



News Bulletin

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Two separate killing incidents committed by Tatmadaw soldiers in Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District (March and May 2017)

This News Bulletin describes two separate killing incidents committed by Tatmadaw soldiers in Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District between March and May 2017.¹

- *On March 18th 2017, an A--- villager named U H---, was shot and killed by Tatmadaw soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion [LIB] #589 at a gold mining site in Shwegyin Township. The leaders of the Tatmadaw and the gold mining company each provided one million kyat [US \$736] to the victim's family as compensation.*
 - *On May 14th 2017, an eight year old girl, named Nan P--, was held hostage and killed by a Tatmadaw soldier from LIB #598 at the army camp in A--- village in Shwegyin Township. The LIB #598's Battalion Commander and Headquarter Commander each paid one million Kyat [US \$736] to the victim's family.*
 - *As a result of these two killings in the same village, many villagers felt afraid and unsafe, and raised their concerns about the Tatmadaw army camp based around the village. They verbally requested the Tatmadaw leaders to withdraw the army camp from its location near the village.*
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First incident

On May 18th 2017, a KHRG researcher met and interviewed with a female Bamar-Shan ethnic villager named Daw² K---, 36 years old, in A--- village, A--- village tract, Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District. Daw K--- reported that an A---villager was shot and killed by the Tatmadaw soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #589 in March 18th 2017 while the villagers were mining gold at the gold mining site near A---village.

¹ This News Bulletin was written by KHRG office staff and is based on information from a community member from Nyaunglebin District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor local human rights conditions. It summarises information from one situation update and two interviews received by KHRG in May 2017. In order to increase the transparency of KHRG methodology and more directly communicate the experiences and perspectives of villagers in southeast 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.

² *Daw* is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

According to Daw K---, there is an open gold mining site near A---village and villagers from many other villages went to mine and look for gold there on a rotational basis. Therefore in March 2017, A---villagers requested the administrator of A---village to give them permission to go and mine gold at the gold mining site. Daw K---and another woman led and organised villagers in order for them to be able to mine gold at the gold mining site. She explained that they had to try three times to get permission to be able to mine for gold. The first time when they reached the gold mining site, they were told that their village name was not included on the list of people who are allowed to mine for gold and the second time when they gathered and were ready to depart to the site they were informed that their village name was still not on the list. Finally, the third time their village name was on the list and they were allowed to mine gold.

However, Daw K--- reported that at the time A---villagers were notified to start mining for gold, at 2 PM on March 18th 2017, one of their villagers named U³ H---, also known as U T---, was shot and killed before he entered the gold mining site. Daw K---explained the incident:

“When we arrived there, the name collector came to check the people [against a list of those who are allowed to mine] and said that the people who had to go to work at 2 PM [as scheduled] can go and mine gold now. Every one of our villagers went there except U H--- who was still looking for the yellow bucket that we brought with us. I told him not to look for the bucket as everybody had already left and he would be late. But, he left anyway. When he left to find the bucket, we heard a gunshot but I thought that this might be a gas tank explosion. Soon, one young boy reached my side and said, ‘They shot our villager U H---.’ I was shocked and I said ‘U H--- had just left my side, how did he get shot?’ Many people ran away but I did not. Our villagers were afraid but I told them not to run and not to be afraid of anything. I told them, ‘We lost one of our people so let’s go, let’s go see what is happening’. When his wife’s sibling [his brother in law] was about to embrace him [in order to send him to hospital], he was not allowed [to enter the crime site]. According to our village head, he would report this event to [village tract] administrator. I hear that he was shot in his chest but I did not see it.”

Daw K--- and other villagers wanted to help and rescue U H--- and send him to a hospital but they were not allowed to enter the area where the incident took place so they retreated. The village head asked her [Daw K---] to gather other villagers and they went back to their homes with the trucks. Some people did not want to go as they did not want to leave their villager [U H---] there. However, they all eventually left the place due to the village head’s order, yet A---villagers were unhappy with the incident. Further, the incident happened at the time when A---villagers had lined up and were waiting to enter the gold mining place. Yet, due to the incident that happened, the gold mining site was closed on that day and none of A---villagers were able to mine for gold.

According to Daw K---, U H--- was sent to a hospital in Shwegyin Town and was accompanied by the village administrator but U H--- had already died. U H---’s corpse was returned back to the village that evening. The perpetrator who shot and killed U H--- was a Tatmadaw soldier from LIB #589. That night, Daw K---witnessed that the leaders from Tatmadaw and the company which controls the gold mining site each paid one million kyat⁴ [US \$736] to U H---’s wife. There was also said to be other support provided to the victim’s family members.

The Tatmadaw private who shot and killed U H--- is called Min Min and he is a soldier from LIB #589 and his army camp was situated opposite to a school in Taung Hun Sat village and it is

³ U is a Burmese honorific title used for an elder man, used before their name.

⁴ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the Aug 22 2017 official market rate of 1,358.60 kyat to US \$1.

also close to A---village. Later on, the gold mining site was shut down by law under Section #144.⁵

Second Incident

On May 18th 2017, a KHRG community member met and interviewed a 50 year old man named U C---, in A---village, Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District who reported the case of an eight year old girl who was murdered. The case that happened in his village was perpetrated by a Tatmadaw soldier from LIB #598. The killing case resulted in fear for villagers who live within close proximity of the Tatmadaw army camp.

On May 14th 2017 at 2:30 AM, a 40 year old Tatmadaw soldier from LIB #598, Company #3 entered a house belonging to U L---, in A---village, with a knife and held U L---'s eight year old daughter named Nan⁶ P--- as a hostage.

U C--- and many other A---villagers witnessed the incident. U C--- explained to a KHRG researcher what he had witnessed,

“When I reached the front of U L---'s house, I saw that the soldier was holding the girl's hand with one of his hands and holding a knife in the other hand. When I stood up in front of the house and stared at him for a while, other [Tatmadaw] soldiers came to the house and one soldier jumped out from the truck. Immediately, the soldier that held the girl's arm hacked [attacked the girl's mother]. After that, he held the girl's shoulders and placed his sharpened knife to the girl's neck and said, 'Don't come close to me, otherwise, I will cut this girl's head off.' As we are used to seeing hostages, we assumed that he would bring this girl as a hostage because he was afraid about being beaten by other villagers for hacking the girl's mother. We also believed that he would release the kid when he arrived back to his [army] camp. All villagers worried that if we approached him he would kill the girl so we just looked at him from a distance.”

U C--- reported that after watching the situation for a while, at around 3AM he rushed to fetch the Lieutenant of the army camp and informed him about the situation. He told him that the girl's mother had been attacked with a knife and that a knife was placed at the girl's neck as she had been taken hostage. The Lieutenant's name is Naing Htin Kyaw and he is 22 years old. Whilst U C--- went to inform the Lieutenant, the soldier dragged the girl with him from the girl's house to the direction of the army camp but he did not enter the camp, he just sat in the field located in front of the camp. According to U C--- when Lieutenant [Naing Htin Kyaw] arrived at the scene, the Lieutenant apologised and tried to calm the soldier down with a gentle and persuasive voice and asked him to let the girl go. However, the soldier responded that he won't listen and obey anyone, not even the president. Many people tried to persuade him to calm down and free the girl, but he did not obey.

After a little while, it started raining and the soldier pulled the girl with him and moved inside a little tent in front of the army camp. According to U C---, while the soldier was in a hut he was talking and moving around. No one dared to get close by because they worried that the soldier would kill or hurt the girl so they surrounded him from a distance. Meantime, U C---, the girl's father, U L--- and some other Tatmadaw soldiers quietly entered the camp from the backyard and checked to see what happened to the girl. While they were at the back of the hut they saw the girl was lying down and the father thought that his daughter was asleep. Subsequently, the

⁵ This refers to Section #144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, “Temporary order in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger”. This gives authorities the power to shut down meetings or impose curfews for events that constitute a public threat or nuisance. For more information see the [Code of Criminal Procedure](#).

⁶ *Nan* is a Pwo Karen title used for women, before their name.

rain stopped and the soldier who had taken the girl hostage entered the army camp alone. Immediately after the soldier left, the father hurried to his daughter but he saw his daughter's neck was cut and she was lying dead. There was a lot of blood from the girl and it made a small pond.

According to U C---, many villagers got angry and they were about to enter into the camp and kill the soldier who murdered the girl but the Lieutenant calmed them down. Instead, the Lieutenant himself went inside the camp and looked for the soldier. Later on, villagers who waited outside of the army camp heard three to four gun shots and consequently they knew that the soldier was shot and killed by the Lieutenant but they did not enter the camp and see it with their own eyes. However, according to the Myanmar police statement, Lieutenant Naing Htin Kyaw followed the soldier inside the camp and convinced him to lay down the knife repeatedly but the soldier did not listen to him therefore, he shot the soldier at his left thigh with an MA-1 gun [Emerk assault rifle] one time but the soldier ran away and committed suicide by slitting his own throat.

U C--- reported that after the incident, when it was early in the morning, he tried to contact the local Myanmar police to report the case but he was not able to. Therefore, the ten-household leader asked villagers to inform the police in-person. In the meantime U C--- contacted Shwegyin Township police. After contacting the Township police, before 5:30 AM, the Tatmadaw's Operation Commander's G3 arrived at the army camp and the place of the incident along with Myanmar government township leaders and Myanmar police. Finally, the girls' corpse was sent to hospital.





The first two photos were taken on May 18th 2017, in A--- village, Sa Lu Chaung village tract, Shwegyin Township, Nyaunglebin District. On May 14th 2017, a Tatmadaw soldier named Myit Win from LIB #598 went to A--- village, Sa Lu Chaung village tract, Shwegyi Township, Nyaunglebin District and he was verbally abusive towards villagers. He entered U L---'s house in A--- village at midnight. The private Myint Win took a knife from the kitchen and he acted in an offensive and violent way. He then cut U L---'s wife's hand and he grabbed U L---'s daughter, Nan P---, who was eight years old, as a hostage. The soldier later murdered the girl by slitting her throat. The soldier [Myint Win] was reported dead shortly after. As can be seen in the pictures; the first photo shows Nan P--- who was lying dead at the crime scene with her throat slit. The second photo shows the knife used at the crime scene that private Myint Win used for the murder. The third photo shows Nan P---s mother receiving treatment at the hospital. [Photos: A--- villager]

According to U C--- the corpse of the soldier was rolled up in a mat and put in the same truck as the girl's corpse and both were transported to Ka Din Ta Ya hospital in Shwegyin Town for the autopsy. Nan P---'s mother was also sent to hospital for the treatment. The soldier's corpse was cremated at a hospital but the girl's corpse was sent back to her home for cremation.

After the incident, LIB #598's Battalion Commander paid one million kyat [US \$736] in compensation to the girl's family member and the Headquarter Commander also paid one million Kyat [US \$736] compensation. The private who murdered Nan P--- was named Myint Win and was a soldier from Sa Lut Gyi army camp of LIB #598. According to villagers the army camp has been situated in the area for 15 years.

According to local sources, the private was a cook and was addicted to alcohol and therefore he drank regularly. He had been at the army camp since the Tatmadaw initially based their troops in the village. Prior to the incident, he was sent back to attend military training at the training camp for a couple days and returned as he was assigned to the army camp in A---village. The incident happened two weeks after he returned from training. According to a Myanmar police statement, the soldier was addicted to alcohol and was ordered by his commander to quit drinking, he then became violent and committed the murder.

According to a Myanmar police statement, after they filed the case, it had to be processed in the military court, not the civilian court, since the perpetrator was a Tatmadaw soldier. Therefore, the Myanmar police wrote a permission letter to Tatmadaw Military Operations *Sa Pa Ha* in Shwegyin Town about which authority (Myanmar police or Tatmadaw) would take responsibility in processing the case to court. Eventually, the case of Nan P--- was brought to the Tatmadaw military court #350 and U C--- and other villagers were asked by court authorities about the case as witnesses. The private was charged (posthumously) by the Myanmar police under the Myanmar Penal Code articles #302,⁷ #451,⁸ #326⁹ and #309.¹⁰

⁷ This refers to article #302 of the Myanmar government penal code: Punishment for Murder.
⁸ This refers to article #451 of the Myanmar government penal code: Trespass in order to commit offence punishable with imprisonment.
⁹ This refers to article #326 of the Myanmar government penal code: Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or other means.
¹⁰ This refers to article #309 of the Myanmar government penal code: Attempt to commit suicide.

Fear of proximity to army camp

Following the two incidents of killings, of Nan P-- and U H---, A---villagers raised their concerns that living near the Tatmadaw army camp poses a great danger and threat to their security.

Daw K--- stated her concern that, *“Now, villagers are in panic when they encounter with [Tatmadaw] soldiers. Related to a recent killing case of a child, it’s [Tatmadaw leaders] saying that the perpetrator had a mental abnormality and mistakenly killed the child. Honestly, when local villagers see any [Tatmadaw] soldiers, they are worried that these soldiers are also suffering from mental disability like the previous one [...] As a result, we are worried that this kind of event will be repeated again.”*

On the other hand villagers want to rely on Tatmadaw soldiers for security issues in the village but they recommended the Tatmadaw to situate their bases at a distance from the village.

“We cannot say that they [Tatmadaw] should not be here because we also need them if there is any uprising or conflict in a village which crops up and [the Tatmadaw can] calm it down. [...] They can base their troops here but I would like to suggest them to locate their camp a bit further from the village.”

In addition, U C--- reported that villagers felt unsafe after the incidents, *“The first incident [of U H--- being shot and killed] was committed by a soldier of LIB #589 two months ago [on March 18th 2017]. Now, the soldier that cut the kid’s neck was from LIB #598. The whole village is now under intimidation after experiencing these killing cases. Villagers from two to three different houses gathered as a group and slept in one house together [at night time for the purpose of having larger numbers to offer protection from any violence].”*

When the Tatmadaw Headquarter Commander went to see the girl’s corpse at hospital, U C--- and other A---villagers requested him to, if possible, remove the Tatmadaw camps which are located nearby Shwegyin Town and A--- village. This request was made due to the two villagers being killed by Tatmadaw soldiers.

He continued that,

“There are houses near the Tatmadaw army camp. There were children playing when the Tatmadaw came to borrow hoes from their house. They ran away when they saw the soldiers coming and their mother was not with them. They were really afraid of soldiers since they knew that the girl that got killed was only eight years old. Since they learnt from their experience, they ran away when they saw the [Tatmadaw] soldiers.”

“In the past, we did not have fences around our houses but we lived freely without any danger from an outside attack. We did not have thieves or robbers. Now villagers are frightened [by this event]. Now they are building fences around their houses, as strangers can easily break into their houses by not having doors and fences as the girl’s house was easily gotten into. Villagers are really frightened since the girl was killed in front of them. Now the whole village is in panic. Even me, I feel myself like I am afraid of something, something not because [I’m scared of] the dead girl’s and soldier’s souls. I do not even know myself what I am afraid of and nor do the villagers. Villagers do not dare to go out at night time.”

When U C--- was asked how he and other villagers felt about the Tatmadaw soldiers being based near the village, he responded that,

“I would like to say that our village is in peace since the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] was signed [in November 2015]. Therefore, we do not need any military camp in [near] our village anymore. If something has happened, we will report it to the nearby police. [...] We do

not need to have [military camps] at all. It is much better not to have military camps here. Then, our villagers could live freely, peacefully and happily. Now villagers are not happy to have the military in their village. They are in fear now. If we do not have military camps or soldiers in our village, we can travel and work freely without any fear. Sometimes they [other villagers] even bring me to go with them to somewhere [because they do not dare to go there alone].”

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

- “Nyaunglebin Interview: U A , January 2016” (September 2016)
- “Two separate landmine incidents happened in Hpapun and Nyaunglebin districts, March and April 2016,” (August 2016)
- “Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Mone Township, April to May 2016,” (August 2016)
- “Hidden Strengths, Hidden Struggles: Womens testimonies from southeast Myanmar,” (August 2016)
- “Nyaunglebin Interview: Saw P, December 2015,” (December 2015)

Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District



Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)