



# Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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## Interview

February 18, 2016 / KHRG #15-80-A2-I1

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## Dooplaya Interview: Naw A---, July 2015

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*This Interview with Naw A--- describes events occurring in Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District, in July 2015, including rape, violent abuse, and explicit threats. Naw A--- reported to KHRG that she was raped in July 2015 by Hpah Ta Roh, a soldier from the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), who came to her house in the middle of the night. After the rape, Naw A--- disclosed that Hpah Ta Roh also threatened and violently abused her in an attempt to deter her from reporting the incident to the village leaders. Hpah Ta Roh also spoke to the village head, warning him that his incident is not his concern. Naw A--- wished for the incident to be reported to all the relevant leaders so that this kind of crime does not happen to other villagers in the future.*

### Interview | Naw A---, (female, 45,) B--- village, Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District (July 2015)

*The following interview was conducted by a community member trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. It was conducted in Dooplaya District in July 2015 and is presented below translated exactly as it was received, save for minor edits for clarity and security.<sup>1</sup> This interview was received along with other information from Dooplaya District, including three other interviews, two incident reports, 113 photographs and 9 video clips.<sup>2</sup>*

**Ethnicity:** Karen

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Marital Status:** Married

**Occupation:** Has no occupation

**Position:** N/A

**What is your name?**

Naw A---.

**How old are you?**

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<sup>1</sup> KHRG trains community members in southeast 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 conducting interviews, community members are trained to use loose question guidelines, but also to encourage interviewees to speak freely about recent events, raise issues that they consider to be important and share their opinions or perspectives on abuse and other local dynamics.

<sup>2</sup> In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in southeastern 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.

45 years old.

**[What is the] village that you live [in]?**

B--- [village].

**How about [your] ethnicity?**

Karen ethnicity.

**How about [your] religion?**

Buddhist.

**[Do you] have a family [are you married]?**

Yes, I have a family.

**How many children do you have?**

I have one child.

**Male or female?**

Male.

**How old is he?**

He is 22 years old.

**Is your son married?**

Yes, he is.

**Your son's father is still alive?**

Yes.

**Where is he?**

He is in Thailand.

**Is he Thai?**

Yes, he is. I have married twice. My first husband was shot and killed by people.

**Why did people kill him?**

People said he practiced black magic, but he did not practice it. People disliked him so people went [to] shoot [him] and killed him.

**Which group killed him?**

It was my cousin.

**Where does he live?**

He lived in the same village as me, [which is] called F---.

**When did people kill him?**

When he was having rice [meal].

**Were you there when he [your first husband] was eating?**

Yes, I was there. It [the bullet] also hit my head.

**Where?**

Here, look [she shows her scar to the KHRG community member].

**So they shot and killed your husband [and] you were also hit?**

Yes.

**Your [current] husband is in Thailand now?**

Yes, he grew up in Thailand and he has Thai ID.

**So what is your occupation?**

I have no occupation. I am just waiting for my husband and [in the meantime I] help my brother with his work, cutting [unwanted] vegetation.

**Do you have any responsibility in the village?**

No, nothing. I [used to] just do *loh ah pay*<sup>3</sup> and porter [forced labour] when my [current] husband was here.

**Now, do you still have to do *loh ah pay* or porter?**

No, [I] only had to go for sentry [duty] when my husband was [in the village]. Now, there is no more [forced labour demanded] from our family because my husband is not here; there is only me, and my son [is] also a soldier. Since it [our situation] is like that, they do not ask for [labor contribution]. But if my husband comes back they will start assigning [our family forced labour duties] again such as sentry and travelling back and forth.

**In your area, how many military groups are there?**

There is *Nyein Chan Yay A'pweh* [Karen Peace Force (KPF)].<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Loh ah pay* is a Burmese term now commonly used in reference to forced labour, although traditionally referring to voluntary service for temples or the local community, not military or state projects.

<sup>4</sup> *Nyein Chan Yay A'pweh*, can be translated as 'Peace Group' and refers to the Karen Peace Army (KPA), aka the Karen Peace Force (KPF). *Nyein Chan Yay A'pweh* should not be confused with *Aye Chan Yay A'pweh*, which also translates as 'Peace Group', and is a government-sponsored militia formed in 1998 and consisting of roughly 30 reserve soldiers and significantly less active members. Nor should the group be confused with *Htanay Pyithu Sitt*

**Only one group?**

Yes, only one group, Kyaw Kler's *Nyein Chan Yay A'pweh* [KPF], in addition to the Tatmadaw group.

**How about B--- [village]?**

No [armed groups inside of the village, only in the surrounding area].

**So there are only two armed groups that you know of [in this area]?**

Yes.

**Have you seen any other groups travelling around?**

No.

**You said there are *Nyein Chan Yay* [KPF soldiers] and Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers]. Do you [personally] know any of the Tatmadaw [soldiers] there?**

I don't know Burmese [Tatmadaw soldiers] and I can't [re]call their names, either. They live in F-- mountain. I have seen them come down [to my village] sometimes.

**Do they demand things from the villagers when they come down to the village?**

I have not seen them demand things.

**How about [any demands] on the part of *Nyein Chan Yay A'pweh* [KPF]?**

No, I have not seen *Nyein Chan Yay* [KPF] demand things [from villagers], either. They eat their [own] thing [food].

**Do the Burmese [Tatmadaw] there demand tax?**

No.

**They live on their own on the mountain?**

Yes, they live on their own on the mountain.

**Do they come down sometimes?**

Yes, they come down on their own and buy things. They do not live in the village; they live only on the mountain.

**Now, you live in B--- [village], and you came to me. Could you discuss what happened a little? How did it happen, etc.?**

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*A'pweh*, another militia also known as the Thaundaung Peace Group that has been in conflict with *Aye Chan Yay A'pweh* in Toungoo District. It is also distinct from the KNU/KNLA-Peace Council, which has, on occasion, been referred to as 'Peace Group'.

Yes, he came and did [it to] me, and then he left. I also feel bad [upset]. I was thinking to report it but I don't dare to. He will kill me if I do.

**Who do you mean by “he”?**

He is Hpah Ta Roh.

**Is Hpah Ta Roh a villager or a soldier?**

He is a soldier.

**Which [armed group's] soldier is he?**

He is a DKBA [Democratic Karen Benevolent Army]<sup>5</sup> soldier.

**Are you sure that he is a DKBA [soldier]?**

Yes, he is. I am sure.

**So where does he live?**

He lives in Ta Poh Kaw [village]. He told me, “*I am from Ta Poh Kaw [village]; do not mess with me*”.<sup>6</sup> He told me that. He told me, “[If] *I raped you why did you not say it* [at the time it was happening]? *Are you mute?*” He told [yelled] at me saying, “*Shoot and kill me if you feel that I’m such an inconvenience* [to you]!” He told me that.

**Did he rape you in your house or somewhere else?**

It was in my own house, in my room like this [demonstrates to KHRG community member]. I can show you that.

**How many people were there when he came?**

I was alone.

**Did he call out to you when he came?**

When he came, [he climbed] up the ladder, [which made a] “Klaw Klaw Klaw” sound, while I was sleeping. I woke up and I was thinking, was it a cat or a human? And I just stayed still. I thought if it was my son, he would call out to me. And now [at the time] I was thinking: if it was him, why didn't he call me? And [then] he [Hpah Ta Roh] called [to] me, “*Hey, friend?*” “Yes,” I answered. I told him that I thought it was my son and I kept sleeping [lying on my bed]. He asked me,

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<sup>5</sup> The Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), formerly the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, was formed in December 1994 and was originally a breakaway group from the KNU/KNLA that signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burma/Myanmar government and directly cooperated at times with Tatmadaw forces. The formation of the DKBA was led by monk U Thuzana with the help and support of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the name of the military government in Burma/Myanmar at that time. For more information on the formation of the DKBA, see “[Inside the DKBA](#),” KHRG, 1996. The DKBA now refers to a splinter group from those DKBA forces reformed as Tatmadaw Border Guard Forces, also remaining independent of the KNLA. As of April 2012, the DKBA changed its name from “Buddhist” to “Benevolent” to reflect its secularity.

<sup>6</sup> In colloquial Karen, when one person holds a position of power over the other, the powerful person may use this expression to emphasize their power. The specific village of origin of the speaker is irrelevant to this assertion of power.

*"Come out and bring betel nut."* And so I came out with betel nut. And I was also afraid as it was dark, and he told me about himself, saying that he comes to do logging [in the area]. I asked him, *"You haven't visited [me] in the past so why are you visiting me now?"* He replied, *"I came to visit."* I replied to him, *"You visit me at midnight? You want to go back and sleep? Go back and sleep!"* He just stayed [sitting].

**Did he not reply anything to you?**

No, he did not. I told him, *"Go back and sleep in other people's house,"* but he did not go back and sleep [elsewhere]. He did not say anything and he just stayed [sitting]. When I was about to leave to go back and sleep in my room, he pulled me. I thought of shouting but he said not to shout, and I did not shout because I thought that if I shouted he would kill me. I thought he would shoot if I shout. In the past, [when I saw him around the village, he] came with no gun, but now there was a gun with him. That is why I was scared and I didn't dare to talk about it [to others in the village].

**Did he ask you any [questions] before he raped you?**

No, he did not. He just raped me and did that to me.

**Did he do everything [all sexual acts to you] at that time?**

I am thin and I couldn't defeat him. He is fat [big and strong] and there was no way that I could've defeated him. Think, he is bigger than me. My husband is thin. He [Hpah Ta Roh] is fat and I am thin - I can't win [against] him.

**Did you shout [at] any [point in] time [during the incident]?**

No, how could I shout? He slapped my mouth.

**Did he slap your mouth or cover your mouth?**

No, he did not cover my mouth. He slapped my mouth when I was trying to shout. He held me tight. I could not shout and I didn't dare to shout because there was a gun beside him. I thought that he would shoot me, so I didn't dare to shout.

**What kind of gun was it?**

[In Karen] it is called *Ka Hkee* gun. [She asks her cousin who is present in the room what the gun is called] I believe it is called AK [47] gun.

**What is his name again?**

His name's Hpah Ta Roh.

**How old is he?**

He should be around 35 years [old]. He is an adult man.

**You said Hpah Ta Roh is a DKBA [soldier]?**

Yes, he is.

**Do you know his position in the military?**

I do not know his position. I have just seen him in other people's houses and [then] he came to my house and raped me. That is all I know about him. I have no idea about his position in the military.

**Has he ever visited you at your house before he raped you?**

No, never. He has never been to my house before. That is the only time that he visited me.

**Has he met with you [at] any time before [the rape]?**

No, he has met me only once, when I was visiting my female cousin's house for a drink of hot tea.

**Did he talk to you when he met you there?**

No.

**Did he ask you anything when he met you in your cousin's house?**

He just asked me how many [people] I live with, and I answered that I live alone. He has never been to my house. That was the first time that he visited me.

**He has never been to your house and [yet] he knows the way to your house?**

When my cousin went down to F--- [village] to buy things, he followed her [when she was] coming back [to my house]. He did not come up to my house, he just went back straight away. And suddenly, he comes to my house at midnight and I didn't know what his plan was, perhaps to assassinate me or only to rape me?

**What time did he come to your house?**

It was midnight. A little while after he visited [showed up at my house], the rooster started to crow. And he held me down and raped me and after that he sat for a while and he left as the light was coming up. He went to someone else's house.

**So he did not leave immediately after he raped you?**

No, he sat for a while and [then] he left.

**Where was he sitting?**

He was lying on the floor. He told me that he is going to sleep. When the light came up he took his gun with him and he left.

**Where did you go after he raped you?**

I was there [at my house]. I was cooking rice in the kitchen. I thought he went back to sleep. I didn't go back to sleep. I started cooking after he raped me. I thought he will go back, but he was lying there and he woke up when the light came up and he took his gun and went to my older sister's house. I thought, what kind of person is he? I have never seen [experienced] a thing [situation] like this in the past. Now, he came and raped me and he did this to me. I thought he was trying to mess with me as [if I were his] enemy. I am just a woman, I know

nothing [about fighting back]. If he [tried to] kill me; I would die on the floor. I was scared. My husband was not home and my son was not home, either. I was alone.

**Did you tell anyone about it in the morning?**

No, I didn't tell anyone. Later on, I told him [Hpah Ta Roh], "*You did [raped me] like this and this should go* [be reported to the] *elders* [village leaders]." He did not like it [the idea of me reporting the case], and he left [walked away].

**You told him [that]?**

Yes, I did.

**Did he go to your house again?**

Yes, he did. I [took a] look at him and he didn't look normal [he looked like he was up to no good] and I went and stayed at my younger sister's house. And he asked me to come and meet him and I came back [from my sister's house to my cousin's house]. I thought that we were going to discuss why he raped me. I have not seen a thing [situation] like this in the past. I thought I was going to tell him this. [When we met again] I hadn't [even] started talking, [when] he violently abused me. He kicked me and shot [at] me [for intimidation].

**Where did he kick you?**

He kicked me in my female cousin's house.

**Where? Which part of your body did he kick?**

He kicked me in the back of the neck, twice.

**Did he kick strongly?**

Yes, it was too strong. I was numb [after].

**Did you fall down since he kicked you [strongly]?**

Yes, I fell down and he kicked me again and I was gone [passed out]. I was gone [had passed out] because I was already numb after [the] first [time] he kicked me. He came up [to the house] again [later that day] and he kicked me there [on the floor] twice in the back of my neck and I started feeling pain in my neck. After he kicked me, he shot [at the floor] beside me. There was a hole in the timber floor.

**Was the distance between the hole and you far?**

No, the distance was just like [the distance between] where you sit and where I am now. I guess he would shoot at me, but he didn't dare to really shoot at me. He just shot somewhere else which was not far from me, like between you and me. I was sitting like this and he shot here like this. [He] shot twice but the gun was jammed. He told me that he would shoot more if the gun wasn't jammed. He also told me it was enough, spending this many bullets.

**How many times did he shoot?**



Twice. When I was going back [from my cousin's house] with my older sister, he followed us and he shot another two times. I don't know what he was doing. I have no idea what he was trying to do, I thought he would kill us [me] if he caught us [that day].

**He kicked you twice?**

Yes.

**After kicking you, he shot [his] gun two times?**

Yes.

**What did he say to you after that?**

He said, "*Kill me if you feel in your heart that I am an inconvenience to you.*" He told me that.

**He told you that?**

Yes, he said "*I am a tiger. I don't just bite people, if I do [bite] - you will be able to hear it [you'd get bit seriously]*". "[I] *bite to death,*" he said. He said that. Hpah Ta Roh said that.

**So when you went to meet him [at your cousin's house] he did not say anything [before he violently abused you]?**

No, he did not. He just violently abused [me] and shot the gun, [and] as I was saying before, he asked me to kill him if I do not feel good about him. I did not say that I do not feel good about him. He said, "*If you do not feel good [about me], kill me. Why didn't you shout when I raped you?*" Because if I shouted I was afraid that he would have killed me.

**So when he was shooting [his] gun, how many people were there?**

There were three or four people altogether, including my cousin and daughter-in-law, when he was shooting.

**What about [the] other people? Were they scared?**

I don't know. They might have been scared. Everyone is scared of gun shooting.

**[The interviewer addresses Naw A---'s cousin, who is also in the room:] Aunty, do you know about Hpah Ta Roh raping this aunty?**

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** Yes, I did.

**She said that he [Hpah Ta Roh] kicked her. Is it true?**

Yes.

**Where did he kick her?**

He kicked her here at her face.

**[Naw A--- cuts in and says:]** Not the face, it was my head.

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** When I was climbing up I did not look carefully. He came up and he directly kicked her and she was knocked down. She did not fall down on the floor as she placed her hands down [to break her fall]. She was moving like this [the cousin demonstrates the action].

**[Naw A---:]** And I turned back [to face Hpah Ta Roh with my] hands down on the floor and he kicked me again and I was going like this [Naw A--- acts out the motion].

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** The first time when he abused her I was not there, I only saw the second time that he abused her.

**How many times did he abuse her?**

Twice.

**Twice?**

Yes, the first time when she was in her sibling's hut people fetched her and when she arrived back [to her other cousin, Naw C---'s house], I was not there. Later on they [people] called me [to come see the incident]. I didn't see the first time.

**[Naw A---:]** the first time when he violently abused me I passed out and my head was like, "Woah!" My head was dazed and I could not move.

**How did he abuse you in the first time [instance]?**

**[Naw A---:]** He kicked the back of my neck and I was knocked down and my daughter-in-law was there. The distance was just like where you are and where I am. She was just looking [as the incident took place]. He also said, "*I would beat you more than this if your daughter-in-law was not here. It is because I feel Ah Na<sup>7</sup> of your daughter-in-law.*" My sister said he asked her, "*Are you alright? If you are not alright with me beating your younger sister, I will kill you all!*" My older sister didn't dare to say [that] she [doesn't] feel okay. She just replied "Yes, I am okay."

**[The researcher asks Naw A---'s cousin:]** Aunty, you said you did not see the first time that he abused her?

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** No, I did not. I was on my hill farm, cutting vegetation in my farm. At the time, people went to call her [Naw A---] and when she came back to Naw C---'s house, Hpah Ta Roh was there. I do not know where they [Hpah Ta Roh and Naw C---] met [know each other].

**[Naw A--- cousin:]** Was he there when you came back?

**[Naw A---:]** No, he was not there. He was drinking alcohol at Saw G---'s house. Naw C--- and you went there to go and get him, right?

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** I went there to call him, it was the second time. The time that I saw the incident. The time that Naw C--- went to your son to call you. You mean that time?

**[Naw A---:]** Yes, that time.

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<sup>7</sup> In Burmese language, *Ah Na Dei* means 'a desire not to impose on others' or reluctance to impose on others. The idea is to maintain smooth relations by considering others' feelings and refraining from upsetting the other. Combined with a sense of fear, feeling of *Ah Na Dei* can justify inaction. See, "[Empowerment as constructive power for gender](#)," *CTC Bulletin*, 2004.

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** I was not there on that time, I only saw the second time. I heard that he [Hpah Ta Roh] came up to the house and beat her and kicked her. Her [Naw A---'s] daughter-in-law told me about that.

**Is there no village head?**

There is no village head. The village head lives in F--- [village]. He [Hpah Ta Roh] did not allow me to go and report about it to the village head. He would kill us [if we reported to village head].

**[Naw A---:] Did he say that he would kill you if you reported about it to the village head?**

**[Naw A---:]** Yes, he said he would kill me if I reported about it to the village head or [other local] leaders. He said he is not afraid of the village head or leaders. He told me that.

**So have you reported [officially complained] to anyone since he has raped you?**

No one.

**Did you inform anyone [at all in the village]?**

No one except a *Hpuh* [grandpa].

**Which *Hpuh* [grandpa]?**

*Hpuh Bo*<sup>8</sup> Kay.

**Who is *Hpuh Bo Kay*?**

I do not know [exactly what his position is]. He [Hpah Ta Roh] went to the village head and told the village head, "*It has nothing to do with you.*" He thought that I reported the case to the village head. He went back [to the village] to find me on that day.

**Who?**

Hpah Ta Roh. He went to the village head as he could not find me. I have not met with the village head as he was in his farm [when I tried to see him]. I heard [from other villagers] that he [Hpah Ta Roh] told the village head, "*It has nothing to do with you,*" and the village head did not care.

**So [Hpah Ta Roh] talked to the village head first?**

Yes, the village head also told me that. He said he was told by Hpah Ta Roh, "*Do not listen to what she said; it has nothing to do with you.*" They [both] said I was just lying, and it was not true that I have been raped.

**Who said [spread the rumor] that you were lying?**

F--- villagers in the village:<sup>9</sup> Maung Oo Tin and Kyaw Kler. They said it is not true. Kyaw Kler was asking [other villagers] if it is true that I have been raped by Hpah Ta Roh. He said that I was just lying. I do not lie. I am old and do not lie. I would not be telling [about the rape] if I

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<sup>8</sup> *Bo* is a Burmese title meaning 'officer.'

<sup>9</sup> F--- village and B--- village are very close to each other, with villagers from both places often coming into each other's villages.

hadn't been raped. I tell [about the rape] because I have been raped. I have children [a son], a husband, and a grandchild. If I just keep secret, my older sister is *Nuh Boo*,<sup>10</sup> and if I kept it secret [I was worried] that she would get a disease or face [some sort of] accident. It is not good whether we state [report it] or not. Think: I have to be afraid in two or three [different] ways.

**Do you remember the date that he beat you and threatened to shoot at you?**

No, I can't remember.

**So how long has it been since the incident happened?**

I think it has been about a week. In the morning, after he beat me, he had to go. After three or four days he came [back] down here. I think it's only been that long. I can't remember exactly. My blood is not working well<sup>11</sup> and I cannot count the days. In the past I was good at it but now it is clear [that I cannot do that].

**You said he had to go. Where did he have to go?**

To Ghaw Lay Hkee [name of place]. The DKBA had to go back [there on order from their leaders]. He went back with Maung Pein and Nya Khay. The three of them went back together.

**Is Nya Khay also a DKBA soldier?**

Yes, he is.

**Does he live in B--- village, as well?**

No, he does not live in B---. He lives in Htee Hpoh Ghay Hkee [village]. He went back with Hpah Ta Roh.

**How many people did he go with?**

The two of them went back together because the other one [Maung Pein] went back ahead [of them].

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** It has been a week [since the incident]. He violently abused her.

**[Naw A---:]** And he left in the morning [as per the order from the DKBA leaders]. If he was still there [B--- village] he would not be happy with me; he would shoot me.

**Did he also come to your house [to rape you] later, after he first raped you?**

No, he did not. After he raped me, in the morning, he went back [to my house] but he did not get into the house and he just left.

**[Naw A---:] Were you there [at home when he came]?**

No, I was cutting [clearing] vegetation on the farm.

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<sup>10</sup> *Nuh Boo* likely refers to the Buddhist practice of Vassa, which is a three-month period between July and October in which one adopts more ascetic practices. Naw A--- said she was worried that if she kept her rape a secret, she would have been lying by omission and such an action may have compromised her sister's spiritual practice, which puts an emphasis on honesty and truth-telling.

<sup>11</sup> The expression "blood not working well" often implies mental health issues.

**You saw that [he came to your house]?**

Yes, [I saw him from the field the first time he came to] check [if I'm there] and he did not find me so he left and he did not come anymore.

**Is the distance between your hut [house] and your farm [long]?**

It is close.

**He did not call [out to] you?**

He saw me when he came. He was saying, "*Aren't you coming up to the house?*" I said no to him, [so] he went up to the hut alone and he was just looking around and [then] he left. He was going to my older sister's house and then he left. He went back to my cousin who was cutting vegetation [in her farm].

**Did he come up to your hut?**

He did not come up to my hut as I was not there [in the hut].

**[But] you just said he came up to your hut for a while?**

He came to me twice.

**He came to you twice in the morning after he raped you [on the same day]?**

Yes, he went up to my house the first time. I saw him and he left. Then he came down again when I was cutting [vegetation in the farm]. He was asking me, "*Are you not coming up to your house?*" and I answered, "*No,*" and then he left.

**Did he not ask you anything [else]?**

He did not ask me anything. He did not tell me anything. He just left.

**You said he has never been to your house until he raped you?**

No, never. Ask my cousin [if you don't believe me].

**Did you know that he would come on the night that he went to your house [and raped you]?**

No, I did not. He shot [his] gun and come to my house.

**On the way coming to your house?**

Yes, he shot one time on his way to my house.

**On that night?**

Yes, after [he] fired [his] gun he came up to my house. He placed his gun down when he climbed up [the ladder to my house]. I thought it was my son and [so] I paid no mind and I kept sleeping on my bed. And he woke me up [by calling out to me] and he asked me to bring betel

nut for him and I replied that I do not have betel nut and betel nut leaves.<sup>12</sup> I told him, “*What are you here for? It is nighttime and it is midnight.*” I told him to sleep in other people’s house. I asked him, “*Where are you coming from?*” “[I] *am coming from Kyeik Doe [Town],*” [he said.] I asked him, “*You come back from Kyeik Doe, and why don’t you sleep in other people’s house? It is midnight.*” He replied to me, “*I do not want to sleep [in other people’s house]. There was nobody in Naw D---’s house - she went to her mom’s house to sleep [there].*” I asked him, “*Why didn’t you sleep in Naw D---’s house?*” He replied that he does not want to sleep. He did not want to sleep there and he slept here, it is fine, but do not do like that [rape me]. He could have slept on his own.

### **Do you know Hpah Ta Roh’s commander?**

I do not know his commander. I just know that he does logging and is friends with [fellow DKBA soldier] Nya Khay. I just think that his commander is Nya Khay. He does not have other commander [that I know of].

### **He does logging in your area?**

Yes, he does [logging] near Naw D---’s [house] area in B--- [village]. He has never been to my house [before the incident]. He does logging and usually goes to Nya Khay’s [house] and to Koo Koo’s house.

### **After he visited [raped] you, did you feel like you wanted to marry him or something?<sup>13</sup>**

No, I have never had that kind of thinking [in my mind]. I have children [a son] and a husband.

### **Did he proposition you [before the rape]?**

No. He has not propositioned me and I have never met him.

### **So now I would like to know how do you want people to help you [regarding the rape case]?**

What kind of help?

### **How do you want the leaders to help you?**

If [I] submit the case [to leaders], would he be okay? If I do submit the case to the leaders, he would tell me he will kill me for ruining his dignity. He would tell me that. And I do not damage his dignity [as it is true]. He did [that to] me, and so I said he did [it to] me. I would not say that if he hadn’t done it. There are a lot of people in F--- [village] and B--- [village]. None of them has raped me. He is the only one. I want the leaders to arrange [mediate] in a good way. [I want a case] like this to never happen [in the future], like [the case of] him raping me. One time is enough. I had bad luck during this [whole] year. I think it was my fate that this year I’ve had to face such a thing [rape]. It is obvious.

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<sup>12</sup> In Burmese, ‘betel nut’ and ‘betel leaf’ are referred to as *konywet* and *konthih*, respectively, as if they are from the same plant. The Burmese names are also commonly used by Karen language speakers. Betel nut 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.

<sup>13</sup> In past rape cases in the region, the abused woman was sometimes pressured to marry her rapist, if she was unmarried or widowed. KHRG previously published an incident where a SLORC soldier insisted on marrying the woman he had raped, “[Incidents Reported from Karen Villages](#),” KHRG, November 1993.

**So, I would like to know what you want me to do with this information. [Would you like me to] send it to the superior leaders or what do you want to do with the information that you have reported to me?**

It depends on you. You can sent it if you want and [I think] it is good to send [it in].

**It doesn't depend on me, it depends on your feelings [decision]. You were the person that suffered [in this incident] and you know best. Do you want [me] to report to the superior leader or how do you want me to report it? And do you agree to it [reporting the case to leaders]?**

For me, I agree.

**[Speaking to Naw A---'s cousin:] So aunty, what do you want to say based on what you have seen [regarding the case], such as the way he talked and beat [your cousin]? Do you want to mention anything related to what you have seen?**

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** You have to ask the victim. If you want to report [on the case], that will be good. I am not the victim and [so how] can I make a statement for her?

**You are not the victim but you are her cousin [so you can speak up and confirm her testimony]. For example [because] she [Naw A---] has disease in her [is not completely healthy] and her blood is not working. So...**

It is good if she mentions [it to the leaders] so that doesn't happen [again] in the future. If we just keep things as is, he might come [back] in the future because he might think that he has done it [rape] and no action has been taken against him so he might keep doing it.

**So Hpah Ta Roh does not have a wife?**

**[Naw A---'s cousin:]** People said that he has a wife but he told [me] that he does not have a wife. People said that his wife is a mute woman. He is from Ta Poh Kaw [village]. I do not know how many wives he has. Kyaw Kler told me yesterday that he has a wife.

**Who is Kyaw Kler?**

He is a *Nyein Chan Yay* [KPF] officer. He is *Hpuh Bo Myint*'s subordinate, [*Hpuh Bo Myint* is] the one that lives in Per Hkler [village]. People [also] call him [*Hpuh Bo Myint*] *Bo Myint Htun*. Don't you know him?

**No, I don't know him.**

He is Kyaw Kler's commander. Kyaw Kler is also a KPF officer.

**So why did you not mention it to the village leader?**

**[Naw A---:]** I don't know about it anymore [I give up]. If the village head talks about it, he [Hpah Ta Roh] does not like the village head talking about it. What to do? It is awkward, I told you. I do not know [what to do]. He [Hpah Ta Roh] won't [be] pleased if I report it to the village leaders. So what to do? He did tell me not to report it to the village leader, and if I do, he will not be pleased. My sister heard that as well. He will not be pleased if I report to the leader and he would say that I am just lying. I do not lie. I am not a kid, how can I lie? I am old and I got a grandchild.

**You did not report it to the leaders [government authorities], so did you report it to any of the local [village] leaders?**

Recently people told Kyaw Kler that Hpah Ta Roh raped Saw E---'s mom [Naw A---]. He replied it might not be true. It might be just a rumor. I do not know what Hpah Ta Roh might say to that. He [Hpah Ta Roh] once had an argument with Kyaw Kler and he was going to shoot Kyaw Kler with [his] gun and Kyaw Kler [said he] allows him to shoot him one time and he [Kyaw Kler] will shoot him back one time.<sup>14</sup> They are very brave [aggressive] people, do not stay close to them.

**Do they do aggressive things there [in the village]?**

They do not [usually] do aggressive things in the village. Only with me, and there was one time [when] he [Kyaw Kler was] angry when he [Kyaw Kler] lost his logs or bamboo. He [Hpah Ta Roh] was displeased with me when I talked about the incident [rape].

**You said you do not know Hpah Ta Roh's leader?**

No, I just know that he is here to do logging and he stays in people's [villagers'] houses. It has not been very long since I first met him. I think [his leader] might be Nya Khay. I thought I will report it to Nya Khay, [but] people do not want me to report it [to him].

**Who does not allow [you to report to Nya Khay]?**

My younger sibling told me not to report. [My younger sibling] said, "*They will kill you if you report about it or they will kill you on the way* [when you walk alone] *or they will strangle you and kill you.* People told me [different things] here and there, and I just live like a deaf person [not sure whose advice to listen to].

**Did he shoot the gun close to you and were you scared?**

Of course I was. How can you not be scared when people shoot a gun beside you?

**In whose house [did] he fire [the gun]?**

It was in Naw C---'s house.

**Is she your relative?**

My cousin.

**Where is your son now?**

He is in B--- [village].

**Your son lives together with you?**

Sometimes he lives with me and sometimes he goes back and lives with his uncle. His uncle was here before he went back [to his village]. [My son] works in farming together with his uncle.<sup>15</sup>

**So did you not tell your son?**

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<sup>14</sup> No shots were fired in this incident, Kyaw Kler and Hpah Ta Roh were merely saying these threats to each other.

<sup>15</sup> It is common for locally recruited soldiers to work in farming when not fulfilling their military duties.



I told him already.

**What did your son say?**

He said, "*I do not know, [you should] do what you want to do*". It happened to me this way and I report it this way. I do not say other things [that didn't happen].

**Is there anything that you want to mention which I neglected to ask you about the incident?**

[You] have to mention it to the leaders and the leaders should reprimand their children [soldiers] as their children are not good [did a bad thing] so that they don't do this in the future. I can say only that much.

**Anything else?**

No, that's all

**Ok so I will send this information and audio to the superior [to the leaders through KHRG]. Let's see what the leaders will plan [to do regarding] the incident. Thanks for the information.**

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

- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Win Yay Township, March to May 2014," (February 2016)
- "Dooplaya Interview: Daw A---, October 2015," (February 2016)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyonedoe and Kawkareik townships, July to November 2014," (January 2016)
- "Dooplaya Situation Update: Kyainseikgyi Township, March to May 2015," (November 2015)
- "Forced recruitment of a child soldier by KNLA in Kyainseikgyi Township, Dooplaya District, October 2015," (October 2015)

## Dooplaya District



## Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)