



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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Photo Set: More than 100 households displaced from TohBoh Dam construction site in Toungoo

This Photo Set presents 17 still photographs taken by a local community member who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions.¹ The photos were all taken in March 2012 at the TohBoh Dam construction site in Tantabin Township within locally-defined Toungoo District.² According to the community member who took these photos, more than 100 households have been relocated from the area now occupied by the dam construction site, where construction is ongoing. For additional information on the TohBoh dam, see “Toungoo Interview: Saw H---, April 2010, published by KHRG on August 7th 2012.

Photo Set | Tantabin Township, Toungoo District (March 2012)

This photo was taken in March 2012, and shows the Day Loh River Valley in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District where the dam is being constructed.³ Vehicle access roads in the vicinity of the dam site and large swathes of deforested land are also clearly visible. *[Photo: KHRG]*



¹ KHRG trains villagers in eastern Burma to document individual human rights abuses using a standardised reporting format; conduct interviews with other villagers; write general updates on the situation in areas with which they are familiar; and take photographs and videos as evidence of abuse.

² According to government designations, the dam site is in Tantabin Township, Eastern Bago Region. “TohBoh” is the Karen language name for the dam site and adjacent village, which is also known as “TunBoh” in Burmese language.

³ The river is referred to as “Day Loh” in the Karen language and “Thauk Yay Kah” in Burmese.



The above left photo shows vehicle roads approaching the Toh Boh Dam construction site, while the photo above right shows a bulldozer on another road. While 100 households were relocated from the dam site itself, road-building in the surrounding area has the potential to destroy or limit villagers' access to additional cultivable land.[Photos: KHRG]



The photo above left shows people and vehicles on top of the TohBoh Dam under construction. In the photo above right, a sign in black reads: "Thauk Yay Khat(2) hydropower electricity project." [Photos: KHRG]



The photos above show electricity pylons on a different side view of the Toh Boh Dam under construction. In the photo above right, the sign in red reads: “*Tunnel for diverting water out.*”⁴ [Photos: KHRG]



The two photos above show housing areas for construction workers near the Toh Boh Dam construction site. [Photos: KHRG]

⁴According to a report from Free Burma Rangers (FBR) in December 2011, “*construction of the TohBoh Dam has displaced one village and will affect 12 villages if completed. Asia World Company began building this hydropower dam in 2004 along the Day Loh River near TohBoh Village, causing all the people in the village to move away. When the project is completed, flooding will affect people in 12 additional villages: Pa LehWa, Lay Mine, Mine Na Seh, Swa Lo, NawKa Maw, NgwayTaung, Toe Thaw, ThaHpanChaung, Tha Ye Ba, Joh Pin Seit, Kyaute Pa Sar and ThehPyu. Mine Na She, Swa Lo and TohBoh will likely flood, and people’s livelihoods in the other ten villages will be heavily affected. In this area people use this river as their primary transportation route.*” See: “Burma Army Shoots Villager in Pa’an District and Continues Construction on TohBoh Dam in Toungoo District,” Karen State, *Free Burma Rangers*, December 22nd 2011.



The photo above left shows the steel door that will control the water flow from the Day Loh River. The photo on the right shows the spillway control section, designed to regulate the amount of water flow; when the water reaches a certain elevation, the spillway control section will reduce the amount of water flow from the upper dam. According to the community member who took these photos, the surrounding agricultural land belongs to villagers from 10 villages, which includes durian, mangosteen, cardamom and betelnut⁵ plantations, all of which would be flooded if the dam becomes operational.⁶[Photos: KHRG]



The photos above show two different views of the powerhouse that will produce electricity from the dam. The yellow pipe beneath the powerhouse allows water to enter and connect to the machine that produces hydropower. [Photos: KHRG]

⁵In Burmese, "betelnut" and "betel leaf" are referred to as "konywet" and "konthih," as if they are from the same plant. The Burmese names are also commonly used by Karen language speakers. "Betelnut" is the seed from an Areca Palm tree, areca catechu; "Betel leaf" is the leaf of the Piper betel vine, belonging to the piperaceae family. See "Attacks on cardamom plantations, detention and forced labour in Toungoo District," KHRG, May 2010.

⁶ FBR local community leader estimated that over 5,000 acres of land will be flooded, including lemon, paddy rice, banana and betelnut fields. Three Tatmadaw camps – ChaySoe, Pa Na WahSoe and Yaw Mu Kee – surround the dam. Soldiers from Tatmadaw Infantry Battalion (IB) #39, under the Southern Command, are in each camp; see "Burma Army Shoots Villager in Pa'an District and Continues Construction on TohBoh Dam in Toungoo District, Karen State," *Free Burma Rangers*, December 22nd 2011.



The photos above were taken in March 2012 in the Day Loh River Valley. The top two photos show construction workers building cement terraces, reinforced with bamboo poles, which together will contain the water once the dam becomes operational. In the background, features characteristic of excavation for unknown purposes are present.⁷[Photo: KHRG]

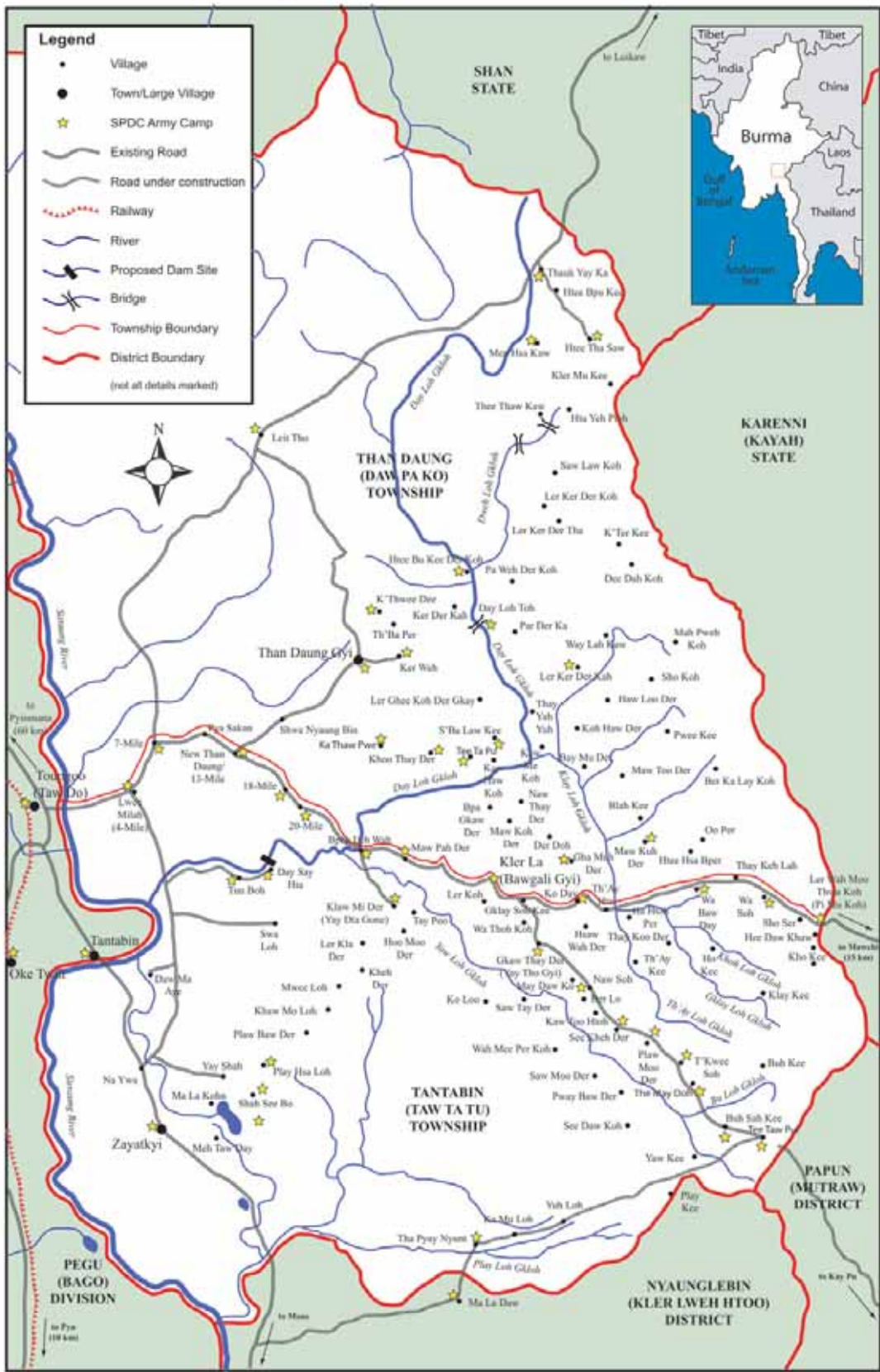
Further background on the current situation in Toungoo District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- “Tatmadaw soldiers fire at four villagers carrying rice, order forced labour in Toungoo District,” (July 2012)
- “Toungoo Situation Update: Tantabin Township, January to March 2012,” (May 2012)
- “Toungoo Situation Update: Received in November 2011,” (April 2012)
- “Toungoo Interview: Saw E---, September 2011,” (April 2012)

⁷ In the interview received by KHRG along with these photos, Saw H--- describes the likelihood of mining operations occurring simultaneously with the dam construction; see “Toungoo Interview: Saw H---, April 2010,” KHRG, August 2012. Additionally, the top right photo resembles previous gold-mining operations along the rivers in DwehLoh Township, Papun District; see “Papun Situation Update: DwehLoh Township, May 2011,” KHRG, September 2011.

- “Toungoo Interview Transcript: Saw L---, December 2011,” (April 2012)
- “Toungoo Interview Transcript: Saw M---, December 2011,” (March 2012)

Toungoo (Taw Oo) District



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