



Incident Report

November 25th, 2019 / KHRG Log # 19-82-I1

Thaton Incident Report: One villager sustained serious injuries after stepping on a landmine in Hpa-an Township, May 2019

On May 18th, 2019, two villagers were injured following the explosion of a landmine in Wel Pyan village tract, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District. One of the victims lost his right leg and is now totally dependent on his relatives for his survival. So far, no action has been taken to clear the contaminated areas of landmines.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Landmine explosion
Date of Incident(s)	May 18 th , 2019
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A--- village, Wel Pyan village tract, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District

Victim Information		
Name	Saw B---	Saw C---
Age	19	32
Sex	Male	Male
Nationality	Karen	Karen
Family status	Married	Married
Occupation	Farmer	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist	Buddhist
Position	Villager	Villager
Village	A--- village	A--- village

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Unknown	Soldiers	Unknown	Mee Zai	U Sanda Waya, a

¹ The present document is based on information received in November 2019. It was provided by a community member from Hpapun District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions on the ground. The names of the victims, their photos and the exact locations are censored for security reasons. The parts in square brackets are explanations added by KHRG staff.

			Mountain	Senior Monk in charge of the Mee Zai Mountain's monastery
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Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

After the D--- village tract administrator told me about landmine victims in A--- village, I asked help from Saw E---, an A--- villager who lives in Ka Ma Maung. He put me in contact with the victims, after which I met with them in A--- village.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The two sources experienced this incident first hand.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

This incident occurred outside of A--- village, Wel Pyan village tract, Hpa-an Township, Thaton District. The victims are Saw B---, 19 years old, and Saw C---, 32 years old, from A--- village.

On May 18th, 2019 they left A--- village to forage for dog fruits in the forest. At approximately 30 minutes walking distance northwest of the village, Saw B---, walking five feet [1.524 metres] behind Saw C---, stepped on a landmine. Due to the landmine explosion, the flesh of his right leg was torn off from the knee down. Saw C--- also fell forward onto the ground and sustained a slight back injury.

Saw C--- explained the incident to KHRG: *“My younger brother who was walking behind me stepped on the landmine. It hit my back and I fell forward. When I looked at my brother, he had also fallen down but he seemed like he was going in and out of consciousness. I also realised that my back was slightly injured.”* Saw B--- added: *“I do not remember how I got back home.”*

According to information received by KHRG, this landmine was planted by a seceding faction of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) splinter group² led by Senior Monk U Sanda Waya. They used to be based on the Mee Zai Mountain, but they left after surrendering their weapons to Border Guard Force (BGF)³ Battalion #1014 on June 23rd, 2019.

According to a follow-up conversation with a KHRG researcher, Saw B--- and his family are now in distress due to the consequences of the landmine incident. Saw B--- cannot work anymore, as he lost part of his right leg. He now depends on his family and relatives for his survival. Saw C--- can still work, as his back injury was not serious. They did not receive any compensation to cover their medical treatment.

So far, no armed actor took responsibility to clear the area of landmines. Local villagers just try to avoid areas which they think might be contaminated.

² In 1994, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) split from the KNLA over religious considerations. In 2010, the majority of DKBA troops transformed into BGFs, but one faction refused and changed its name to Democratic Karen Benevolent Army in 2012. In 2015, the DKBA splinter split from this faction. It is active in Hpapun and Hpa-an districts, and it has not signed the NCA.

³ Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

Both the victims allowed KHRG to use this information.



This photo was taken on August 3rd 2019 in A--- village, Wel Pyan village tract, Hpa-an Township. It shows Saw B---, the 19-year-old villager who lost part of his right leg after stepping on a landmine. [Photo: KHRG]

Further background reading on the issue of landmine contamination in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Logging and gold mining activities threatening community livelihoods, land confiscation by the Tatmadaw and landmine contamination in Mone and Shwegyin townships, November 2018 to January 2019"](#) (August 2019)
- ["Dreaming of Home, Hoping for Peace: Protracted Displacement in Southeast Myanmar"](#), (May 2019)
- ["Hpapun Situation Update: Dwe Lo and Lu Thaw Townships, March to April 2018"](#), (November 2018)
- ["Hpapun Interview: Naw A---, November 2017"](#), (July 2018)

About KHRG

Founded in 1992, the Karen Human Rights Group is an independent local organisation committed to improving the human rights situation in Southeast Myanmar. KHRG trains local people to document and gather evidence of human rights abuses, and publishes this information to project the voices, experiences and perspectives of local communities. More examples of our work can be seen online at www.khr.org.