



# Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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## Situation Update

November 20, 2014 / KHRG #14-65-S1

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### **Doplaya Situation Update: Kawkareik Township, September 2014**

*This Situation Update describes events occurring in Kawkareik Township, Doplaya District in September 2014, including issues of land confiscation and explicit threats toward villagers. Starting in November 2010, the Tatmadaw began to confiscate A--- villagers land upon which they built houses for their soldiers' families, as well as houses for members of the Border Guard Force (BGF) and the Karen Peace Force (KPF) and their families. Villagers complained to the A-- village head, who felt too afraid to raise the issue with the Military Operations Command (MOC) #19 General Tun Nay Lin. Villagers report having been threatened with arrest by KPF and BGF soldiers if they continue to complain.*

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### **Situation Update | Kawkareik Township, Doplaya District (September 2014)**

*The following Situation Update was received by KHRG in September 2014. It was written by a community member in Doplaya 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.<sup>1</sup> This report was received along with other information from Doplaya District, including five interviews, 57 photographs and 14 video clips.<sup>2</sup>*

#### **Introduction**

The following is a Situation Update covering events from September 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 29<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Kyeh Doh [area] in Kawkareik Township, Doplaya District. Starting in 2010, the Burmese [Tatmadaw] GE [General Engineering platoon] from Battalion<sup>3</sup> #257, under the command of MOC [Military Operations Command]<sup>4</sup> #19 Major General Tun Nay Lin, confiscated farms from A--- villagers in Kyeh Doh area. Because of this, some villagers

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG trains community members 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, 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.

<sup>2</sup> In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in eastern Burma, 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 categorized by Type, Issue, Location and Year, please see the Related Readings component following each report on KHRG's Website.

<sup>3</sup> Battalions are comprised of four rifle companies, an intelligence section, signal platoons, heavy weapons companies and a head quarters. It is usually made of up 500 soldiers, but it is often understrength.

<sup>4</sup> Military Operations Command are comprised of ten battalions for offensive operations. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs), made up of three battalions each.

do not have farms [to earn] their livelihoods on. This is the real situation that has happened in our area. The names of the villagers who have lost farms are:

1. D---
2. U H---
3. R---
4. K---
5. Saw J---

Beginning in November 2010, the Tatmadaw [started] confiscating the land of villagers and they built houses on that land for the army [soldiers'] families to live on. Then, they [the Tatmadaw] built 62 buildings for the KPF [Karen Peace Force]<sup>5</sup> and BGF [Border Guard Force],<sup>6</sup> but they will continue building [on the confiscated land]. The villagers lost their farms and land for [earning] their livelihoods. They [the villagers] complained to the [A---] village head [about this]. The village head received the complaints and went to meet [Tatmadaw Major] General [Tun Nay Lin] in the city.<sup>7</sup> He [the village head] did not dare to say anything about the land confiscation when he met with the [Tatmadaw] general and he could not report anything to the land owners. The KPF and BGF gathered the farm owners and told them not to complain about the land confiscation, otherwise they will put them in jail. They are threatening the owners and because of this the owners are afraid to complain.



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<sup>5</sup> Karen Peace Force was formed in February 1997 after splitting from the KNU/KNLA and 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. Following repeated rejections of Burmese government proposals to reform KPF into the Tatmadaw Border Guard, substantial elements have since reformed in the Tatmadaw Border Guard in 2010 while others remain independent.

<sup>6</sup> 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 battalions are assigned two digit battalion numbers and 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.

<sup>7</sup> It is unclear which city the researcher is referring to in this instance. Neither the date or exact location of the meeting was included in the submitted report.



The above photos were taken by KHRG's researcher in A--- village, Kyeh Doh area, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District on September 19<sup>th</sup> 2014. These photos show the villagers' land that was confiscated by the Tatmadaw in 2010 and the houses they built for soldiers' families to live in. The villagers whose lands were confiscated are now facing livelihood issues as they no longer have land to work on. *[Photos: KHRG]*

### Conclusion

As I am a KHRG researcher I see that because of the many armed groups [in the area] it impacts the civilians' rights. Already around 20 acres of land have been confiscated by the Tatmadaw and because of the threats the civilians cannot do anything. This Situation Update is true.

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

- "Dooplaya Interview: Naw A---, July 2013," (October 2014)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyainseikgyi, Kawkareik and Win Yay Townships, December 2013 to February 2014," (September 2014)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyonedone Township, September to December 2013," (September 2014)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyonedoe Township, January to June 2014," (September 2014)
- "Dooplaya Incident Report: Villagers subjected to forced labour and degrading treatment by the Karen National Defence Organisation, March 2014," (September 2014)

## Dooطلا District



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