



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

July 24, 2018 / KHRG #18-55-I1

**Thaton Incident Report: Killing in Bilin Township,
December 2017**

This Incident Report describes the extrajudicial killing of U C---, a villager from D--- village. The village tract secretary, Saw Eh Kyay, ordered his murder, claiming that U C--- was problematic because he was frequently abusing his family and threatening his neighbours under the influence of alcohol. Because U C--- was Muslim, it is possible that discrimination played a role in his murder. Of the six people involved in this extrajudicial killing, three were found guilty and sentenced to a seven-year prison term. Three were found innocent, and released from police custody. This incident is worrying because it shows how easily community leaders can order an extrajudicial killing in a community.

Incident Report | Bilin Township, Thaton District (December 2017)

The following Incident Report was written by (1) a community member in Thaton 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.¹ This report was received in May 2018 along with other information from Thaton District, including two other incident reports²

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Killing
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¹ 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.

² 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.

Date of Incident(s)	December 5, 2017
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	D--- village, D--- village tract, Bilin Township, Thaton District

Victim Information	
Name	U C---
Age	55
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Unknown
Family	Yes
Occupation	Daily Worker
Religion	Islam
Position	Villager
Village	D---

Name(s)	Occupation	Village
Saw Wah Kloh	Villager	E---
Saw Hpah Eh Kyay	Village tract secretary	E---
Daw Ohne Kyin	Community-based legal assistant (Karen Legal Assistance Center)	D---

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

I [KHRG researcher] first heard about this murder from villagers in D--- village. I then went to interview the victim's wife. I also interviewed two village elders who take responsibility in the community, as well as the chairwoman of the Karen Women's Organisation responsible for this district in December 2017.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

This information is true because it was verified by all of the interviewees. U C---'s wife, the two elder community members and the KWO chairwoman all confirmed that it was true.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On December 5th 2017, a villager called U C--- was killed in D--- village, D--- village tract, Bilin Township, Thaton District.

U C--- was responsible for repeated instances of domestic violence. He often beat his

wife when he was drunk. He also verbally abused her by swearing at her, and threatened his neighbours. Due to these repeated problems, local community members including village elders, came together to discuss this problem and take action.

On December 5th 2017 at 09:00 PM, village head Daw Ohne Kyin, two to three villagers and E--- village tract secretary U Hpah Eh Kyay discussed the problem of U C---'s behaviour. They agreed to arrest U C---.

They proceeded to arrest U C--- in U Shwe Hlaing's sugarcane plantation and brought him back to E--- village. On the same night, U C--- was brought to E--- cemetery and shot dead by Saw Wah Kloh, a civilian from a neighbouring village. He was ordered to do so by Saw Eh Kyay, the village tract secretary.

On December 8th 2017, the township police arrested the perpetrators and detained them at [the police] station. According to the court decision, Saw Wah Kloh, Saw Eh Kyay and Daw Ohne Kyin were all found guilty of killing U C---. They were sentenced to seven years in prison, and had to pay a 100,000 kyat [US \$ 72] fine to the court.³ In addition to this punishment, each of these three perpetrators had to pay 900,000 kyat [US \$ 639] as compensation to the victim's family.

Three other villagers were involved in the decision to kill U C---: Saw Tee Kway, the village head of [E---] village, U Kyaw Htoo Ghay, the village tract head of [E---] village, and Daw Mu War Day, a villager from [E---]. They were all found innocent by the court. However, each of them was asked to pay 300,000 kyat [US \$ 213] as compensation to the family.

According to information received by KHRG, U C---'s family received over 3,500,000 kyat [US \$ 2485] in compensation.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.

U C---'s wife and the other interviewees gave permission to KHRG to publish this information.

³ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the 4 July 2018 official market rate of 1,408 kyat to US \$1.

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

- "Thaton Field Report: A transition to peace? Villagers' concerns about ongoing militarisation from January 2016 to December 2017", (May 2018)
- "Thaton Situation Update: Bilin Township, March to May 2017", (December 2017)
- "Thaton Situation Update: Bilin Township, July to September", (April 2017)
- "Thaton Interview: Ma N---, July 2015", (February 2017)