



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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BGF and KNLA grenades injure villagers and their children in Papun District

This news bulletin is based on information submitted to KHRG in May 2013 by a community member describing grenade-related injuries suffered by villagers, including children, in Bu Tho Township, Papun District. In January 2013, a 23-year-old woman and her one-year-old son were injured when Tatmadaw Border Guard Force #1014 Company Sergeant Saw Day Day shot them with an inoperable grenade while intoxicated and in their home. In May 2013, grenade shrapnel injured a father and his two-month-old son when fighting broke out between Tatmadaw BGF #1014 forces and Karen National Liberation Army soldiers. All four injured villagers received treatment at Hkaw Taw Hpoh Hospital.

On May 30th 2013, a community member trained by KHRG reported that grenades fired from M79 grenade launchers injured four villagers in two separate incidents in January and May 2013 in Bu Tho Township, Papun District.

On January 15th 2013, Tatmadaw Border Guard Force (BGF)¹ #1014 Company Sergeant Saw Day Day from Meh Say army camp, under the command of Camp Commander Saw Thway, fired an M79 grenade launcher in M--- village while drunk in a villager's home. The 40MM grenade, which failed to explode, hit 23-year-old Naw E--- and her one-year-old son Saw A---. She sustained injuries to her knee and ankle, and her son was injured in his midsection. They sought treatment at Hkaw Taw Hpoh Hospital, where she received six stitches for her injuries,

¹ Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burmese government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw. BGF battalions are assigned four digit battalion numbers, whereas regular Tatmadaw infantry or light infantry battalions are identified by two or three-digit battalion numbers. For more information, see "DKBA officially becomes Border Guard Force" Democratic Voice of Burma, August 2010, and, "Exploitation and recruitment under the DKBA in Pa'an District," KHRG, June 2009.

and her son three for his. Company Sergeant Saw Day Day agreed to pay 240,000 kyat (US \$248)² for their medical fees, but they received only 100,000 kyat (US \$103).

On May 16th 2013, four Tatmadaw BGF soldiers led by Commander Yen Thway came to Y--- village from Meh Say camp and encountered by chance about 20 Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) soldiers led by Brigade #5³ 2nd Lieutenant Saw Win Lwin, also known as Saw Eh Roh. The KNLA soldiers, using combined small arms, opened fire on the Tatmadaw BGF soldiers at around 2:00 p.m. In the course of the fighting, a 40MM grenade fired from an M79 grenade launcher detonated in front of a villager's house, and another exploded behind it. As a result, grenade shrapnel struck two-month-old Saw T--- behind his ear, and his father suffered injuries as well. Saw T--- and his father received medical care at Hkaw Taw Hpoh Hospital but did not receive any financial support for treatment costs.

Fighting between the KNLA and other armed actors has been rare since the implementation of the January 2012 ceasefire.⁴ Despite the agreement, tensions remain heightened in many Karen districts, and this incident might reflect the trepidation held by some KNLA forces toward the Burma government and Armed Forces as a result of ongoing land disputes, development projects and decades of mistrust.

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

² As of June 28th 2013, all conversion estimates for the Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 968 kyat to the US \$1.

³ Brigade #5 encompasses the geographic area that is also known locally as Papun District.

⁴ On January 12th 2012 a ceasefire agreement was signed between the KNU and RUM officials in Hpa-an Town. The preliminary agreement was based on '11 key points' and was due to be followed by more in-depth talks after 45 days. Negotiators from the two parties met for a 2nd round of talks beginning on 4th April, see "KNU and the Burmese Government Continued State-level Ceasefire Talks," *Karen National Union*, 4th April 2012 and held a 3rd round of negotiations from 3rd-4th September 2012, see "KNU Delegations Departs for the Third Round Negotiation of Ceasefire with the Burmese Government," *Karen National Union*, 1st September 2012. For more information on the ceasefire and how it has affected local villagers, see "Safeguarding human rights in a post-ceasefire eastern Burma," KHRG, January 2012 and "Steps towards peace: Local participation in the Karen ceasefire process," KHRG, November 2012.

- “Incident Report: Villager tortured by Tatmadaw commanders in Papun District, December 2012,” (June 2013)
- “Papun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, January to March 2013,” (June 2013)
- “Demands for labour and money by religious leaders in Papun District, January 2013,” (June 2013)
- “BGF Battalion #1014 forced labour and forced recruitment, April to May 2012,” (May 2013)
- “Landmine explosion and death of villagers in Papun District,” (May 2013)

