



Situation Update

December 5, 2014 / KHRG #14-46-S2

Toungoo Situation Update: Thandaunggyi Township, July 2014

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District in July 2014, including livelihood problems due to land confiscation.

- *In 2014, Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #603 confiscated over 200 acres of villagers' land without providing any compensation.*
- *The villagers requested permission to collect their crops from LIB #603, however they were denied access to their fields. Instead, LIB #603 allowed local female police officers to collect the crops for themselves.*
- *The villagers reported this case to the regional sub-township office, as well as both district and state parliaments, however they had not yet received a reply at the time this report was published.*

Situation Update | Thandaunggyi Township, Toungoo District (July 2014)

The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in July 2014. It was written by a community member in Toungoo District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. It is presented below translated exactly as originally written, save for minor edits for clarity and security.¹ This report was received along with other information from Toungoo District, including one other situation update, two incident reports, 30 interviews and 133 photographs.²

Toungoo district, Thandaunggyi Township, Leik Tho sub-township³ quarterly report

Land confiscation in Leik Tho sub-township

In 2014, the SPDC [State Peace and Development Council]⁴ has [so far] confiscated over 250 to 300 acres of land. The villagers in Leik Tho [sub-township], Thit Khwa Taung

¹ KHRG trains community members in eastern Burma/Myanmar 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, community members 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 In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in eastern Burma/Myanmar, KHRG aims to make all field information received available on the KHRG website once it has been processed and translated, subject only to security considerations. For additional reports categorised by Type, Issue, Location and Year, please see the Related Readings component following each report on KHRG's Website.

³ A sub-township is an administrative unit comprised of several village tracts, which in turn are comprised of 5 to 20 villages in a local area.

village and Let Pet A'in village usually work on plantations [for their livelihood]. The crops produced in the region are cardamom, dog fruit,⁵ and coffee beans. After the confiscation [of their land], the local people are now unemployed. Because of these issues, the land owners whose lands have been confiscated face problems with their economic and social situations, as well as their livelihoods. The SPDC military government LIB [Light infantry Battalion]⁶ #603 has not given compensation to the land owners. The land that they confiscated was over 200 or 300 [acres] and there is also [part of this] land that they have not built buildings [on yet], but they do not allow the land owners to go into the plantation and collect the crops. They [the land owners] made a request to the military officers to [obtain permission] to collect the crops, but they did not allow it. [The Tatmadaw] only allows [local] female police officers to collect crops [for themselves] in [the area under the control of] LIB #603. The land owners signed [an informal document]⁷ and reported [sent it] to the regional sub-township office, district parliament and state parliament, but they have not received a reply yet. I interviewed the people whose lands were confiscated from Let Pet A'in village in the evening on March 17th 2014 at the [village] chairpersons' [village head's] house. According to the villagers, if they [the land owners] collect the crops from their plantations without getting permission from the superior officer [and if the soldiers catch them], they [the soldiers] ask them to leave the crops with them and they also say that the land no longer belongs to you [the villager] anymore. [Now], the villagers weave mats and sell them for their livelihoods. They [the villagers] said to help them [resolve this problem] if there are people who are willing to help them.

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

- “Toungoo Incident Report: Arbitrary arrest and detention, and violent abuse in Thandaunggyi Township, December 2005,” (October 2014)
- “Toungoo Field Report: January to December 2013,” (August 2014)
- “Toungoo Incident Report: Stone mining in Thandaunggyi Township, June 2013,” (August 2014)
- “Compensation for land flooded by Toh Boh dam operations in Toungoo District, August 2013,” (July 2014)
- “Toungoo Interview: A---, August 2013,” (July 2014)

⁴ In Karen, the Burmese phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) is commonly used to refer to the Burma/Myanmar government or to Burma/Myanmar's state army, the Tatmadaw. Many Karen villagers who were accustomed to using the phrase *Na Ah Pa* (SPDC) continue to use that phrase, despite the official dissolution of the SPDC in March 2011; see: "[Mission Accomplished as SPDC 'dissolved'](#)," *Myanmar Times*, April 4-10th 2011.

⁵ Dog fruit, also known as jengkol, is a bean containing sulphur and a mildly toxic amino acid. It is native to Southeast Asia and is commonly eaten with rice and fish paste.

⁶ Light Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) comprised of 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Primarily for offensive operations but sometimes used for garrison duties.

⁷ Although the researcher did not include a copy of the document in the report, it is likely the document contained the names of the villagers whose land was confiscated, the acreage confiscated and the villagers' signatures.

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)