

Analyzing the Ei Tu Hta Internally Displaced Persons Camp Administration in the Karen National Union-Controlled Area

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Abstract

This case study focused on analyzing the administration of the Ei Tu Hta (ETH) Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp. It was established in 2006 for Karen people displaced from Taw Oo, Kler Lwel Htoo, and Mu Traw due to armed conflict and abuses by the Burma Army. From 2006 to 2017, the Borderline Consortium (TBC) supported basic needs such as food rations and hygiene materials. Since 2017, aid has been cut off, and people in the camp have faced increasing difficulties in meeting their basic survival needs. Under conditions of partial support and limited resources at ETH IDP camp, this research emphasized the role of camp administration in fulfilling essential public services and managing resources effectively.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with community leaders, service providers, and camp administrators. The recorded interview transcripts were systematically analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that the camp administration is managed by a local governing body, and camp administrators collaborate with the upper administrative body of the KNU Brigade 5 administration.

The study highlighted the camp's administrative structure, administrators' performance and challenges, residents' participation, residents' difficulties, and their preferred development pathway toward transforming the IDP camp into a village tract. The findings showed that both residents' perspectives and administrators' expectations focus on improving services in two phases: the current hybrid situation as both an IDP camp and a village tract, and the full transformation into a recognized village in the future. This study contributes to research on displacement governance and community-led administration by providing empirical insights into how long-term IDP camps manage public services and institutional transitions.