaw LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #345 ordered the villagers not to build huts on their farms and to dismantle all huts [already established] in the villagers' farms. This has happened in the Ler Doh [Kyauk Kyi] Township area and is causing farming problems for the villagers. The village head discussed [the problem] with the Tatmadaw soldiers and the Tatmadaw soldiers agreed to let the villagers build huts on their farm. However, if the villagers build huts on their farms they have to pay 3,500 kyat (US \$4.55).⁷⁵ The villagers have to work on their farms, so they had to agree to pay.

On June 13th 2011, Captain Thet Zaw Win of Tatmadaw LIB #345, which is based at the H--- army camp, ordered the villagers from B---, L---, T--- and K--- village tracts to go and repair the army camp [at H---]. Each household had to bring two bamboo poles and two wooden posts. There were 400 households that had to bring the wooden posts and bamboo poles, and ten villagers that had to work for them [as *set tha*] every day at the army camp.⁷⁶ The Tatmadaw

⁷² 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.

⁷³ 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 Nyaunglebin District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Nyaunglebin District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Livelihood consequences of SPDC restrictions and patrols in Nyaunglebin District," KHRG, September 2009.

⁷⁴ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report and informants; however, in order to ensure clarity in this translation, "SPDC" has been replaced with "Tatmadaw" when referring to the state military and with "Burmese government" when referring to the national government.

⁷⁵ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 November 15th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

⁷⁶ *Set tha* is a Burmese term for forced labour duty as a messenger stationed at army camps or bases and serving as a go-between to deliver orders from army officers to village heads, but also involving other menial tasks when no messages are in need of delivery.

soldiers did not ask the villagers to work for them in the same way they had before. They asked instead for ten *set tha* to actually stay at their army camp to work for them.

On July 19th 2011, Tatmadaw LIB #345 Captain Way Pyo Thu forced the villagers from S---, N---, B--- and T--- village tracts to cut and clear vegetation for them around the O--- Pagoda army camp. The villagers in the area had to clear vegetation that stretched 50 yards out [from the camp perimeter] and it took the villagers five days to finish. Each of the four village tracts had to send 20 villagers every day.

Taxation and demands

On June 19th 2011, the Ler Doh *Myo Lon Mu* [Township Security Director] demanded three chickens from S--- village. This *Myo Lon Mu* always demands food from villagers and when Tatmadaw LIB #345 came and took military responsibility for Southern Ler Doh Township, they made demands on the villagers for a whole month. The villagers cannot raise enough animals [to meet soldiers' demands for food]. Each household has to pay about 3,000 kyat (US \$3.90) each month into a village fund. If they demand a lot of food, the village head has to collect more money, about 8,000 kyat (US \$10.39), from the villagers. Because of this [regular demands for food], the village head has to collect more and more money from the villagers.

On July 21st 2011, Tatmadaw LIB #345 Company Commander [Captain] Thet Zaw Win ordered the villagers from K---, B---, L--- and T--- village tracts to buy four [prepaid] cellular phone cards, totalling 150,000 kyat (US \$195). The village tracts decided to divide the cost between them. B--- village tract had to give 50,000 kyat (US \$64.94). K--- village tract had to give 30,000 kyat (US \$38.96). T--- village tract had to give 20,000 kyat (US \$25.97) and L--- village tract had to give 50,000 kyat. This commander, after he demanded and took the money, did not allow the villagers to talk about or report [what had happened].

On July 22nd 2011, Company Commander [Captain] Thet Zaw Win based at H--- camp ordered villagers to procure 1,500 [empty] fertiliser bags to build the army camp's defences. He ordered [villagers from] L--- and B--- village tracts to deliver these and to build the army camp defences.

At the same time [July 22nd], each household in T--- village tract and K--- village tract was ordered to give the Tatmadaw [LIB #345] one load of firewood every day and whenever they [villagers] came to the H--- army camp. There are 200 households [in T--- and K--- village tracts combined].

On July 25th 2011, Z--- Camp Commander Kyaw Kyaw Zin ordered villagers to bring firewood. Every household in A---, C--- and G--- villages had to provide one load of firewood to the camp.

Life under Tatmadaw control

Even though the [November 2010] election brought change, the Tatmadaw soldiers still come into villages and their relationship with villagers has not changed. They demand more and more money from villagers. The demands for money from the Township Administrative Officer come through the Village Tract Administrator. They [civilian officials] meet together with Tatmadaw LIB #345 every 15 days.

Villagers' situation

The villagers who live in the hill areas are now facing food shortages because last year, in 2010, the Tatmadaw came and attacked their villages, burning down the villagers' houses and destroying their food supplies. The villagers did not have the chance to work on their hill farms

regularly, so they have food shortages this year.⁷⁷ Because of this, and because [villagers] under Tatmadaw control do not have jobs to do, some villagers have moved closer to areas where they can receive help from the organisations [from Thailand providing cross-border support]. So they have moved closer to hill areas to look for work and to catch fish to sell.

When villagers [in Tatmadaw-controlled areas] want to travel they need to ask permission from the Tatmadaw soldiers. Tatmadaw soldiers allow the villagers travel because they can demand [payment for travel permission]. Farmers also have to pay money in order to work on their farms without disruption.

General information

In May, Tatmadaw LIB #264 at I--- army camp demanded money for each villager's farm hut. Villagers had to give 2,000 kyat (US \$2.60) per farm hut. The Tatmadaw soldiers give villagers the chance [to work and travel] because they can demand money from villagers and force villagers to work for them. They allow villagers to move around and work without disruption because they get money from them.

The Burmese government's primary school in E--- village sent a funding request to UNICEF and received millions [of kyat] to buy supplies and students' books. However, for the transportation of the books, they [the Burmese government]⁷⁸ demanded that the students' parents pay more than the books would have cost if they had bought them themselves.

Dooplaya Situation Update: August 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in August 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Kawkareik, Kya In and Waw Raw (Win Yaw) townships of Dooplaya District between April and August 2011. The villager describes human rights abuses committed by soldiers from at least three Tatmadaw battalions, including: shelling of villages, resulting in civilian injuries and destruction of houses and food supplies; demands for the fabrication and delivery of thatch and bamboo, and for the provision of food; restrictions on villagers; detention, physical abuse, and killing of villagers; shooting of villagers; and a demand for villagers, including children, to clear the perimeter of a Tatmadaw camp. The villager also expresses concern that these abuses disrupt villagers' livelihoods and the provision of education for children.

Situation Update | Dooplaya District (August 2011)

⁷⁷ While the KHRG researcher who wrote this report did not specify the timeframe of the attacks to which he was referring, KHRG has previously reported that approximately 2,000 villagers in central Kyauk Kyi [Ler Doh] Township fled a series of attacks in which five villagers were killed, eleven houses burned and landmines planted in abandoned villages between January 17th and March 26th 2010, following the establishment of a new Tatmadaw camp in Kheh Der village tract, See "Attacks and displacement in Nyaunglebin District", KHRG, April 2010 and "Attacks on displaced villagers in Nyaunglebin District", KHRG, January 2010.

⁷⁸ While the villager who wrote this report did not mention any specific actors in the Burmese government, other unpublished information received by KHRG from the same villager suggests that, with regard to this incident, he is referring to the Kyauk Kyi [Ler Doh] Township Education Coordinator within the Burmese government's Education Department.

*The following situation update was written by a villager in Doooplaya 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.*⁷⁹

Area Situation, April 2011 – August 2011

Kawkareik Township

On April 26th 2011, SPDC [Tatmadaw]⁸⁰ IB [Infantry Battalion] #283, based in Meh Naw Ah, shelled a village with mortars and two villagers were injured. The two villagers' names are Saw N---, 40 years old, and Naw N---, 41 years old. One house and [several] things belonging to villagers were destroyed. Three pots belonging to a villager named Saw L--- and one house belonging to Saw G--- were destroyed, and one cow belonging to Saw P--- was injured.

K--- village, Kawkareik Township

On May 13th 2011, commanding officer Win Naing Tun of SPDC Army IB #283, based in K--- army camp, demanded 400 thatch shingles from each [of the following] villages: K---, P---, G---, N---, A--- and O---. They had to deliver the thatch shingles on May 14th 2011.

Presently, villagers cannot work freely. The children can study in school, but villagers must always be aware.

T--- village, Kawkareik Township

On August 23rd 2011, an incident occurred, leading to villagers having to be cautious all the time.⁸¹ [Now] villagers are no longer allowed to wear longyis, rain clothes or traditional palm leaf hats. They [local Tatmadaw forces] only allow villagers to carry umbrellas and wear trousers.

Villagers can no longer work as normal and children can also no longer go to school as normal because the SPDC Army camp is now based in their village. Villagers do not know which battalion [is based in the camps] or who the [commanding] officer is.

I recently received accurate [credible] information that SPDC soldiers [from the camp in T---] killed two people on August 24th 2011. I did not obtain information about who these two people were, but I know one person was a Thai citizen who was returning from his parent-in-law's funeral.

⁷⁹ 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. KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Doooplaya District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Displacement Monitoring: Regular updates on Protection Concerns for villagers in Doooplaya and Pa'an districts and adjacent area in Thailand," KHRG, August 2011.

⁸⁰ In Karen, the Burmese phrases Na Ah Pa (SPDC) and Na Wa Ta (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase Na Wa Ta (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase Na Ah Pa (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term Na Ah Pa was used by the researcher and informants, and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

⁸¹ The KHRG researcher did not specify the type of incident that affected local security dynamics and led to the imposition of clothing restrictions on villagers.

W--- village, Kawkareik Township

On May 30th 2011, KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] and SPDC soldiers were fighting. After the fighting, SPDC soldiers arrested one villager. They bound him and beat him badly. His name is Saw A---. He is 22 years old. They also demanded three ducks from a villager named Naw P---, 40 years old, and three chickens from a villager named Saw S---, 43 years old.

On June 4th 2011, SPDC Army LIB #208, Column #2 Commander Nay Myo Aung demanded several villages each to provide 35 bamboo poles. The bamboo had to be very tall, ten times the length of one's fingertips to elbow [ten cubits]. Villages which had to cut and send the bamboo poles were M---, Ny---, Dt--- and Gk---, and two people from each village had to go and build [military] shelters in La--- village. If the villagers did not go, they [Tatmadaw LIB #208] would take action [to punish] the villagers.

As of August 28th 2011, some villagers in Kawkareik Township can work as normal and some are having difficulties working. Villagers here are mostly farmers, cultivating hill fields and rubber plantations. Villagers are working, but they work in fear. Armed groups that are active in Kawkareik Township are KNLA Battalion #18, KPF [Karen Peace Force], DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] Brigade #5,⁸² SPDC LIB #208, and SPDC IB #283. The SPDC units are the ones who oppress the civilians. If the DKBA or KNLA forces attack them, they [Tatmadaw forces] come back and abuse civilians.

Kya In Township

In the Kya In Township area, villagers are mostly farmers, cultivating hill fields and rubber plantations. The children attend school as normal.

On May 18th 2011, Commander Nay Myo Aung of Column #2 of Tatmadaw LIB #208 ordered 90 KI--- villagers to go and clear [vegetation from] the army camp's perimeter. I know that children were included with the villagers who did this [forced labour].

Waw Raw (Win Yaw) Township

On April 1st 2011, soldiers from SPDC LIB #588's army camp, led by Commander Than Zin La and based in the area of the Doo Wa Koh mountains, arrested U--- villager Saw B---, 25 years old, and they shot him directly in the left side of his chest. He was badly injured and they sent him to Tatmadaw Battalion #588. In Waw Raw Township, villagers can work as normal [without disruption]. KNLA Battalion #16 is [active] there.

⁸² DKBA forces in Dooplaya District that refused to transform into Tatmadaw Border Guard battalions, and have been fighting Tatmadaw forces since November 7th 2010, have been variously referred to as DKBA #907, K*lo Htoo Baw* [Golden Drum], and Brigade #5. Each of these terms refers to different configurations of DKBA units commanded by Na Kha Mway. Na Kha Mway left the KNU/KNLA in 1997 and became the commander of DKBA Battalion #907; in 2007 he was promoted to head four DKBA battalions (#901, #906, #907 and a security battalion) as the commander of the *Klo Htoo Baw* [Golden Drum] Tactical Command. In May 2009 this unit was reconfigured as DKBA Brigade #5, with Na Kha Mway commanding Battalions #901, 905, 906, 907 and 909; Brigade #5 was active in the Kya-In Seik Kyi, Kawkareik and Myawaddy areas of Dooplaya and Pa'an districts. In September 2011, it was reported that remaining DKBA forces were to be reconfigured into two tactical commands, *Klo Htoo Wah* and *Klo Htoo Lah*, and that Na Kha Mway would be the senior commander of these forces; see: "DKBA to accelerate military tactics," *The Irrawaddy*, September 8th 2011. For more on the origins of the current conflict and the transformation of DKBA troops into Border Guard battalions, see: "Protection concerns expressed by civilians amidst conflict in Dooplaya and Pa'an districts," KHRG, November 2010.

Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, August 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in August 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Papun District in January 2011 and human rights consequences for local communities. It contains updated information concerning Tatmadaw military activities and details the following human rights abuses: coordinated attacks on villages by Tatmadaw and Border Guard troops and the firing of mortars and small arms in civilian areas, resulting in displacement of the civilian population and the closure of two schools; the use of landmines by the Tatmadaw and non-state armed groups; and forced portering for the Tatmadaw and Tatmadaw Border Guards. The report also mentions government plans for a logging venture and the construction of a dam. Moreover, it documents villagers' responses to human rights concerns, including strategic displacement to avoid attacks and forced labour entailing physical security risks to civilians; advance preparation for strategic displacement in the event of Tatmadaw attacks; and seeking the protection of non-state armed groups against Tatmadaw attacks and other human rights threats.

Situation Update | Bu Tho Township, Papun District (August 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.⁸³ This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including 12 interviews and 98 photographs.⁸⁴

Situation in Bwa Der village tract, Bu Tho Township

In January 2011, SPDC [Tatmadaw]⁸⁵ and [Tatmadaw] Border Guard forces joined together and became active in Day Wah, Kyaw Bpah, Htee Th' Daw Hta and Mar Bpree. They then went to Bu Tho Koh to make attacks in the areas of O---, E---, A---, B---, Th---, Gh---, N---, S---, L---, K---, and H--- [villages]. In those village areas, some villagers had to flee in order to escape, and lost their livelihoods.

The units that made the attacks were SPDC Army LID [Light Infantry Division] #11 and Border Guard Battalion #1013. The commander of LID #11, [Infantry] Battalion #120 was Way Kyaw. Border Guard soldiers were led by Maung Chit and Pa Yuh Khay and their [respective] ranks are Company Commander and Deputy Company Commander. These Border Guard soldiers obey and follow orders from the SPDC Army because they get [their] salaries from them [Tatmadaw]. I have no idea how much salary they get.

⁸³ 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.

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the researcher and informants, and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

Based on the attacks on villages, villagers suffered as they had to flee, and two schools were lost and destroyed. One school which was lost was B--- School because the school teachers, students and villagers fled when SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers came, and they did not have that school anymore. I do not know how many students, villagers and households were there. The estimated number of students was over 20, with two school teachers. The school teachers did not dare meet with the soldiers that attacked them. They were afraid that they would have to carry [porter] things and guide the way to KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] soldiers close by, when a battle could then happen after which SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers would punish them.

The second school which was lost was P--- School located in N--- village in the K--- area. In January 2011, SPDC Army LID #11 and Border Guard Battalion #1013 came to Y--- and Gt--- [village areas], west of the Gkoh Loh River, in the eastern Bu Tho Township area, and they shot small and heavy weapons [in the area]. This school's teachers and students could not continue school lessons anymore because the two school teachers had come from a refugee camp. It was not school holidays, but the students were in separate places and if they wanted to study they would have had to do this [study] in the jungle, so they had to give up attending school.

SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers are currently active all the time. Now, L---, S---, N---, and Ny--- villagers are preparing [themselves] to be ready to flee. SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers are [presently] active in one more place, called Haw Mar. It is close to N--- and Ny--- villages. Some villagers from this area have fled already.

As for KNLA soldiers, they currently take security [measures] for us to be able to [sustain our] livelihoods in the areas that SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers are active. They [KNLA soldiers] planted landmines in order to disrupt SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers' movements. It [planting landmines] caused problems for the SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers because they could not advance quickly. KNLA soldiers are active to [ensure] security for the villagers' livelihoods in the area. If villagers did not have any rice to eat, the KNLA soldiers could not keep living [in the area the villagers live].⁸⁶

Their [the Burma government's] first plan is to conduct logging business [in Bwa Der village tract]. The second plan is: they have always had a plan to build a dam at Gkay Doh [and will continue] until it is finished.

SPDC Army and Border Guard soldiers active [in the area] also use many landmines and plant them but do not inform the villagers [of the locations of the mines]. In addition, they order villagers to porter things. They demand money if the villagers do not come to porter things.

The villagers face many problems [due to] these attacks. The problems concern food crises, health and education. These make it very hard to keep on living into the future.

As for the weather, it was abnormal [in early 2011] and people worked their hill fields, but they could not burn them because the rains came. A lot hill fields could not be replanted.

⁸⁶ For an in-depth discussion of the complex factors informing local perspectives on the role of non-state armed groups, and landmines, in protecting civilian communities in upland areas of northern Karen State from attacks by Tatmadaw forces, see: *Self-protection under strain: Targeting of civilians and local responses in northern Karen State*, KHRG, August 2010, pp.82-115.

Tenasserim Situation Update: Te Naw Th'Ri Township, May to September 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in October 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Tenasserim Division between May and October 2011. The villager describes incidents of human rights abuse, including: arbitrary taxation by civilian and military government officials to fund state-organised pyi thu sit local militia groups and schools; conscription of villagers into a pyi thu sit; and the execution of Saw L---, a villager who had been forced to serve as a guide accompanying an active patrol column of LIB #558. The villager who wrote this report believed Saw L--- was killed in retaliation for an attack against that Tatmadaw column by KNLA soldiers, in which one Tatmadaw soldier was killed and several others injured. This report also documents some of the ways in which villagers respond to human rights abuse, specifically through attempts to engage and negotiate with local powerful actors to reduce or avoid demands for arbitrary payments levied against villagers.

Situation Update | Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division (October 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Tenasserim 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.⁸⁷

Government [civilian and military] personnel collect protection money from Karen villagers

On October 29th 2011, a Pewa area village head reported that [Tatmadaw] LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #561 Major General Lar Myay Shwe demanded 70,000 kyat (US \$90.90)⁸⁸ and five baskets of rice (160 kg. / 352 lb.) from each of the villages in the Pewa area. These [demands] were made for the *pyi thu sit* [people's militia]⁸⁹ in K--- village. K--- is a village in the Pewa area of Te Naw Th'Ri Township. There are four villages located in the K--- village area. LIB #561 organised [villagers] to serve in the *pyi thu sit* in K--- village. Now, they [LIB #561] have organised 18 people [to serve in the militia] and given them weapons. K--- villagers did not want to serve as *pyi thu sit*, but they were threatened by the soldiers and forced to serve, so there was no other way but to do it.

"We always face demands. Each village always has to pay 70,000 kyat and give five baskets of rice for the pyi thu sit. They do not understand our problems and they said that we have to support people who protect our area."

Village head, Pewa village tract, Te Naw Th'Ri Township,
Tenasserim Division (October 2011)

⁸⁷ 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. KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Tenasserim District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Militarization, Development and Displacement: Conditions for villagers in southern Tenasserim Division," KHRG, March 2011.

⁸⁸ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 December 1st, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

⁸⁹ *Pyi thu sit*, or 'people's militia', are local militia groups composed of civilians recruited and trained by the Tatmadaw.

"We do not want to do this job. We do not want to take people's sweat [the fruit of people's labour]. What they pay us is not equal to that they demand [from the villagers]. There's nothing we can do. We close our eyes and work."

Saw P---, K--- village *pyi thu sit* member, Pewa village tract, Te Naw Th'ri Township, Tenasserim Division (October 2011)

Information gathered from Te Naw Th'ri Township on May 24th 2011

Over thirty soldiers from LIB #558 led by Captain Myo Thaw Zin Oo came into the Pewa area of Te Naw Th'ri Township and fought with KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] Battalion #11 on May 22nd 2011. During the battle, one soldier from LIB #558 was killed and four others were injured. Because his soldier died and other soldiers were injured, [Captain] Myo Thaw Zin Oo killed a [villager] guide named Saw L---, 39 years old.⁹⁰ Saw L--- was a villager from Ht--- village in Pewa Bplaw. A Pewa area village head, Saw W---, reported that Saw L--- left behind his wife, Naw T---, and four children, his youngest child being only two years old. The Burmese Army [Tatmadaw] soldiers [from LIB #558] ordered Saw L--- to guide the way for them when they went to clear [the KNLA] out of areas of Pewa that they wanted to clear.

Information gathered from Te Naw Th'ri Township on September 21st 2011

The information I got from *Bp'Doh*⁹¹ Hs--- was that Saw Ha Bay [Saw Ha Bee]⁹² came to Kyauk Maing [6-Mile] village and ordered village heads and religious leaders to meet him and gave them a statement with three topics:

1. An invitation to [non-state] armed groups to [meet and negotiate] an end to armed conflict.
2. [Non-state] armed groups can contact people [political leaders in the Burma government] who control the division [Tenasserim Division].
3. If the first steps [above] are completed [making contact to set up negotiations], the government controlling the country will form a [negotiation] party in order to talk with people who want peace and cooperation in the future.

⁹⁰ Soldiers on active patrol frequently order or request village heads to accompany active patrol columns and guide them in areas that may be contaminated by landmines and/ or where non-state armed groups operate; guides may be forced to walk at the front of a patrol column or may be forced to walk among soldiers. For recent incidents in which civilians guided troops, see "Thaton Situation Update: June to October 2011," KHRG, November 2011; "Villager executed in Papun District," KHRG, October 2011; and "Toungoo Situation Update: May to July 2011," KHRG, October 2011.

⁹¹ *Bp'Doh*, a Karen term that literally means 'big', is commonly used as a prefix to the name of a senior or high-ranking member of a political or military organisation.

⁹² Other media sources have also recently reported that Saw Ha Bay, or Saw Ha Bee, has been campaigning local community leaders in areas east of Mergui Town, where the KNU is currently blocking the construction of a highway linking Kanchanaburi in Thailand with the Ital-Thai deep-sea port currently under construction in Tavoy. See "Government 'KNU peace offers' designed to split," *Karen News*, October 2nd 2011; "Naypyidaw Sends More Troops to Tavoy Road Site," *The Irrawaddy*, November 10th 2011. Saw Ha Bay, or Saw Ha Bee, is a former Education Department Vice-Coordinator, who campaigned successfully as a Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) candidate in the 2010 election. KHRG has previously reported that, at that time, Saw Ha Bay demanded 40,000 kyat (approximately US \$45.45) from every village in Tatmadaw-controlled areas of Te Naw Th'ri Township in order to cover the cost of paper to make ballots, and was accompanied by Tatmadaw officers and representatives from the Yuzana Company, which has close links with the Tatmadaw. The head of the Yuzana Company, U Htay Myint, also ran for and won a seat in Parliament in the November 2010 elections, representing Tenasserim Division on the USDP ticket. See "Militarization, Development and Displacement: Conditions for villagers in southern Tenasserim Division," KHRG, March 2011.

Information gathered from Te Naw Th'Ri Township on September 21st 2011

The information I got from *Bp'Doh* Ht--- was that Saw Ha Bay was ordered [by the Burmese government] to come and meet with [non-state] armed groups on September 21st 2011 and he met with a group that has already surrendered, the KPF [Karen Peace Force].⁹³

Information gathered from Te Naw Th' Ri Township on September 23rd 2011

The information I got from *Bp'Doh* W--- was that on September 23rd 2011 Saw Ha Bay ordered 150 villagers from 12 villages to meet him. They discussed about how to repair schools, monasteries and bridges.

"I said that we won't pay as this is the government's job and the government should take responsibility for it. But they told me that we must pay. Then they again ordered me to go and meet with them to pay them money. Because some villages had paid money, they ordered me to go and meet with them again."

Saw C--- (male, 43), Y--- village head, Ma Noh Roh village tract, Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division

On June 1st 2011, for primary school funds in Ma Noh Roh, [Burmese] public education staff announced the collection of 3,000 kyat (US \$3.90) per month from the parents of each student in Bokpyin Township Branch of Pyi Kyi Ma Daing Township, Ma Noh Roh village tract. Therefore, students' parents were faced with a problem about sending their children to school. This meant that some parents could no longer send their children to school.

Township funds

On May 29th 2011, Bokpyin Township Branch of Pyi Kyi Ma Daing Township demanded 'Township' funds from the following villages: Ma Noh Roh, Kheh Chaw, Lan Po Kan and Ywa Tha Ywa. Ma Noh Roh had to pay 250,000 kyat (US \$324.68), Kheh Chaw had to pay 150,000 kyat (US \$194.81), Lan Po Kan had to pay 300,000 kyat (US \$389.61) and Ywa Tha Ywa had to pay 300,000 kyat.

"As I'm a Y--- leader, I refused [to pay] them as I have the right, but they disagreed. Then they ordered me to go and meet with Pyi Kyi Ma Daing administrators U Moe Htway Oo and U Kyaw Kyaw Han. They told me that I had to come and pay money on June 30th 2011. In the meantime, I decided to give in to their demands and I didn't complain at all and they let me leave. Seven days after I reached back to my village, Taung Nge Village Administrator U Ya Kyaw demanded each village to pay 10,000 kyat (US \$12.99) for a'myo th'mee yay ya [women's affairs] and k'lay thay tar [children training] programmes. Then, each village had to pay 10,000 kyat for an under-nineteen football competition in Bokpyin Township."

Saw C--- (male, 43), Y--- village head, Ma Noh Roh village tract, Te Naw Th'Ri Township, Tenasserim Division

⁹³ Formed in February 1997 after splitting from the KNLA, surrendering to and signing a ceasefire with the Burmese military government, the KPF controls some administrative areas in Three Pagodas Pass and operates a number of road and river checkpoints in the area of Three Pagodas Pass. After repeated rejections of Burmese government proposals to reform the KPF into Tatmadaw Border Guard forces, substantial elements reformed into Tatmadaw Border Guard troops in 2010. See *Mizzima Election 2010 Factsheet: KPF*.

Pa'an Situation Update: June to August 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in September 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Pa'an District between June 2011 and August 2011. It details recent Tatmadaw and Tatmadaw Border Guard activity, including camp locations and troop strength, and incidents related to a forced relocation order issued to eight villages in Lu Pleh Township by Tatmadaw Border Guard units on July 15th 2011. After the July 20th deadline for relocation, Tatmadaw and Border Guard forces commenced joint attacks against six of the villages ordered to relocate, including multiple days of heavy shelling and machine gun fire which the villager who submitted this report described as indiscriminate. On July 20th 2011 Border Guard troops also deliberately killed villagers' livestock and fired mortars into civilian areas of R--- village, injuring a 50-year-old woman, while retreating from an attack by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) on the Border Guard camp in R---. This report further documents Tatmadaw Border Guard demands for forced labour and forced porters. The villager who submitted this update raises villagers' concerns related to flooding along the Dta Greh [Hlaing Bwe] River during the 2011 monsoon season, and the abandonment of schools and loss of trade and livelihood opportunities due to forced relocation. This report notes that, in response to the abuses and concerns mentioned above, villagers in Pa'an District adopt strategies that include: moving to areas beyond Tatmadaw control, monitoring local security conditions, and hiding food stores in the jungle.

Situation Update | Pa'an District (September 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Pa'an 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.⁹⁴ This report was received along with other information from Pa'an District, including 47 photographs.⁹⁵

Tatmadaw locations and activity

In early June 2011, the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw]⁹⁶ unit which was active in Lu Pleh [Hlaing Bwe] Township was LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #548. Their battalion commander, Thu Koh, commanded one column of [more than] 50 soldiers and they always [regularly] conducted operations around Lu Pleh Township's main road connected to the Gklaw Gka Htee army camp. This SPDC Army unit also cooperated with the [Tatmadaw] Border Guard forces based in the Kaw Taw [Myaing Gyi Ngu] area.

⁹⁴ 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.

⁹⁵ 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 Pa'an District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Pa'an District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Functionally Refoulement: Camps in Tha Song Yang District abandoned as refugees bow to pressure," KHRG, April 2010.

⁹⁶ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report, and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

Column #1 of SPDC Army LIB #231, which is commanded by Battalion Commander Thu Koh, has been active along the main road between Gklaw Gka Htee and Meh Th'Waw village, on the [Burma – Thailand] border.

In the border places, such as Meh Ta Ree, Kler Day and Pway Poe Gklah, the army units that have been active there are Column #2 of LIB #231 and Column #2 of LIB #548, with over 40 soldiers in each column.

In Dta Greh [Bpaing Kyon] Township, the SPDC Army unit that has been active in the Htee Bper area is LIB #548, with nearly 60 soldiers under Battalion Commander Thu Koh. They came and conducted operations sometimes, but the area was flooded so travelling was not easy. They were active when they could be. The base for this army unit is Dta Greh [Bpaing Kyon] army camp.

There has not been a lot of SPDC Army activity in the border areas. They only sat in their camps, such as Bpoo Lu Tu 1248 [a military location] and Gka Teh (Ta Lay) army camps. There are 25 soldiers in Bpoo Lu Tu and 45 soldiers in Gka Teh. They have not yet conducted any special operations. These SPDC Army units always just waited for the Border Guard to conduct operations, and got information from them. The SPDC Army unit based in Bpoo Lu Tu is LIB #549 under Camp Commander Thee Ha Aung.

Border Guard locations and activity

In early June [2011], most Border Guard activities were in Lu Pleh Township, such as in the Kaw Taw [Myaing Gyi Ngu] area and on the Lu Pleh main road between Gklaw Gka Htee and Meh Th'Waw. In early June, Border Guard commanders arranged their soldiers and attacked the DKBA and the KNLA forces in villages of the Kaw Taw area and around Kaw Taw.

The Border Guard commanders managing these forces were Major General Tun Laing, Major General Pah Nwee, and Colonel Maung Chit Thu. These commanders had orders to secure the area and set up outposts. They appointed Battalion Commander Laing Thee of Border Guard Battalion #1019 as combat operations commander. They joined forces with ten SPDC Army soldiers from the *Klo Pa Doh* heavy weapons unit and they started attacking villages and forcibly relocating civilians as ordered. There were about 80 soldiers and they went from village to village as they had been ordered.

For the border areas, there was no special activity in the three townships. In Lu Pleh Township border areas, such as Meh Ta Ree and Wa Shu Koh, Column Commander Maw Lah Wah managed Border Guard Battalion #1015 with 45 soldiers. For Dta Greh Township border areas, the SPDC Army unit that took responsibility in the areas of Ler Bper Her, Gklay Moe Ta and to Gka Teh was Border Guard Battalion #1020 with nearly 60 soldiers under Battalion Commander Sar Lin. Border Guard Battalion #1015 set up their headquarters in Yar Tah village in Dta Greh Township. Border Guard Battalion #1020 set up their headquarters in Gkoh Gkoh in T'Nay Hsah [Nabu] Township.

Forcible relocation of civilians and displacement

On July 15th 2011, the Border Guard units managed by Major General Tun Laing, Major General Pah Nwee and Major Maung Chit Thu ordered village heads together and forced all of them to move their villagers from their villages and relocate to the Kaw Taw [area]. Villages that were ordered to leave were: L---, N---, B---, A---, M---, W---, P--- and K---. Within five days, the villagers had left and, while some went to Kaw Taw, there were a lot of people who fled to other places.

The photos below [top and bottom left] are of P--- village. All the villagers there fled and only houses remain [bottom left]. The photos [top] show the P--- village high school where lessons have stopped. Villages such as B---, A---, M---, W--- and P--- had only one school [between them] and so all of these villages' students attended the P--- high school [before it closed].

The photo bottom left is of K--- village from which villagers were forced to relocate. The villagers left K--- village and they were separated because some went to Kaw Taw and some to other places. The photo shows the K--- primary school which was abandoned and where teaching has stopped.



The two photos top left and right show the abandoned P--- village high school; According to the villager who took these photos and wrote this report, the P--- village high school served the children of at least five villages, including B---, A---, M---, W--- and P--- villages, before residents were forced to relocate in July 2011. The photo bottom left shows other abandoned buildings in P--- village; the photo bottom right shows the abandoned primary school in K--- village. *[Photos: KHRG]*

The photos below are of B--- village from which villagers were forced to relocate, and now all the villagers have fled. The building of the big bridge was organised by a senior monk in Kaw Taw and served as an important travel and trade route in connection to which the villagers did business. Since the villagers were forced to relocate, the villagers' businesses have been ruined. No one stayed in the village. Some went to a relocation site [at Kaw Taw], and some went to other places. The photos below show the same bridge that was organised by the monk. There used to be shops and stalls for selling things beside the bridge.

All the villages that people had to leave were located in Lu Pleh Township, Pa'an District. Since 1995, it has mostly been the DKBA forces that have stayed in those villages and there were a lot of villagers who were DKBA soldiers. Now, there are problems between the DKBA and the Border Guard for which villagers are blamed and, because of the SPDC's trickery, even the Karen now have conflict and are fighting amongst themselves.



According to the villager who took these photos, the B--- village bridge, top left, played an important role in local commerce prior to the forced relocation of B--- village, along with six other communities in the area, Tatmadaw Border Guard units under the command of Major General Tun Laing, Major General Pah Nwee and Major Maung Chit Thu. In the two photos bottom left and right, soldiers from a Karen armed group are seen crossing the bridge in B--- village, after residents had left the village on July 20th 2011. The photo top left also shows the bridge in B--- village. [Photos: KHRG]



The photos above show houses and a road in B--- village, from which residents were ordered to relocate to the Kaw Taw area by Tatmadaw Border Guard units under the command Major General Tun Laing, Major General Pah Nwee and Major Maung Chit Thu on July 15th 2011. [Photos: KHRG]

Border Guard attacks on villages

On July 20th 2011, a Border Guard force with about 80 soldiers commanded by Border Guard Battalion #1019 Battalion Commander Laing Thin and that had joined with and were led by the SPDC [the ten SPDC Army soldiers from *Klo Pa Doh* heavy weapons unit] approached L--- village and shelled the village with mortar fire for two days. The reason they shelled [the village]

with mortars, the Border Guard said, was that the villagers who had not left and stayed in the village must either be DKBA or KNU [KNLA] soldiers. Those who shelled the mortars for the Border Guard were the SPDC Army soldiers which led the Border Guard soldiers. Ten SPDC Army soldiers formed the mortar [heavy weapons] unit. The weapons that they used during the attack were an 81 mm mortar and one .5 calibre machine gun and they fired them all day. Their soldiers advanced little by little and they took L--- village.

In N--- village, the Border Guard soldiers fired mortar shells from the opposite side of the Salween River, so the villagers did not dare to stay anymore and fled.

After July 20th 2011, the Border Guard left L--- village and came and attacked the DKBA forces based at E---. They attacked with heavy and small weapons fire and they secured the top of the hill, after which they started shelling the A--- bridge area.

E--- was on the top of a hill overlooking B---, W--- and M--- villages, and P--- and K--- villages. Starting on July 25th 2011, they shelled B---, W--- and M--- as well as around the B--- village pagoda; they just shelled like crazy [carelessly]. The village that was damaged most was M---. There were lots of shells that exploded beside the B--- village bridge shown in the photos [above]. They shelled the three villages [B---, W--- and M---] for one day and one night. There are no villagers in these places now.

Village outside of Tatmadaw control

The photos below are of a village called Y--- in Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District. The village is located in the mountains and some villagers from R--- and T--- village came and stayed there. The villagers who live there work in hill fields and hide their rice in the jungle. They have not faced any SPDC Army encounters. They work for themselves and listen to the news. Only the KNLA sometimes comes there. The villagers set up the village many years ago. The villagers say they will never go back to a big village as long as the situation is unstable. They will stay in their hiding place.





The photos above show houses in Y--- village, which is in an area of Dta Greh Township beyond Tatmadaw or Tatmadaw Border Guard control. According to the villager who took these photos and wrote this report, some residents of Y--- village previously lived in R--- and T--- villages; the villager explained that Y--- villagers ensure their security by monitoring the local situation and hiding rice caches in the jungle..
[Photos: KHRG]

Forced labour

The photos below are of villagers from R--- who had to carry food for the Border Guard. R--- village is in Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District. At the start of the rainy season the vehicle road was destroyed [became muddy and impassable due to rain] and the villagers have had to carry rations [by foot] for the Border Guard once a month. It takes one day to carry the rations, but sometimes they have to sleep [spend a night] along the way. Men, women, and all people who can carry rations have to go. They have to go six, seven, ten and sometimes more than ten people at a time. The reason [R--- villagers have to porter] is that there was a Border Guard army camp near R--- village.



According to the villager who took the photos above, these villagers are residents of R--- village, Dta Greh Township who were forced to do tasks such as cooking, sentry duty, camp repair and portering water and firewood without compensation, for soldiers based at the Border Guard Battalion #1015 camp in R--- village under the command of Mu Maw Dweh. Note that all of the villagers shown in these photos are women, except for the man in the photo above right, at the far left of the photo. [Photos: KHRG]

The Border Guard unit based in the R--- army camp was Border Guard Battalion #1015. The Camp Commander was Mu Maw Dweh and there might have been about 15 to 20 soldiers there. The soldiers forced the villagers to work for them, such as [repairing] the camp fence, finding firewood, carrying water, acting as sentries and cooking for them. There was no compensation for the villagers. There are no Border Guard soldiers in the camp now. In July 2011, the camp was attacked and secured by KNU [KNLA] soldiers.

Flooding

The photos below are of R--- village. In August 2011, it rained a lot and the Dta Greh River [Hlaing Bwe River] flooded, and it flooded some houses in R--- village. The villagers have had to face many problems. They have had to do forced labour and now they face flooding problems. Some villagers here had to move away from the river [due to the flooding]. They were very happy because the Border Guard camp was not there any more, and they believed they would no longer have to carry rations for the Border Guard once a month. However they did not have long to relax, as now when the Border Guard travels through on patrol, they force the villagers to rotate and go for three days each to porter for them, until they make a new camp in a far away place. Then the villagers are released and they can return [to R--- village].



The six photos above document examples of flooding on the Dta Greh [Hlaing Bwe] River in the vicinity of R--- village, Dta Greh Township following heavy rain during August 2011. According to the villager who took these photos, some R--- villagers temporarily abandoned homes close to the river due to the flooding; see photos middle left and right. Other residents, meanwhile, continued to pursue livelihoods activities such

as fishing and animal husbandry, despite the flooding in R--- village; see photos top right and bottom left and right. [Photos: KHRG]

Villager injured by mortar

The photos below are of Naw P---, 50, in R--- village, Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District. On July 20th 2011, when the KNU [KNLA] were attacking the R--- [Tatmadaw] camp, before the Border Guard soldiers retreated they fired their weapons into R--- village and fired [mortars] so randomly that the mortar shrapnel hit Naw P--- once in the stomach and once in her right thigh. The Border Guard soldiers shot everyone's pigs and goats that they saw. Naw P--- was hit by mortar shell shrapnel that lodged itself in her stomach. After the Border Guard retreated, the villagers sent the woman who was hit [Naw P---] to the KNU [KNLA] medics and she was injected [with a sedative] and treated. In the afternoon, she was sent to A--- hospital. The piece of shrapnel was successfully removed. It [the operation and treatment] took five days and it cost more than 600,000 kyat (US \$723).⁹⁷ She had to borrow [money] from other people. That [the cost] was the biggest thing that affected this villager's life. When she could not [afford to] pay any more money, she came back to her village and contacted her friends on the border, and she was sent to a hospital in Thailand. After that, in the first week of August, she was sent to the O--- hospital.



The two photos above show Naw P---, a 50-year-old resident of R--- village, Dta Greh Township. According to the villager who took these photos and wrote this report, on July 20th 2011 Naw P--- was injured in her stomach and right leg by mortar shrapnel when Tatmadaw Border Guard soldiers fired mortars indiscriminately into the R--- village area, following a KNLA attack on the Tatmadaw camp in B--- village. Following this incident, other R--- villagers lent Naw P--- money to pay for her medical care in hospitals in Burma and Thailand, which was estimated to cost approximately 600,000 kyat (US \$723). [Photos: KHRG]

Claymore mines

Border Guard Battalion #1015 from the R--- camp used the landmines in the photos below. They placed them at the back of the grounds near the [R---] camp gate. The SPDC Army supplied them with these landmines. The Border Guard force there was controlled by the SPDC Army, and they did as they were ordered.

⁹⁷ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 October 25th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 830 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.



The four photos above show factory-produced claymore mines; the villager who took these photos reported that these mines were provided by the Tatmadaw to Border Guard Battalion #1015, which planted the mines near the gate of Battalion #1015 camp at R---. In the photo top right, the Burmese inscription 'yan thu bet' translates as 'enemy side' or 'side facing enemy'; in the photo bottom right, the inscription 'shay twet maing a saing 36/11' reads 'frontline mine width 36/11'. [Photos: KHRG]

Dooplaya Situation Update: August 2011 to September 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in September 2011 by a villager describing events and military activities occurring in Kawkaik Township, Dooplaya District, during the period between August and September 2011. The villager describes the shelling of civilian areas by DKBA troops resulting in the destruction of a villager's house, and villagers' fears of violence by DKBA forces following the defection of a DKBA soldier to Tatmadaw Border Guard troops and his transport through the area around their community. The report also details demands for payment issued by KNU/KNLA Peace Council soldiers; discusses the death of a KNU/KNLA Peace Council officer by natural causes; and raises villagers' concerns about the flooding of bean and corn plantations along the Moei River at the beginning of September which resulted in destruction of farmers' seeds and crops.

Situation Update | Kawkaik Township, Dooplaya District (September 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Dooplaya 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.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ 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

On August 24th 2011, KNU/KNLA Peace Council⁹⁹ forces became active in the Palu area and they taxed every house 100 baht, but no one knows what they will use that money for.

On September 1st 2011, Saw Paw Moo, the Brigadier Warrant Officer in the KNU/KNLA Peace Council also called *Thu Koh Hter Kee* [literally 'Officer One-Two'] died. In the past he was a Company Sergeant Major [with the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)] and he cooperated with the KNU [Karen National Union] for many years and many months. What happened then, we do not know but he left [the KNLA] and joined the KNU/KNLA Peace Council controlled by General Htein Maung based in Htoh Gkaw Ko [in Dta Greh Township, Pa'an District]. He had been working less [recently] because he had developed a kidney disease, so he went to Mae Sot hospital on September 1st 2011. He left his organisation, the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, and he went to be with his Father in heaven. His funeral was held in Gklay Thoo Kloh on September 3rd 2011.

On the morning of Sunday, September 4th 2011, at 6:30 am, the DKBA [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] fired two small mortars in the area of D--- village. The DKBA tried to attack the place where the Border Guard soldiers under the command of *Bo Gkya Na Bpa* are based. The mortar shells hit a house, but no one was injured. Only villagers live in the places they shelled; there were no any army troops there.¹⁰⁰

On September 8th 2011, at 9:00 am, a DKBA [soldier] named G--- defected to the Border Guard forces under *Bo Gkya Na Bpa* and brought an M16 and one magazine. Two cars came and drove him up into the Palu area [to] D--- village. Because of this, the [D---] village head is worried that the DKBA soldiers who live in the jungle will come and bring violence upon the village.

Because of the heavy rain between September 9th to 13th 2011, a few of the cornfields and bean fields beside the [Moei] River flooded. If it does not stop raining and the rain continues as it has, many crops and seeds will be destroyed. This is a natural disaster, but no one will help the farmers, neither the government nor organisations. This is our fate and we have to accept it.

Pa'an Situation Update: September 2011

which they are familiar. When writing situation updates, villagers are encouraged to summarise recent events, raise issues that they consider important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area. KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Doooplaya District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Threats to human rights, obstacles to protection: Conditions for civilians seeking refuge in Phop Phra District, Thailand," KHRG, November 2010.

⁹⁹ The KNU/KNLA Peace Council, also called the Karen Peace Council or KPC, is an armed group which split from the Karen National Union (KNU) in 2007 and subsequently refused to comply with orders from the then-SPDC government to transform its forces into the Tatmadaw Border Guard; see: "KNU/KNLA Peace Council," *Mizzima News*, June 7th 2010 and "KPC to be outlawed if it rejects BGF," *Burma News International*, August 30th 2010.

¹⁰⁰ On November 4th 2011, media sources reported that DKBA 5th Brigade under Brigadier Na Kha Mway, which had been engaged in active conflict with government forces in Doooplaya and Pa'an districts since the November 7th 2010 election, agreed to a ceasefire with Burma government representatives. See "DKBA Brigade 5 Reaches Ceasefire with Naypyidaw," *The Irrawaddy*, November 4th 2011. As of October 21st 2011, KHRG had published 88 short updates about human rights abuses and protection concerns of civilians during the post-election conflict in Doooplaya and Pa'an districts; see *Displacement Monitoring: Regular updates on protection concerns for villagers in Doooplaya and Pa'an districts and adjacent areas in Thailand*, For further background information on the origins of the conflict, see *Protection concerns expressed by civilians amidst conflict in Doooplaya and Pa'an district*, KHRG, November 2010.

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in September 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Pa'an District in September 2011. It details an incident in which Tatmadaw and Tatmadaw Border Guard soldiers forced local villagers to porter military supplies and equipment while wearing Border Guard uniforms during a joint attack on a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) encampment at Kler Law Hseh. The villager who wrote this situation update also reported that since this attack Border Guard soldiers have been based in the Kler Law Hseh area and have forced villagers to porter or make payments in lieu of portering, as well as perform forced labour on military-owned agricultural projects. The villager also reported two distinct incidents in which Tatmadaw and Border Guard troops have confiscated villagers' land in order to build a military camp and cultivate bean plantations.

Situation Update | T'Nay Hsah Township, Pa'an District (September 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Pa'an 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.¹⁰¹

On September 21st 2011 at around 8:45 am, Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1019 led by Company Commander Pa Mee Cho, Battalion #1017 Commander Dih Dih and Burmese Army soldiers from LID [Light Infantry Division] #22 attacked the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] Battalion #101 camp at Kler Law Hseh on the Burma-Thailand border. During the attack, the Border Guard and Burmese Army soldiers used villagers they had arrested to porter for them and forced the villagers to wear Border Guard uniforms. The villagers were from Th--- and Sh--- villages. The fighting took place between around 8:45 am and 10:25 am, after which they managed to take over the KNLA Battalion #101 camp.

The September 21st attack

The [Border Guard and Tatmadaw] attack started on September 21st 2011 at around 8:45 am and finished at around 10:25 am, and won them the KNLA camp [at Kler Law Hseh]. The day that the Border Guard and Burmese Army attacked the KNLA camp [at Kler Law Hseh] was World Peace Day [September 21st 2011]. The KNLA did not shoot back at the Border Guard and the Burmese Army soldiers because the Border Guard and Burmese army stayed in the villages [where civilians live]: [they] set up their mortars inside Sh--- village, and [stayed] about one minute's walk outside of Th--- village. The KNLA stayed on the nearby mountain. The KNLA did not fight back because they [the Border Guard and Tatmadaw soldiers] were in the villages. Two KNLA soldiers died. The Border Guard and Burmese Army soldiers fired over 50 mortar shells, including 81 mm and 60 mm rounds, as well as M79 40 mm [grenade launchers] and RPG-7s [anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers].

The Border Guard and Burmese army soldiers arrested villagers and called them to serve as porters to carry their supplies and rations. They put Border Guard uniforms on all villagers who went and carried supplies for them. Villagers who did not want to go had to pay money. There were two types of payment: one for a month and one for 15 days. If you did not dare to go and

¹⁰¹ 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. KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Pa'an District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Functionally Refoulement: Camps in Tha Song Yang District abandoned as refugees bow to pressure," KHRG, April 2010.

you wanted to hire someone to go porter in your place, you had to pay 100,000 kyat (US \$122.70)¹⁰² for a month or 50,000 kyat (US \$61.35) for 15 days.

Now that the Border Guard occupies the KNLA Battalion #101 camp, they order the villagers to porter rations and water from the village to the camp where they stay. They put Border Guard uniforms on the villagers and on the village head [when the villagers are bringing rations to the camp] so as not to mistake them for KNLA soldiers. There are five people [that regularly have to come to the camp] who the Border Guard order to wear Border Guard uniforms. They are Saw B--- [the Th--- village head], Saw M--- [the former Th--- village head], Saw G--- and another two villagers whose names are unknown. These village heads and the villagers are busy working for the Border Guard now. The above information was provided by two local sources who witnessed Th--- villagers wearing Border Guard uniforms while portering for Border Guard troops. [This paragraph has been partially redacted to protect the identity of KHRG sources.]

Land confiscation and forced labour

Border Guard Battalion #1017 Battalion Commander Dih Dih summoned village heads to meet him on September 26th 2011 and ordered 100 villagers from M--- and G--- to go and harvest his corn and sow beans in Za Ya Phyu [Th'Ro Wah] village. Battalion Commander Dih Dih have been confiscating land belonging to Shan people [who live in Karen State] to sow beans.

The Tatamadaw soldiers from LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #358 also took villagers' land in M--- and G--- villages to build their army camp. These two villages are very close.

Pa'an Situation Update: September 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in September 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in T'Nay Hsah Township, Pa'an District during September 2011. It details an incident in which a soldier from Tatmadaw Border Guard #1017 deliberately shot at villagers in a farm hut, resulting in the death of one civilian and injury to a six-year-old child. The report further details the subsequent concealment of this incident by Border Guard soldiers who placed an M16 rifle and ammunition next to the dead civilian and photographed his body, and ordered the local village head to corroborate their story that the dead man was a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) soldier. The report also relates villagers' concerns regarding the use of landmines by both KNLA and Border Guard troops, which prevent villagers from freely accessing agricultural land and kill villagers' livestock and pets, and also relates an incident in September 2011 in which a villager was severely maimed when he stepped on a landmine that had been placed outside his farm.

Situation Update | T'Nay Hsah Township, Pa'an District (September 2011)

*The following situation update was written by a villager in Pa'an 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.*¹⁰³

¹⁰² All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 October 5th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 815 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

¹⁰³ 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

Injury and concerns involving landmines

On September 13th 2011, a Gk--- villager named Saw P---, 30, had gone to his farm to replant his rice paddy which had died. He returned to his village in the evening and on the way, at 6:30 pm, he stepped on a landmine outside his farm. His farm is far from Gk--- village, about a 20-minute walk. He stepped on the landmine along the La--- River bank outside his farm. His left foot was torn apart when the landmine exploded. After the landmine exploded, [Tatmadaw] Border Guard Battalion #1017 Corporal Saw Bpa Mi Hsaw went to investigate and brought him [Saw P---] back to Gk--- village. The landmines were planted by Corporal Saw Bpa Mi Hsaw and his soldiers. They planted the landmines and sharpened bamboo stakes around the village. After the Border Guard soldiers took Saw P--- to the village, a medic named Saw B--- treated his injuries. Thara¹⁰⁴ Saw B--- provides medical training in Gk--- village.

In the Gk--- area, the active armed groups are Border Guard Battalion #1017, the KNU-KNLA [Karen National Union-Karen National Liberation Army] Peace Council¹⁰⁵ and KNLA Battalion #101. Gk--- village is located in T’Nay Hsah Township near Ky---, Na---, N---, M--- and Dt--- villages.

The villagers also reported that the armed groups which are most active in this area are the Border Guard and KNLA, and that they plant landmines. However, the KNLA plants the landmines around their army camp, and when they plant the landmines they tell the villagers where they plant them. Border Guard Battalion #1017 soldiers use the villages as their army camp and they also plant landmines to protect themselves, but they do not let the villagers know where they plant them. The Gk--- village head also mentioned that because of the landmines, dogs, goats and a herd of cows have also been killed. No one knows exactly how many cows or dogs have been injured or killed [by landmines]. The dogs were mating [when they were killed by landmines] and no one knows who their owners were.

The [Gk---] village head also said that the Border Guard soldiers living in Gk--- and Ky--- villages mostly use *dtaiing* [tripwire] mines. The Border Guard [Battalion #1017] commanders are Gk--- and Ky--- villagers, so they [Battalion #1017 soldiers] live in those villages and they have not built a separate army camp. Border Guard Battalion #1017 Company Commander Captain Saw Hsa P’lee and Section Commander Corporal Saw Bpa Mi Hsaw live in Gk--- village. Because the Border Guard soldiers are based in the village, the villagers live in fear as they worry that a battle might occur in the village.

The [Gk---] village head also said that Border Guard Battalion #1017 left [Ky---] on September 19th 2011 and removed all the landmines that they had planted.¹⁰⁶

Attack on villagers

issues that they consider to be important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area. KHRG’s most recent analysis of the situation in Pa’an District can be found in the recent Field Report, “Functionally Refoulement: Camps in Tha Song Yang District abandoned as refugees bow to pressure,” KHRG, April 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Thara is a Karen term used for a teacher, pastor, or any person to whom one wishes to show respect.

¹⁰⁵ The villager who wrote this report is here most likely referring to the KNU/KNLA Peace Council (also called the Karen Peace Council or KPC), an armed group based in Htoh Gkaw Ko, Pa’an District, which split from the Karen National Union (KNU) in 2007 and subsequently refused to comply with orders from the then-SPDC government to transform its forces into the Tatmadaw Border Guard; see: “KNU/KNLA Peace Council,” *Mizzima News*, June 7th 2010 and “KPC to be outlawed if it rejects BGF,” *Burma News International*, August 30th 2010.

¹⁰⁶ While the villager who submitted this report to KHRG reported here that the Ky--- village head believed Border Guard Battalion #1017 to have left the Ky--- area on September 19th 2011, another report submitted later in September by the same villager documented a subsequent attack by Border Guard Battalion #1017 in the Ky--- area on September 21st; see: “Pa’an Situation Update: June to September 2011,” KHRG, October 2011.

On September 17th 2011, a Border Guard Battalion #1017 soldier shot at a Ky--- villager's farm hut. According to the villagers' beliefs, they were making sacrificial offerings in the hut to ensure their farm's success when the Border Guard soldier shot at them. The villagers believed that the Border Guard soldier shot at them because he had heard loud voices and assumed that, because of the loud noise, KNLA soldiers might be in the hut. That villager's hut is close to a KNLA army camp. In this attack, a villager named Saw A--- was killed, but this villager is not from the Ky--- village area. He was from Pathein [the capital city of Irrawaddy Division] and had come to work in the area. The owner of the hut that the Border Guard soldier shot at is named *Pa Dtee* [Uncle]¹⁰⁷ Ht---. According to the villagers' beliefs, if a villager from another village dies in their village they will not bury the villager where they bury their own [villagers] so they buried him in another place. The villagers also mentioned that a child was injured in the attack. The child was injured on the inside of the left arm. This child is only six years old.

The Border Guard Battalion #1017 soldier who attacked the villagers is named Saw Htee Yoh. He was a [civilian] medic before the transformation of [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA)] into the Border Guard, after which he joined the Border Guard.¹⁰⁸

The Ky--- village head also reported that on the day of the attack, and after the villager [from Pathein] died, the Border Guard soldiers put an M16 assault rifle and two magazines [of ammunition] beside the villager who died and took a picture. After that, they ordered the village head to tell people this villager was a KNLA soldier.

Papun Situation Update: Dweh Loh Township, Received in November 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in November 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Dweh Loh Township, Papun District, between December 2010 and September 2011. This report provides additional information about the summary execution of Saw K---, previously reported by KHRG in October 2011 in the bulletin "Villager executed in Papun District", and also documents the arbitrary arrest of civilians who were subsequently forced to porter for Tatmadaw troops. It also describes de facto movement restrictions caused by the indiscriminate firing of heavy weapons and machine guns into travel routes and agricultural areas surrounding villages as a security precaution during Tatmadaw resupply operations. The report details the ways in which villagers in areas beyond government control engage in covert trade with villagers living in areas under government control and employ early-warning systems to flee Tatmadaw patrols..

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

¹⁰⁷ *Pa Dtee*, meaning 'Uncle', is a familiar Karen term of respect attributed to an older man; it does not necessarily signify any actual familial ties between the 'Uncle' and the villager who wrote this report.

¹⁰⁸ While Tatmadaw and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) units have for years operated together, this operational hierarchy became formalised with the DKBA's transformation into a 'Border Guard Force' under control of the Tatmadaw and containing a fixed number quota of Tatmadaw officers. This transformation dates to at least May 2009, when commanding officers stated in high-level meeting of DKBA officers that the DKBA would transform itself into a 'Border Guard Force.' Leaked minutes from the May 2009 meeting are retained by KHRG on file. Ceremonies attended by Tatmadaw commanders officially announced the transformation of large portions of the DKBA into Border Guard Forces in September 2010; see, for example: "Border Guard Force formed at Atwinkwinkalay region, Myawady Township, Kayin State," *New Light of Myanmar*, September 2010.

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.¹⁰⁹ This report was received along with other information from Papun District, including three incident reports and 4 photographs.¹¹⁰

In the Dweh Loh Township area, there are two groups of people. One group lives under the control of the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw]¹¹¹ and the second group remains displaced in the jungle. The civilians who live under the SPDC Army's control face forced labour, arrests and killings, which still continue to happen. The civilians who live outside of the SPDC Army's control live in the jungle. They cultivate hill fields and work together with the civilians who live under control. Villagers in government-controlled areas communicate [with them] and sell them yearly supplies of salt and fish paste. They have communication with villagers in areas outside government control and then [villagers in areas outside government control] flee if the SPDC Army begins active patrols in the area. The displaced people live like this and have lived like this year after year.

SPDC Army military activities

Here in Dweh Loh Township, there are two groups of SPDC Army units that have been active: LID [Light Infantry Division] #11 units and IB [Infantry Battalion] #96. LID #11 units were active in the eastern areas of the Bu Loh Kloh [Bilin River] and the Baw Kyo Traw [Baw Kyo River Valley] and along the Koo Seik – Ka Ma Maung vehicle road.

The LID #11 units that stay near the vehicle road¹¹² are sent rations once a year, at which time the soldiers take security measures. When the [supply] vehicles come, the soldiers always fire their mortars and machine guns. This makes the civilians who live near the vehicle road afraid and they do not dare go to their farms, hill fields or orchards, so many of their paddy and plantation crops are destroyed. Now, it is nearly the dry season and the time for the SPDC Army units to be sent food. The civilians are worried that they will be attacked by the Tatmadaw if they go to harvest, work or travel, and they have not dared do so in case this happens.

The SPDC Army [LID #11] soldiers who were active along the Baw Kyo Traw vehicle road and based in Th--- [army camp] always demand thatch shingles. However, the civilians developed a strategy of working together with the Karen [KNLA] soldiers who stay near them when the SPDC soldiers demand thatch shingles and bamboo. [Two sentences redacted to maintain the

¹⁰⁹ 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.

¹¹⁰ 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.

¹¹¹ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

¹¹² While the villager who wrote this report did not specify here whether he was referring to the Koo Seik – Ka Ma Maung or the Baw Kyo Traw vehicle road, a KHRG researcher who has extensive experience travelling in that region explained that he thought the villager was most likely referring to the Koo Seik – Ka Ma Maung vehicle road here.

effectiveness of this response strategy.] This strategy was used by the village head in 2010 for the civilians to be able to avoid making the thatch shingles and bamboo that the SPDC Army demanded. Now, in 2011, the Tatmadaw soldiers have not asked for thatch shingles and bamboo again. Columns of the SPDC Army based in Th--- were active between M--- army camp and Th--- army camp. When they were patrolling, if they saw villagers on their way to work, or whenever they saw monks, women, men or children, they would arrest them and make them go with them. Once back at the camp, they would release them.

The villagers who lived in the Th--- and M--- areas were too afraid to go to out to their fields, farms, to work or to travel. They did not dare go and sleep in their farms [field huts]. When the paddy had *der htaw bplaw htaw* [matured], they were too scared to go and sleep [in their field huts], so wild pigs and rats came and ate the harvest and many of the paddy fields were destroyed. When SPDC Army soldiers patrolled and saw villagers travelling to work, they arrested them all. Therefore, none of the civilians dared to go to their fields to work during the time to harvest their paddy fields, even though they knew their crops would be destroyed or eaten if they did not go.

The SPDC Army [unit] active west of the Bu Loh Kloh [River] was IB #96. Their camps were in three places: Meh Way, Gkay Gkaw and Wa Muh. To go between two camps, a small column [of soldiers] was responsible for transporting sick people, food and other [supplies]. They [IB #96] reserved the small column [for this purpose].

The SPDC Army unit [IB #96] had a small column of soldiers that were active between these camps. Whenever they saw villagers on the way to their fields, farms, orchards or to work, the villagers were arrested and forced to carry things for them. Whenever they saw women, men, children or the elderly, the soldiers did not ask them any questions and just arrested them. Now, because the civilians did not dare to go to work, the cows, buffalos and wild pigs have eaten and destroyed villagers' paddy and plantations.

Civilians' livelihoods

During four months between December 2010 and April 2011, the SPDC Army sent enough food for one year to Wa Muh, Gkay Gkaw, Meh Way and Ku Thu Hta army camps. Civilians who live near the camps had to carry [the food] for the SPDC Army, so many of them could not tend to their fields.

Furthermore, the weather was not good this year [in 2011]. There was a lot of rain, so civilians who worked hill fields could not burn their fields, and some could not work on their fields at all. This year, insects also ate paddy from the farms and hill fields so a lot of the paddy was destroyed.

Arrests

The SPDC Army [unit] which was active west of the Bu Loh Kloh [River] was IB #96. On the night of June 6th 2011, at 10:00 pm, 20 to 30 soldiers from IB #96 were going to send food to other soldiers in A---. However, when they arrived in D---, they saw a light near the ground [ahead of them] which they did not recognise, so they shot their guns directly [at the light]. After they fired, they shouted: "*Who's there?*" Villagers Saw M--- and Saw W--- answered: "*We're villagers and we're selling beef.*" After that, the SPDC Army soldiers came and saw the two villagers were, as they had said, selling beef. The villagers were then told to leave their beef shop and to carry things [porter for the Tatmadaw soldiers]. However, Saw W--- only went half of the way before he managed to escape.

Saw M--- arrived in O--- village [after being forced to porter] and before daybreak, while the SPDC Army soldiers were sleeping, he met with Naw K--- and they managed to escape back to their village.

[Naw K--- was in O--- village because] the SPDC Army unit which stayed in Wa Muh army camp [IB #96] had wanted to go to A--- at night, so the villagers there would not know [of their arrival]. When they arrived in Ny--- at 9.00 pm, it was dark and also raining. They saw Naw K--- who had gone to catch frogs. When she came back, she entered her house. The SPDC Army soldiers followed her in silently, then captured her and covered her mouth. After [the capture], they went outside and ordered her to carry [porter] a load. Naw K--- had a seven-month-old baby, but she could not nurse her baby [because she had to porter], which made her breasts become swollen and so painful that she cried the whole way.

Naw K--- arrived in O--- when it was dawn and saw that the SPDC Army soldiers were sleeping. That was when she met with Saw M--- and they managed to escape back to their villages together.

Killings

On September 6th 2011, 27 soldiers of LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #102, commanded by Lt. Colonel Kyaw Tin Myo and based out of Baw Kyo Leh, went to the villages of L--- and N---. They saw three Karen soldiers and opened fire immediately, but the Karen soldiers managed to escape. When they were firing, they [LIB #102] shot Saw K---, the SPDC-appointed L--- village head, in the hand.¹¹³ At the same time, they found Saw K--- in a monastery and, without asking him anything, arrested him immediately and accused him of being a Karen soldier. After that, they took him to the village's vehicle road and threw stones at him, but he did not die. So afterwards, they shot him in the head with a gun and left his body on the side of the vehicle road.

Conclusion

At the time of this report on human rights abuses in Dweh Loh Township, abuses such as forced labour, arrests and killings continue to occur. For [dealing with the] demands for thatch shingles and bamboo, the villagers are using their [response] strategies, so [the demands] are decreasing now.¹¹⁴

Thaton Situation Update: June to October 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in November 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Pa'an Township, Thaton District between June and October 2011, specifically forced labour demands for villagers to clear vegetation from roads, to rebuild Tatmadaw Border Guard camps, to porter for three-month periods, and to guide and serve as human shields for Tatmadaw soldiers on active patrol duty. This report also details demands for villages to provide recruits and payments to support

¹¹³ This incident is described more fully in the news bulletin "Villager executed in Papun District," KHRG, October 2010. The villager who provided information for that report noted that Saw K--- was guiding the KNLA soldiers at the time he was grazed by a bullet, but also documented the date of the incident as September 7th. Readers should be advised that that bulletin contains graphic images.

¹¹⁴ The villager who wrote this report did not specify the strategies that villagers have successfully adopted in Dweh Loh Township to bring about a reduction in forced labour demands; in the past, villagers have used strategies of negotiation, evasion, bribery, refusal, discreet non-compliance, partial compliance, and confrontation to minimize the burden of forced labour demands. For specific examples, see *Civilian and Military order documents: March 2008 to July 2011*, KHRG, October 2011, p. 9 – 10.

recruits' salaries to Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1014; arbitrary demands for payment in lieu of the provision of villagers to fill demands for forced labour; as well as an explicit threat of violence issued against village heads if they failed to comply with a Battalion #1014 demand to send villagers as porters. The report further documents the imposition of movement restrictions preventing villagers from accessing agricultural workplaces, and raises concerns about the future food security of residents living in areas proximate to the Salween River whose paddy fields were flooded and destroyed during the last rainy season.

Situation Update | Pa'an Township, Thaton District (June to October 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Thaton 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.¹¹⁵ This report was received along with other information from Thaton District, including six interviews and 21 photographs.¹¹⁶

Tatmadaw and Border Guard abuse of civilians in Pa'an Township between June and October 2011

On July 15th 2011, Tatmadaw¹¹⁷ LIB #220 led by and under the command of Battalion Commander Zaw Win Htun, which is based in S---, T--- and H--- villages, did not let villagers in the area leave their villages. They [the Tatmadaw] did not let villagers go out to look after their cattle or go to their farms. Then they said they will kill any villagers and village heads who contact the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA], if the KNLA comes and shoots at them.

On July 21st 2011, soldiers under the command of Aung Kyaw Soe, Column #2 and Deputy Battalion Commander of Tatmadaw LIB #215 and Tin Win, a Company Commander of Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1014, forced two villagers [per household] from K---, Y--- and G--- villages to go and clear the road from G--- monastery to the foot of the large limestone outcropping at G---. He ordered two people per household from these three villages to go and clear the road.

On August 5th 2011, Tatmadaw LIB #216 led by Battalion Commander Naing Tin Hla entered W--- army camp and [then] went to E--- village in Bilin Township on August 7th 2011. He forced one person from each household [in E---] to go with his troops and guide them to A---. He

¹¹⁵ 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.

¹¹⁶ 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 Thaton District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Thaton District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Exploitative abuse and villagers response in Thaton District," KHRG, November 2009.

¹¹⁷ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report and informants; however, in order to ensure clarity in this translation, "SPDC" has been replaced with "Tatmadaw" when referring to the state military and with "Burmese government" when referring to the national government.

ordered villagers to walk between his soldiers [one villager between two soldiers]. Even though the villagers were afraid to go, they had to go.

On August 9th 2011, Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1014 [soldiers] led by Company Commander Tin Win ordered villagers from each village in O--- village tract to porter and stay with them for three months. If a village did not provide porters, the village had to pay 450,000 kyat (US \$584).¹¹⁸ They demanded one porter from L--- village, one porter from N---, one porter from I--- village, two porters from B--- village and two porters from R--- village. They threatened that they would *boh* [cover something with cloth or plastic] the village heads' heads [if they did not provide porters or payment]. On August 15th 2011, they also demanded porter fees of 1,200,000 kyat (US \$1,558) from Kh---, Ky--- and Ht--- villages, and 600,000 kyat (US \$779) from Kw--- and P--- villages.

On August 20th 2011, Tatmadaw Border Guard Battalion #1014 Company Commander Tin Win moved and set up an army camp at H--- village, and forced villagers to go and build the army camp for him. The villages that had to go and build the camp were S---, Hs---, T---, H---, Bp--- and U--- villages. The army camp had to be built by August 24th 2011. The villagers finished building the camp by the date when they had to finish. This Border Guard unit recruited soldiers to increase their strength, so they forced [forcibly recruited] Saw G---'s son, Saw B---, Saw H---, Saw T---, Saw P--- and Saw N--- in H--- village. They also demanded 13 people [recruits] from S---, Hs--- and T--- village. They will pay 35,000 kyat (US \$45.45) per month to these people. To recruit new soldiers and pay the new soldiers' salary, they demanded 2,000,000 kyat (US \$2,597) from S--- and 1,000,000 kyat (US \$1,298) from Hs--- villages, 1,000,000 kyat from T--- and 4,000,000 kyat (US \$5,194) total from Bp--- and U--- villages. Those villages have already paid half [the amount], but they will have to pay it all by August 30th 2011.

The civilians' situation

The problems that civilians in Pa'an Township have to face are Tatmadaw and Border Guard demands for money, and flooding and destruction of paddy fields [due to flooding]. Within the five months between June to October 2011, villagers have had to pay millions of kyat to the soldiers under the Tatmadaw and Border Guard commanders. Some villagers have had to sell their land and property to pay porter fees and the recruitment fees for new soldiers. This year, there was also heavy rain and flooding for a whole month which caused paddy in the fields to become rotten. Pa'an Township is close to the Salween River. The farms are about 4.5 miles (7 km) away from the river. Most farms there were destroyed and paddy crops died because of the flooding. For this reason, we can say that the villagers will have to face food crisis [shortages] in the coming year.

Toungoo Situation Update: July to October 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in November 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Toungoo District during the period between July and October 2011. It details incidents of violence against civilians, including: shooting and killing by Tatmadaw LIB #540 of two villagers hunting monkeys in an area adjacent to a Tatmadaw camp; arbitrary detentions of eight civilians, of whom only three have been released by LIB #539 and IB #73; and the beating of a village head following a KNLA attack against Tatmadaw troops. The villager also cites examples of a range of abuses affecting villagers' livelihoods, including: forced labour repairing a road and producing and delivering bamboo poles

¹¹⁸ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 November 15th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

to a Tatmadaw camp; theft and damage of villagers' possessions by patrolling Tatmadaw troops, including destruction of villagers' durian and dogfruit trees; the imposition of movement restrictions preventing villagers from sleeping in their field huts, backed by an explicit threat of violence against villagers violating the ban; de facto movement restrictions on villagers due to Tatmadaw activity; and arbitrary demands for payment by Tatmadaw troops. This report also raises concerns about the health situation in Tantabin Township following the 2011 monsoon, including an outbreak of cholera that interfered with the harvest of cardamom, durian and paddy crops, and may have adverse consequences on villagers' food and financial security during the coming year. The report also notes that some villagers access health services from the KNU Health Department and other relief groups in response to constraints on access to health care in areas of Tantabin Township outside consolidated Tatmadaw control.

Situation Update | Tantabin Township, Toungoo District (November 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Toungoo 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.¹¹⁹ This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including 57 photographs.¹²⁰

SPDC [Tatmadaw]¹²¹ units order villagers to do forced labour

In Toungoo District today, villagers still have to face attacks and forced labour by the SPDC.

SPDC IB [Infantry Battalion] #73, under the command of the Southern Military Headquarters, which is based in B--- village, Tantabin [Taw Ta Tu] Township in Toungoo District, demands money from villagers who live in La--- village tract. These villagers work in cardamom and betelnut plantations and flat field paddy farms, and they live in their field huts. Each household was ordered to pay 3,000 kyat (US \$3.90).¹²² The deadline for all the villagers to pay the money was July 31st 2011. Villagers have faced a problem because they do not have that money. There are over 1,000 households in the area.

On July 24th 2011, LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #539 under MOC [Military Operations Command] #9, which is based in M--- village tract, ordered five village heads in M--- village tract, including Saw P---, Saw K--- [position censored for security], Saw G---, Saw A--- [position

¹¹⁹ 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.

¹²⁰ 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 Toungoo District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Toungoo District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

¹²¹ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," Myanmar Times, April 4-10 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report and "SPDC" is therefore retained in the translation of this report.

¹²² All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 November 28th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

censored for security] and Saw T--- [*position censored for security*], to go to L--- army camp. Then they put these people in jail and until now, those people have not been released yet.

On July 28th 2011, IB #73, which is based in B--- army camp, restricted B--- villagers from going to sleep at their farm huts and they [villagers] were not allowed to use flashlights either. The commander said: *"If I see villagers using flashlights or sleeping in their huts, I'll take action and it'll be dta thee gka dtaw ['death time' or 'time to die'] for them."*

On July 26th 2011, LIB #380 and LIB #379 started operating in T--- and L--- villages. [On August 4th] They took two small tins¹²³ of rice, and five viss (8 kg. / 17.6 lb.)¹²⁴ of fish paste from Saw B---. They also cut down durian and dogfruit trees belonging to Saw B---. They also took all of Saw W---'s property in his hut, worth 150,000 kyat (US \$194.81). When the SPDC [soldiers] went and operated in the D--- area on August 4th 2011, they saw a field hut belonging to Saw B---, a D--- villager, and they took two tins of rice [belonging to Saw B---] and destroyed all Saw W---'s possessions in the hut. All of his possessions cost 150,000 kyat.

IB #73, under the command of the Southern Military Headquarters based in B---, arrested three villagers on August 3rd 2011. The soldiers from IB #73 based in B--- village arrested one O--- villager, named Saw F--- and two A--- villagers named Saw D---, whose father's name is Saw R---, and Naw N---, whose father's name is Saw M---, and the [IB #73] soldiers accused those villagers of communicating with the revolutionaries [KNLA]. The soldiers detained these villagers for six days in their camp and then let these villagers go back on August 9th 2011. Even though they let these villagers go back, they said they will ask these villagers to come and meet them whenever they need them.

On August 5th 2011, MOC #9 which is based in H--- met H--- area leaders and told them to tell the revolutionaries [Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)] not to come and shoot them. On the same day that these village heads were called to meet them, IB #73 also ordered the B--- regional leaders to go and meet them in Y--- and they also told those village heads to tell the revolutionaries [KNLA] not to come and shoot at them. Starting from July, through August and until now, the SPDC entered and operated in the area close to the [Toungoo to Kler La] road in our Tantabin and Than Daung Townships. These things are still happening in our two townships. Especially the villagers who live in that area and have to go and buy food [outside of their villages] have to cross the vehicle road, so they are faced with difficulties.

On August 8th 2011, the LIB #375 from H--- ordered H--- villagers to cut 500 bamboo poles to repair their army camp.

On August 8th 2011, the KNLA also went and shot at SPDC soldiers and then the SPDC arrested the local village head and beat him seriously. His name is Saw De---, 35 years old, and his father's name is Saw Th---. He is not guilty of doing anything wrong. They beat him and abused him until he could not eat and he became sick. He has had to stay lying down in his bed until now.

On August 15th 2011, LIB #380 went to rotate with another battalion and they entered See Kheh Der village. They took a basket of rice (32 kg. / 70.4 lb.) and a musket from Saw Dt--- and other things in his house worth 95,000 kyat (US \$123.38), as reported by the owner.

On August 27th 2011, LIB #375 from H--- army camp ordered villagers from the H--- area to cut big bamboo poles to rebuild their army camp. They ordered 150 bamboo poles from H--- village,

¹²³ While the villager who wrote this report did not specify the exact size of the two tins of rice that were taken from Saw B---'s hut, the modifier "small" suggests that they were not two "big tins" of rice (32 kg. / 70.4 lb.), and likely either two milk tins (0.5 kg. / 1.1 lb.) or two mess tins (2 kg. / 4.4 lb.) of husked rice.

¹²⁴ A viss is a unit of weight equivalent to 1.6 kg. or 3.52 lb.

70 bamboo poles from E---, 42 bamboo poles from P---, and 150 bamboo poles from U---, O--- and W--- villages. They also asked the H--- village head to send them a household list.

For the above information we went and met with the village heads in their villages, and some we met outside of their villages. They told us this so that is how we know this information.

Killing

On August 18th 2011, LIB #540 from Dh--- army camp in Tantabin Township in Toungoo District shot two Hs--- villagers while those villagers were hunting in the jungle. There were six villagers hunting monkeys in the jungle at night. The monkeys ran close to the army camp. The SPDC soldiers were patrolling on the lower side of their camp when they saw the villagers and they shot at the villagers. The two villagers who were killed were Saw Hs---, 32 years old, whose father's name is Saw Pa---, and Saw C---, 23 years old, whose father's name is Saw Gh---. They were shot in the lower part of Dh--- army camp in the Wa--- area.

Forced labour

In 2011, there was so much rain so the roads were damaged. Because of the rain, the vehicle road in Le--- area at the lower part of Ki--- was damaged and cars could not go. So, the SPDC officers based in Le--- ordered villagers to go and repair the road. The road was damaged on October 8th 2011. Villagers had to go and repair the road as the SPDC ordered them. On October 10th 2011, the SPDC ordered 43 villagers from Le--- village to go and rebuild the road. The names of the villagers who had to go and rebuild the road are: Saw E---, Saw L---, Saw Ka---, Saw Z---, Saw Bp---, Saw Gk---, Saw E---, Naw Y---, Saw Wi---, Saw Re---, Saw L---, Naw Ny---, Saw S---, Saw Ba---, Saw Ka---, Naw Ga---, Saw Po---, Saw K---, Saw Z---, Naw Ky---, Saw Tu---, Saw Hte---, Saw Bp---, Saw Do---, Saw Eh---, Saw Pw---, Saw Gk---, Saw Za---, Saw Kh---, Saw T---, Saw Kw---, Saw Tw---, Saw Lw---, Saw Aw---, Saw Wa---, Saw Ah---, Saw Ma---, Saw Bo---, Saw De---, Saw Se---, Saw Si---, Saw Ra---, Naw La---, Saw Ay---, Saw Ni---, Saw Bw---, Naw Ta---, Saw Ku---, and Saw Lw---. These villagers who had to go and rebuild the road had to bring their own food when they went to rebuild the road. The SPDC soldiers did not provide any food to the villagers. One of the Le--- village heads told us [the above information] about the Le--- villagers who had to go and repair the road.

Health

For health issues, villagers who live in government-controlled areas of Tantabin Township in Toungoo District go and get medical treatment at the hospital in Kler La when they get sick. The disease villagers have faced in September and October 2011 is *ta lu poe* [cholera]. Both children and adults have had to suffer this disease during these two months. The hospitals are full of patients. Some people went and accompanied a patient and then the disease infected them also. This disease can infect people easily so we have to be careful when we stay close to the patient. This disease occurred during the harvest period, so many villagers face livelihoods problems.

The villagers who do not live in the areas under government control live in Pw---. For them, they do not have a hospital to get medical treatment. The people who will help them are the [Karen National Union (KNU)] Health Department or other groups. These groups have to come and give those villagers medical treatment. In September and October, three villages have had to face a different health problem. [A symptom of] the disease they face is that they cannot defecate or urinate. They suffered this disease and the health group went and provided medical treatment for them.

Nyaunglebin Situation Update: August to October 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in November 2011 by a villager describing events occurring in Ler Doh Township, Nyaunglebin District between August and October 2011. The report describes the an incident of forced labour in which villagers were forced to clear undergrowth from a palm oil plantation at IB #60 military headquarters, as well as arbitrary demands for villagers to provide money, firewood, wooden logs and food to Tatmadaw troops. The villager who wrote this report notes that governmental administrative reforms at the village tract level have resulted in increased demands for payment from civilian officials at a time when flooding in flat areas of paddy cultivation adjacent to the Sittaung River at the end of the 2011 monsoon has substantially impacted villagers' food security. The villager also raises local communities' concerns regarding the proposed construction of a dam on the Theh Loh River; and requirements that civilians provide guarantees that non-state armed groups will not attack Tatmadaw troops, which villagers fear will lead to reprisals from Tatmadaw soldiers if fighting does occur. This report also documents several ways in which villagers in Ler Doh Township have responded to abuses, including the formation of Mu Kha Poe village security groups to monitor Tatmadaw troop activity and warn other community members of incoming Tatmadaw patrols and attacks;; and cooperation with other villagers and with local community-based aid groups to secure food support, communication equipment, education materials and medical treatment.

Situation Update | Ler Doh Township, Nyaunglebin District (August to October 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Nyaunglebin 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.¹²⁵ This report was received along with other information from Nyaunglebin District, including six interviews and 156 photographs¹²⁶.

Human rights abuses committed by the SPDC Army [Tatmadaw]¹²⁷ have decreased in Ler Doh [Kyauk Kyi] Township, but there are a few human rights violations still caused by the SPDC Army. Villagers also face problems because of abnormal weather. Because of these issues, villagers have faced many problems. For the villagers who live in mountainous areas, there was a lot of SPDC Army activity in the area in 2010, so villagers have faced a food crisis this year [in 2011].¹²⁸ For the villagers who live within SPDC Army-controlled areas, three months of flooding

¹²⁵ 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 important, and present their opinions or perspective on abuse and other local dynamics in their area.

¹²⁶ 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 Nyaunglebin District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Nyaunglebin District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Livelihood consequences of SPDC restrictions and patrols in Nyaunglebin District," KHRG, September, 2009.

¹²⁷ The villager who wrote this report used the term *Na Ah Pa* (State Peace and Development Council, or SPDC) to refer to Burmese military authorities. Many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* to refer to military or civilian government officials, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011. Similarly, older villagers may still use the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (State Law and Order Restoration Council, or SLORC) to refer to the Burmese government, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. As the term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report, "SPDC" has therefore retained in the translation of this report.

¹²⁸ In early 2010 KHRG reported that approximately 2,000 villagers in central Kyauk Kyi (Ler Doh) Township fled a series of Tatmadaw attacks between January 17th and March 26th 2010, following the establishment of a new Tatmadaw camp in Kheh Der village tract. Two reports published by KHRG document the killing of five villagers, the burning of eleven houses, and the deployment of landmines in abandoned villages by Tatmadaw forces. This type of displacement often results in intense food shortages for villagers, as access to previously-cultivated

affected many paddy fields, destroying the paddy. About 3,000 acres (1,214 hectares) of paddy fields were flooded.

SPDC Army battalions and locations

The SPDC Army [units] that operate in Ler Doh Township are LID [Light Infantry Division] #101 and Southern Command Headquarters units IBs [Infantry Battalions] #60, #57 and #53, and LIBs [Light Infantry Battalions] #351, #264, #439, #435, #430 and #439. These army units operate in the *bplaw* [flat and treeless, or plains] area, and there are a few kinds of human rights violations that have decreased compared with the past. The government changed their administrative [structure] a little to include civilian government [officials]. They appointed administrators in each village tract and these administrators collect money from villagers, causing a big problem for villagers.¹²⁹



According to the villager who wrote this report, this photo was taken on October 12th 2011 in the Sweh Dtee Bplaw area of Ler Doh (Kyauk Kyi) Township. The photo shows two bags of paddy seed that had begun to sprout prematurely after being contaminated with floodwater from the Sittaung River during the 2011 rainy season. [Photo: KHRG]

Villagers' situation in mountain areas

In 2010, there were a lot of SPDC Army operations in mountain areas. This year, villagers faced a food crisis, so the villagers reported this to the KNU [Karen National Union] and the KNU will have to arrange food for the villagers so that the villagers can stay and survive in the area. The villagers do not want to leave their homes.



agricultural land is denied. For more on these attacks, see: "Attacks and displacement in Nyaunglebin District," KHRG, April 2010 and "Attacks on displaced villagers in Nyaunglebin District," KHRG, January 2010. For more on food shortages that result from attacks on villagers in hiding, see "Starving them out: Food shortages and exploitative abuse in Papun District," KHRG, October 2009 and *Food crisis: The cumulative impact of abuse in rural Burma*, KHRG, April 2009.

¹²⁹ The same villager who wrote this report also submitted an earlier account to KHRG in August 2011 in which Village Tract Administrators are described as meeting with local Tatmadaw officers every 15 days to coordinate demands for money from local villagers; see: "Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Ler Doh Township, May to July 2011," KHRG, November 2011.



The six photos above were taken on October 23rd 2011 in the Ah--- area of Kheh Der village tract. According to the villager who wrote this report and took these photos, the photos document the Karen National Union (KNU) delivering rice supplies by boat to Kheh Der villagers. KHRG reported in 2010 that a series of attacks between January 17th and March 26th 2010 following the establishment of a new Tatmadaw camp in Kheh Der led to the displacement of at least 2,000 villagers, restrictions on access to previously cultivable land and subsequent food shortages. In the photos above, villagers from Kheh Der village tract are shown carrying rice supplies from the KNU boat. [Photos: KHRG]



The photos above were taken on October 25th 2011 and show the Ler Doh Township *Bp'Doh*, or Chairman, and some of the villagers who portered rice supplies delivered on October 23rd separating rice for distribution to villagers in Kheh Der village tract and Kwee La Der village tract. [Photos: KHRG]

In the beginning of 2009, villagers in T--- village tract organised and established a group of young people who can *leh gkeh gkay gkeh* [endure strenuous work] and track SPDC Army movements for them so they can work freely. In 2010, the group received more members. There

are over 40 people in the group and they call their group *Mu Kha Poe* ['angel' in Karen]. These villagers bring guns with them on their patrols, but the guns they bring are not machine guns; they are guns for shooting animals [hunting muskets]. They resist the SPDC Army and they asked for guns from the organisation¹³⁰ and were allowed to carry the guns. Villagers established *Mu Kha Poe* to provide security in the whole village tract for villagers to be able to work freely. Each member of *Mu Kha Poe* has to spend five days on duty and can then resume their normal village lives [until their next period of duty]. They gather all members [of *Mu Kha Poe*] and provide security in the village tract when there are SPDC Army activities in the area.¹³¹

Now [organisation censored for security] supports them with walkie-talkies for communication. So they have good communication between each other during their patrols and when they search out signs of the SPDC Army. [If they see Tatmadaw soldiers] along the paths on which SPDC Army troops head to the villages, they fire a gun to alert the villagers. Then villagers in the village flee into the jungle. Villagers do this to protect themselves.

Villagers' situation in areas under SPDC Army control

Villagers who live under the control of the SPDC Army are faced with forced labour, demands for money and different kinds of restrictions.

On September 9th 2011, Battalion Commander Khin Htun of IB #60 ordered ten villagers of N--- and 15 villagers from A--- to go and clear [undergrowth] in the palm oil plantation at IB #60 Battalion Headquarters. It takes one hour to walk from the villages to the camp. *Bo*¹³² Khin Htun came and took three *pway* [Burma Ironwood trees]¹³³ from an N--- villager that the villager planned to use for electricity poles. Then this commander [Khin Htun] also took 30 pieces of two-by-three inch and two-by-four inch lumber from loggers named Saw A---, Saw G--- and Saw H---. The commander did not ask permission from these villagers when he took these villagers' wood. He just took what he wanted. The N--- village head, Saw KI---, gave me this information.

The wives of soldiers from IB #60 under the command of *Bo* Khin Htun, have to go and attend military training in Tw---. For this training, *Bo* Khin Htun demanded firewood from N--- and A--- village. Each household had to provide a bundle of firewood, put it in bag and store it beside the vehicle road. There are 100 households [between these two villages combined]. Once a year, these soldiers' wives go and attend training in Tw---.

On September 9th 2011, LIB #345, based in Payalinko, demanded ten durians from T--- village. The T--- village head had to organise to provide the durians for them. This village head told me about this issue. The military administrator who lives in Ler Doh Town also demanded 1,000 kyat (US \$1.30)¹³⁴ from each household. People who live in Ler Doh Town also have to pay 1,000 kyat fee for militia [salaries]. So people who live in Ler Doh Town have to pay 2,000 kyat (US \$2.60) every month. Saw C---, a villager who lives in Y--- section [of Ler Doh Town] told me

¹³⁰ The villager who wrote this report did not specify the organisation to which he was referring, however based on the context, it is probable that he was referring to the Karen National Union (KNU) or the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).

¹³¹ For more information on civilian strategies employed to facilitate information-gathering on Tatmadaw patrol movements in response to the threat of abuse, see "Tatmadaw attacks destroy civilian property and displace villages in northern Papun District," KHRG, April 2011; *Self-protection under strain: Targeting of civilians and local responses in northern Karen State*, KHRG, August 2010.

¹³² *Bo* is a common prefix used to refer to a military officer without necessarily signifying his rank.

¹³³ Burma Ironwood, or *xylia xylocarpa*, is a flowering tree that produces edible seeds, commonly eaten uncooked. The tree is known as *Pway* in Karen and *Pyinkado* in Burmese.

¹³⁴ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 November 29th 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

about this information. The SPDC Army units active in Ler Doh Township forced village heads in Ler Doh Township to sign a guarantee that the KNLA will not to come and attack them. The SPDC Army units always give villagers trouble after fighting has happened, which poses a problem for villagers.

In *bplaw* [flat and treeless, or plains] areas, the Sittaung River flooded for three months, so many paddy fields were destroyed and villagers now face serious difficulties related to their future livelihoods. Many houses and villages were flooded, but there is no support. Villages that were flooded are: Tha Say, Kyun Gyi, Hinthai Wei, Lay Bin Weh, Weh La Daw, Noh Ghaw, Htaik Htoo, Saw Mu Thel, Taw Lu Koh, Noh Poe, Po Lo Noh Soe, Bpa Ta Lah, Sweh Dtee, and Su Kin Tha Yan. These villages were flooded for three months, so villagers in these villages have been without places to stay and food to eat. There is no support for them, so this has become a big problem for the villagers. The flooding started in August and continued into October. Many paddy fields were destroyed.





The photos above, taken on October 12th and 16th 2011, show damage to paddy fields in the Weh Lah Taw and Sweh Dtee Bplaw areas proximate to the Sittaung River, which flooded between August and October 2011.
[Photos: KHRG]





These photos, taken on October 16th 2011 in the Weh Lah Taw area, show villagers inspecting flood damage to paddy fields when water from the Sittaung River receded after three months of flooding. According to the villager who wrote this report and took these photos, the destruction of paddy crops and seeds as a result of flooding has raised villagers' concerns for their food security during the coming year. [Photos: KHRG]

Health

Villages do not get [have access to] good health care. In mountain areas of T--- village tract, there is one Back Pack [Back Pack Health Worker Team (BPHWT) mobile clinic] and there is the M--- clinic in the H--- [area]. P--- village tract receives health care support whenever they can get it. Villagers in flatland areas in the SPDC Army-controlled areas do not receive health care support. They do not have clinics in their villages. They have to go and buy medicine in Ler Doh Town. They can not get medical treatment if they do not have money. Even if they go to a public hospital, if they do not have money, they will not get treatment. In *bplaw* [flat and treeless, or plains] areas, [some villages] receive medical treatment from Back Pack and other villages receive medical health care when FBR [Free Burma Rangers] comes to their area. They never get [health care] from the [Burma] government.

Education

Children do not receive a good education because their parents are poor and cannot send their children to school. Children who should go to school cannot go to school. Children [also] cannot go to high school if their parents do not have money. Now, school teachers do not teach well. Students have to hire *kyu sin*, *wai kyu sin* or *shell wai* [different types of private tutors]. There are many types of *kyu sin*; to hire the *wai kyu sin*, students have to pay 50,000 kyat (US \$64.94) per month and for the *shell wai*, they have to pay up to 100,000 kyat (US \$129.87). So students who do not have money cannot get a higher education. Villagers in *bplaw* [flatland] areas cannot send their children to school and this has become a big problem. Free education is also not provided for the lower standards [primary and middle school]. Poor families who do not have enough food cannot even send their children to primary and middle school. Children who should go to school cannot go to school; they have to work with their parents.

For the mountain areas, [children] get free education as much as possible. They get support, like notebooks, from the KED [Karen Education Department]. Some parents do not have enough food, so they ask their children to work with them. Those children cannot go to school.

Burmese government projects

The Burmese government built a dam on the Khay Loh [Shwegyin] River and many places were flooded [due to the dam]. Now they will build another dam on the Theh Loh River. They plan to

build the dam in 2012. Villagers [in the area] worry for their future lives. If the dam is successfully built, villagers will face difficulties related to travel, places to live and their livelihoods.

Villagers' strengths

Even though villagers face problems, they gather together and work together, so they can do as much as they can to secure their livelihoods related to food and travel. They do not feel sad and disappointed even though there are problems. They try and work hard so they can get by year after year.

Toungoo Situation Update: October 2011

This report includes a situation update submitted to KHRG in November 2011 by a villager describing a joint attack on a village in Than Daung Township by soldiers from Tatmadaw Infantry Battalion #92 and Light Infantry Battalion #603. During the attack the Tatmadaw soldiers fired mortars into the village, prompting residents to flee into the nearby forest; soldiers then entered and fired small arms inside the village, and looted, damaged, or destroyed food, money and other property belonging to the villagers who had fled. A full account of the attack on W---, based on this and one other situation update written by a different villager, an interview with a resident of W---, and photo documentation is available in the bulletin "Tatmadaw soldiers shell village, attack church and civilian property in Toungoo District," published by KHRG on November 25th 2011. This report also notes that villagers in the area face demands for forced labour for local Tatmadaw units three or four times every year, specifically to serve as porters and guides for Tatmadaw troops and to clear vegetation from Tatmadaw camp perimeters. The villager who wrote this report further noted local concerns related to the provision of health care and education, as well as some of the strategies adopted by villagers in response to human rights concerns, including harvesting crops at night to protect livelihoods during Tatmadaw operations, and using traditional practices to treat illnesses in areas where Tatmadaw forces restrict transport of and trade in medicines.

Situation Update | Than Daung Township, Toungoo District (November 2011)

The following situation update was written by a villager in Toungoo 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.¹³⁵ This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including three incident reports, two interviews, two other situation updates and 204 photographs.¹³⁶

Human rights abuses still happening in Daw Pa Ko [Than Daung] Township

The military government changed to U Thein Sein's USDP [Union Solidarity and Development Party] government and the [USDP] government took power after six months, this year. This

¹³⁵ 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.

¹³⁶ 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 Toungoo District will be available on the KHRG website. Until then, KHRG's most recent analysis of the situation in Toungoo District can be found in the recent Field Report, "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

year, at the beginning of October, a new southern commander whose name is *Bo* [officer] Nyo Thaung, came and took responsibility in the area. Under his control are the army [Tatmadaw] units at *Ta Pa Ka* [Southern Command Headquarters], which are IB [Infantry Battalion] #92 and LIB [Light Infantry Battalion] #603. These units fought with the KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army] in Daw Pa Ko [Than Daung] Township in the Htee Tha Saw area, east of W--- village. After that, the SPDC¹³⁷ soldiers entered W--- village and destroyed things. They took villagers' possessions and money, and they killed villagers' animals and destroyed several things.

Village locations and occupations

W--- village is located in the Ht--- area, east of the Day Loh [River] in Daw Pa Ko [Than Daung] Township. It is far to the northeast of Than Daung Gyi Town, about 15 miles (24 km), and it is also east of the Day Loh River, where the surface of the earth is only mountains. East of the Day Loh, there are over 30 villages, but in the Htee Tha Saw area, there are only nine villages. There are nearly 300 households and the population is between about 1,500 and 1,600. The villages are: (1) Th---, (2) Bp---, (3) K---, (4) M---, (5) A---, (6) R---, (7) W---, (8) P---, and (9) L---
¹³⁸

Most of the people who stay there [in the Htee Tha Saw area] are Geko, Gebar or Bres [Karen] and they are Karen ethnicity. Their religion is Roman Catholic.

The villagers who stay there do agriculture such as [cultivating] betelnut, betel leaves and cardamom; and some plant paddy in hill fields and a few farm [paddy fields] near the river bank. We saw that for their livelihoods, they always have to work hard and they do not have time to rest. The produce that they get, they sell beside the Tha Yin Ker – Htee Tha Saw – Leit Tho vehicle road; some go and sell it in Than Daung Gyi and some sell it in villages beside Than Daung Gyi. If there are no disturbances to their travelling, it takes two or three days. Especially, this year, it was raining a lot and the river became bigger, so for the villagers' travelling, it became a problem for them to cross the river.

Because the villagers have faced problems for many years, the weather was also bad [in 2011], and the SPDC came and destroyed the villagers' agricultural workplaces and disturbed their travels, they do not have enough food now and they have to stay in poverty.

The Htee Tha Saw area is governed by two groups, which are the Burmese government and the KNU [Karen National Union] government. So the people who stay there have to be friends with the [two groups of] governors in a sensible way. The Burmese government does not keep the area as a fighting area, but the area is near a place where the SPDC and KNLA keep fighting, so we see that there is no difference between the fighting area and the area under SPDC control. Whether the SPDC troops have to send rations to their camps or whether their columns are active on patrol, the villagers have to carry loads, guide and clear bushes from around the electricity poles. They have to go at least three or four times a year between Law Pee Tar and the Leit Tho area of Toungoo. If they do not go for forced labour, they have to pay at least 3,000

¹³⁷ In Karen, the Burmese phrases *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) and *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) are commonly used to refer to the Burmese government or to Burma's state military, the Tatmadaw. Many older Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Wa Ta* (SLORC) before 1997 continue to use that phrase, even though the SLORC has not officially existed since 1997. Similarly, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011, many Karen villagers continue to use the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) to refer to the Burmese government or to the Tatmadaw; see: "Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011. The term *Na Ah Pa* was used by the villager who wrote this report, and is therefore retained in this translation.

¹³⁸ The villager who wrote this report also provided a list including GPS coordinates of the nine villages in the Htee Tha Saw area, however, these have been redacted from the report for security.

kyat (US \$3.90)¹³⁹ for each day that they do not go. The villagers have to get a written permission document for travel as the SPDC requires.

SPDC locations

In the Than Daung [Township] area, the camps that SPDC units occupy are Thaw Yin Ker, Htee Tha Saw, Gk'Lay Ta, Yar Ro, Tha Kweh Bploh. Now IB #92 stays and is active there. Above the vehicle road, in the Leit Tho, Daw Mar Der and Bp'Ho areas, LIB #603 stays and is active there under the Southern Command.

Commander Kyaw Min Thu of MOC [Military Operations Command] #2 came and stayed in Leit Tho and manages operations from there. For the area west of Day Loh in the Than Daung Township area, IB #124 takes security, and in eastern Than Daung, around the Day Loh River, the MOC #9 battalion which stays and is active there is LIB #378.

Destruction and loss of villagers' property

On October 12th 2011, a column of soldiers from SPDC IB #92 and LIB #603 was active and fired mortars and small arms in W--- village. They also shelled farms, fields, plantations, orchards and forest. After that they entered W--- village and destroyed villagers' possessions and houses. Villagers whose houses were destroyed were: Saw P---, Saw W---, Saw G--- [see No. 14 in the table below], Saw A---, and Naw T--- [see No. 13 in the table below]. The walls, floors and roofs of their houses were destroyed.

Table A.1: Villagers' cardamom, money and other property stolen or destroyed¹⁴⁰

#	Owner	Item(s) stolen or damaged	Value
1	Saw B---	Money stolen	500,000 kyat
		One box of clothing and blankets stolen	Not specified
2	Saw W--- (Pastor)	60 viss ¹⁴¹ of cardamom stolen	720,000 kyat ¹⁴²
		Money stolen	400,000 kyat
3	Saw D--- (Church Treasurer)	Church finances stolen	1,500,000 kyat
		50 Zinc roofing panels damaged	Not specified
4	Saw R---	40 viss of cardamom stolen	480,000 kyat
		Money stolen	300,000 kyat
		All clothing stolen	Not specified
5	Naw N---	20 viss of cardamom stolen	240,000 kyat
		Money stolen	100,000 kyat
6	Saw M---	Money stolen	200,000 kyat
		All clothing stolen	Not specified
7	Saw F---	40 viss of cardamom stolen	480,000 kyat
		Money stolen	200,000 kyat
8	Saw Ht---	25 viss of cardamom stolen	300,000 kyat
		Money stolen	200,000 kyat
9	Naw Na---	All clothing stolen	Not specified

¹³⁹ All conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report 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 November 21st 2011, this unofficial rate of exchange was US \$1 = 770 kyat. This figure is used for all calculations above.

¹⁴⁰ Note that this table is a list of items stolen or destroyed as reported by one villager trained by KHRG who visited W--- village a week after the attack on October 12th and, as such, should not be read as a complete inventory of all items stolen or destroyed. For a table that compiles all the information submitted to KHRG by three different villagers regarding items stolen or destroyed during this incident, see "Tatmadaw soldiers shell village, attack church and civilian property in Toungoo District", KHRG, November 2011.

¹⁴¹ A viss is a unit of weight equivalent to 1.6 kg. / 3.52 lb.

¹⁴² According to one of the villagers who submitted information for this report, in Toungoo District one viss of cardamom is valued at approximately 12,000 kyat (US \$15.48).

		20 viss of salt (32 kg. / 70.4 lb.) stolen ¹⁴³	Not specified
10	Saw Th---	16 viss of cardamom stolen	192,000 kyat
		Money stolen	50,000 kyat
11	Saw Dt---	15 viss of cardamom stolen	180,000 kyat
12	Naw Hs---	Money stolen	200,000 kyat
		Money stolen	200,000 kyat
13	Naw T---	50 Zinc roofing panels stolen	Not specified
		All clothing stolen	Not specified
		House damaged	Not specified
15	Saw G---	15 Zinc roofing panels damaged	Not specified
		House roof damaged by mortar	Not specified
16	Saw Pa---	25 viss of cardamom stolen	300,000 kyat
19	Saw A---	Money stolen	500,000 kyat
20	Village Youth Group	Three goats killed	Not specified
		One pig killed	Not specified
21	Roman Catholic church	Electricity inverter	Not specified
		Battery	Not specified
		Amplifier	Not specified
		VCR	Not specified
Totals			7,242,000 kyat (US \$9,405) ¹⁴⁴

When the SPDC fired heavy weapons and small arms in the village, immediately, the villagers went out of the village without any food or clothes. The SPDC saw this and so did whatever they liked with the things that they [the W--- villagers] had left behind.

At that time it was raining all day and night so the villagers who fled into the forest, especially the children and elderly people, got sick and are [sick] even now. Because the SPDC entered and destroyed [the village] and were active in the area, villagers did not dare to go to their fields, cardamom orchards and betelnut orchards, and they could not work or prepare paddy for a week. Their paddy and fruit got rotten, so that has affected their income and caused problems for their families to be able to eat.

When the SPDC entered and destroyed things, they also destroyed things in the Roman Catholic church including a statue of Mary. They fired at it with a gun so it broke into two or three parts. They broke pictures and materials in the church so it made the Christians very sad.

At that time [in October], the SPDC column was active in the area, so villagers who stayed there did not dare to travel and could not work in suitable weather, so they had to go in fear and were worried. Villagers who stayed in the area did not dare to travel and could not harvest paddy or pick cardamom. It was also the time that the villagers had to harvest their plantations that they had been working on for the year. It was not easy to work at this time, so in the future there will be a food problem for some villagers.

Health care and education

¹⁴³ While the villager who wrote this report said that Naw Na--- lost 20 viss of salt, a local resident of W--- village who fled temporarily to the forest during the October 12th attack said that Naw Na--- lost 20 viss of rice, during an interview conducted with him by another villager trained by KHRG to document human rights abuses. See "Toungoo Interview: Saw F---, October 2011," KHRG, November 2011. Note also that that interview was conducted in Sgkaw Karen with a third-party interpreter translating questions for the interviewee into Gkebar Karen, which is the dialect spoken by W--- villagers. The villager trained by KHRG who conducted research in the W--- village area and wrote this report does not speak Gkebar Karen.

¹⁴⁴ This amount reflects only the exact values of caches of money and cardamom stolen as reported to KHRG by the villager who wrote this report; the value of other damaged or stolen items, including zinc roofing panels, wooden floors, walls and ceilings, clothing, jewellery, and religious or cultural items are not included in this total.

There is no special hospital or clinic in the W--- village area. The villagers use traditional medicine and a few use medicines from western countries when they bring them secretly. The government does not allow the villagers to bring medicine. If they see that villagers bring medicine, they would severely punish them, so the villagers also do not bring [medicine with them]. If someone is seriously sick, they send them to town.

For education, we saw that all villages have school up to grade four in primary school. Some schools were established by the Burmese government and some were established by the villagers. Most children who finish school in the villages do not continue to study, and help their families instead. There is no one who has finished high school who helps the villagers in that area. All the male and female teachers who teach in the area are from other places.

Table 2: SPDC army camp locations:

No.	SPDC army camps	GPS coordinates
1	Htee Tha Saw	N 19° 14' 35" E 96° 47' 55"
2	K'Ma Dee Bpoh Lee	N 19° 17' 10" E 96° 47' 00"
3	Thaw Yin Ker	N 19° 18' 50" E 96° 43' 55"
4	Dah Roe	N 19° 19' 35" E 96° 47' 15"
5	Yar Doh	N 19° 20' 05" E 96° 48' 50"
6	Gk'Lay Tar	N 19° 22' 10" E 96° 48' 30"

Conclusion

In this area, the SPDC destroyed villagers' occupations and their church so the villagers who stay in that area have to suffer in their bodies and also in their hearts. Previously, the weather was not good and it was dry, so some plantation crops died, while others remained but could not bear fruit, so the villagers could only get a small income from their fruit. If we count in percentages, the income that would remain for the villagers is only 30 or 40 percent of what it should be. In order to get enough food the villagers tried to do hill fields, but it rained early so they could not burn the fields very well and some places that they planted paddy were destroyed by rats and wild pigs, so the villagers could get only half the rice [they expected]. According to the information above, the SPDC was also active in the field areas so the villagers could not harvest their paddy, although some villagers went and harvested at night time. For the villagers to get access to services and food and be able to stay safely, they need help to solve the problems that they face.
