



Karen Human Rights Group
Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

July 16, 2018 / KHRG #17-118-I1

**Hpapun Incident Report: Arbitrary Land Confiscation in
Dwe Lo Township, May 2017**

This Incident Report describes a case of arbitrary land confiscation by the Ka Ma Maung town administrator Saw Tha Klo Htoo. It occurred on May 14th 2017 in Section #2 (also known as Ohne Daw Section), Ka Ma Maung Town, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. 107 acres of land were confiscated from the local community, affecting many Muslim households. The land was then divided into plots 60 feet long and 40 feet wide, and sold for 300,000 kyat [US \$224.15 USD]¹ a plot.

Incident Report | Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District (May 2017)

The following Incident Report was written by (1) a community member in Hpapun 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.² This report was received in November 2017 along with other information from Hpapun District, including three other incident reports, nine interviews, one situation update and 165 photographs.³

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Arbitrary land confiscation
Date of Incident	May 14 th 2017

¹ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 28/03/2018 official market rate of 1335.81 kyats to US \$1

² KHRG trains community members in southeastern Burma/Myanmar to document individual incidents of abuse 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 incident reports, community members are encouraged to document incidents of abuse that they consider to be important, by verifying information from multiple sources, assessing for potential biases and comparing to local trends.

³ 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.

Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	Section #2 (also known as Ohne Daw Section), Ka Ma Maung Town, [Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District]
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Victim Information	
Name	Saw B---
Age	54
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Yes
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager
Village	Section #2 (also known as Ohne Daw Section), Ka Ma Maung Town

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Saw Tha Klo Htoo	Ka Ma Maung Town Administrator	General Administration Office, Ka Ma Maung Town	General Administration Office	U Thein Zaw, Hpapun Township Administrator

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

I [KHRG researcher] heard about how victims of the fighting in Mae Thaw Waw were having trouble securing shelters in Ohne Daw Section, Ka Ma Maung Town. When I went to Ohne Daw to investigate and collect information about this issue, I also learned about the land confiscation.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

[I interviewed a villager whose land had been confiscated, Saw B---.] He told me that "They [the Village and Section #2 administration manage the land] on their own. They signed [the document about the land confiscation] themselves and then Aung Moe Hein from the Myanmar Land Department submitted it [to the higher-up authorities]". [Saw B-- shared his perspectives on the land confiscation and told me who was responsible].

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

An instance of arbitrary land confiscation occurred on May 14th 2017 in Section #2 (also known as Ohne Daw Section), Ka Ma Maung Town [Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District].

The villagers whose land was confiscated are: Daw C---, Daw D---, Daw E---, Naw F---, Ma G---, Daw H---, U I---, U J---, U K---, U L---, Saw B---, U M--- and N---.

Saw Tha Klo Htoo, the Ka Ma Maung town administrator, is responsible for confiscating the land. He confiscated this land to remove a Muslim community from the centre of the village. The confiscated land was then sold to [other] villagers. Each plot of land was sold for 300,000 kyat [US \$224.15 USD]. Each plot was 60 feet long and 40 feet wide. In total, 107 acres of land were confiscated in total.

Saw Tha Klo Htoo issued a directive on May 14th 2017 to confiscate these 107 acres of land. U Khay Mi and Saw Tha Klo Htoo were responsible for carrying out the land confiscation. Saw Tha Klo Htoo then sold this land to people from the neighbouring villages of Myin Ma, Kyun Daw, Baw Kyoh Lel, P'Lan Taung and Kwin D'La.

In April 2017, the representatives of the Land Management Committee of Hpapun Township came to Section #2 in Ka Ma Maung Town. They met with villagers whose land had been confiscated. However, they did not do anything to resolve this issue. Instead, they told the local community that reporting this case to higher authorities and attempting to get the land back would be very expensive. The committee told local villagers that it was up to them to decide whether they would like to go through such a costly process.

After this visit, no further actions were taken by the villagers to get their land back. Although they wanted to fight for their land rights, they did not know what further steps they could take. Therefore, they felt that getting their land back was helpless.

This is not the first time that the land in question was confiscated. Before the land was confiscated in May 2017, the land had previously been confiscated by the monk U Khay Mi Ka (also known as U Khin Maung Win) and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA).⁴ With the formation of the DKBA in 1994, the land was gradually taken from the local community. It was used to establish the Ohne Daw village.

⁴ The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) was originally formed in 1994 as a breakaway group from the KNLA. Since its separation from the KNLA in 1994, it was known to frequently cooperate with and support the Tatmadaw in its conflict with the KNLA. The original group underwent major change in 2010 as the majority of the original DKBA was transformed into the BGF, which is under the control of the Burma/Myanmar government. The remainder of the original DKBA formed a smaller splinter group in 2010 and then changed its name in 2012 from the Democratic Karen *Buddhist* Army to the Democratic Karen *Benevolent* Army. Following this major change in 2010, the original DKBA is considered to no longer exist as a distinct entity as it has now been submerged within the BGF. This original DKBA (Buddhist) (1994 – 2010) should not be confused with either the DKBA (Benevolent) (2010 – present) which was formed as a breakaway group from the original DKBA, or with the DKBA (Buddhist) (2016 – present) which was formed as a splinter group from the DBKA (Benevolent) (2010 – present) in 2016. For more information on the formation of the DKBA, see “[Inside the DKBA](#),” KHRG, 1996.

	
<p>This photo was taken on August 13th 2017 in Section #2 (also known as Ohne Daw Section), Ka Ma Maung Town, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The land shown in this photo was confiscated by Saw Tha Klo Htoo, the Ka Ma Maung town administrator. <i>[Photo: KHRG]</i></p>	<p>This photo was taken on August 13th 2017 in Section #2 (also known as Ohne Daw Section), Ka Ma Maung Town, Dwe Lo Township, Hpapun District. The person in this photo is Saw B---, 54 years old. His land was confiscated. A KHRG member interviewed him about the land confiscation. <i>[Photo: KHRG]</i></p>

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

<p>Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.</p>
<p>I interviewed Saw B---, [one of the villagers whose land was confiscated], who gave permission to use this information.</p>

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

- “Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, July 2015,” (April 2017)
- “Hpapun Interview: Saw B---, October 2016,” (March 2017)
- “Hpapun Interview: Saw A---, March 2016,” (January 2017)
- “Hpapun Field Report: January to December 2015,” (December 2016)
- “Hpapun Situation Update: Bu Tho Township, June to August 2016,” (November 2016)

Mu Traw (Hpapun) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)