



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

News Bulletin

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Forced labour and indiscriminate firing in Hpapun District, June and July 2012

This news bulletin describes forced labour and an indiscriminate shooting committed by different armed actors in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District between June and July 2012. On June 15th 2012, BGF Battalion #1013 Commander Saw Maw Thaw demanded T--- villagers produce and porter materials for the maintenance of Tha'Ree Hta military camp. The following month, on July 7th, villagers were demanded to do sentry duty for BGF Battalion #1014 in U--- village. This bulletin also describes how KNLA Battalion #102 Second-in-Command Saw Hsa Yoo Moo fired a gun indiscriminately at an R--- villager's house in July 2012.¹

Between June and July 2012, villagers from Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District suffered human rights violations committed by different armed actors, including members of Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions #1013 and #1014, and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Battalion #102.

On June 15th 2012, BGF #1013 Commander Saw Maw Thaw from T--- village, Kyaw Pah village tract, in Bu Tho Township, demanded 100 thatch shingles from T--- villagers, requiring them also to transport the thatch shingles from T--- village to Tha'Ree Hta military camp. Villagers complied with the demands out of fear, despite their wishes to refuse.

In addition, on July 7th 2012, a KHRG community member was informed that BGF #1014 soldiers, led by Battalion Commander Maung Chit, had demanded two villagers from U--- village to perform daily sentry duty for their camp. Two people rotated every three days for sentry duty.

Moreover, in July 2012, in R--- village, R--- village tract, also in Bu Tho Township, Hpapun District, KNLA Company #4, Battalion #102 Second-in-Command Saw Hsa Yoo Moo was inebriated and fired his handgun indiscriminately at *tharamu*² Naw D---'s house 10 times in the presence of Bu Tho Township leader P'Doh Pah Hkuh and the KHRG community member. After he fired the pistol, he said, *"Township leader P'Doh Pah Hkuh and Forest Ranger of the Forestry Department, Saw Heh Per, know nothing. They don't know any of the conditions. [They] stay in the office and always give the orders. For the situation dealing with death, I always have to be the first person [who has to face it]. Just do the work, if it has to be done. If it is not necessary, don't do it. Saw Heh Per and I are going to solve the problem this evening immediately."* Nearby villagers, unsure of Saw Has Yoo Moo's motives, fled out of fear when he fired his pistol.

¹ This news bulletin was written by KHRG based on information from a community member from Hpapun District, who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions, including three incident reports received by KHRG in October 2012.

² *Tharamu* is a Karen term used for a female teacher, or nurse or any woman to whom the speaker wishes to show respect.

The community member reported that, while villagers are afraid to confront perpetrators, they feel that if the area had greater media coverage rights violations would decrease.

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

- “Mining development damages farms and irrigation infrastructure in Hpapun District,” (August 2013)
- “Incident Report: BGF #1014 Corporal Maw Nay Say violent abuse and extortion of villager in Hpapun District, November 2012,” (August 2013)
- “Violent abuse and forced labour in Bu Tho Township, November and December,” (July 2013)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Dwe Lo Township, March 2012 to March 2013,” (July 2013)
- “BGF and KNLA grenades injure villagers and their children in Hpapun District,” (July 2013)

