



## Incident Report

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / KHRG # 20-11-12

## Mu Traw District Incident Report: *Tatmadaw soldiers shot two villagers in Dwe Lo Township, January 2020*

*This report describes an incident where two villagers were shot by Tatmadaw<sup>1</sup> soldiers in A--- village, Lay Hpoh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw [Hpapun] District during a funeral procession on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020. Due to the shooting, these two villagers were severely injured and had to be hospitalised. No assistance or compensation was provided to them by the Tatmadaw.<sup>2</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Two villagers were shot by Tatmadaw soldiers and severely injured
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	January 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2020
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	A--- village, Lay Hpoh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information		
<b>Name</b>	Saw <sup>3</sup> B---	Saw C---
<b>Age</b>	63	60
<b>Sex</b>	Male	Male
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Karen	Karen
<b>Family</b>	Married	Married
<b>Occupation</b>	Farmer	Farmer
<b>Religion</b>	Buddhist	Buddhist
<b>Position</b>	Villager	Villager
<b>Village</b>	A--- village, Lay Hpoh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District	A--- village, Lay Hpoh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

<sup>1</sup> Tatmadaw refers to the Myanmar military.

<sup>2</sup> The present document is based on information received in February 2020. It was provided by a community member in Mu Traw 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.

<sup>3</sup> Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Naung Htun <sup>4</sup>	Major	Military Operations Command (MOC) #8, Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #408	Maw Loh Kloh army camp, K'Ma Moh MOC #1 army camp	Lt. Colonel Aung Naing Htun, Colonel Aung Aung.

## Part 2 - Information Quality

### 1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

KNLA Battalion #102, Company #3 Commander Saw D--- contacted a KHRG field researcher to inform him about this incident the morning after it occurred.<sup>5</sup> The researcher interviewed the two victims, Saw B--- and Saw C---, on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2020, as well as Saw E--- and Naw F---, the villagers from A--- village who found the two victims after they had been shot. They did not know the battalion or division of the Tatmadaw soldiers who shot the victims, so the researcher talked to the local KNLA Battalion Commander to obtain this information. The KHRG researcher also interviewed the A--- village head, Saw G---, who was in the village during the incident and who helped the victims. The Joint Monitoring Committee [JMC]<sup>6</sup> staff person, Saw H---, who helped the victims the day of the incident was also interviewed by phone.

### 2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The primary sources, Saw B--- and Saw C---, experienced the incident first-hand. Saw H--- is the JMC staff member who was called to the village after the incident, and also provided assistance to the victims. Saw G---, the village head, was in the village when the fighting broke out and provided assistance to the victims. Saw D--- is the KNLA Battalion Commander who was involved in the fighting with the Tatmadaw that broke out earlier in the day.

## Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

### Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020 at 10:00 AM, fighting broke out between Tatmadaw LIB #408 and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>7</sup> Battalion #102, Company #3 in A--- village, Lay Hpho Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District. The fighting originally broke out because LIB #408 troops trespassed more than 50 yards [45.72 metres] into an area controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU).<sup>8</sup> The villagers interviewed said that the Tatmadaw soldiers did not have any prior contact with the village head, even though they entered into KNU-restricted

<sup>4</sup> The soldiers who shot the two victims could not be identified, but because Naung Htun was the officer in charge at the time of the incident, he is responsible for the actions of his troop and thus is listed here as a perpetrator.

<sup>5</sup> See KHRG (March 2020), "[Mu Traw District Incident Report: Physical violence against a villager by Tatmadaw soldiers in Dwe Lo Township, January 2020](#)".

<sup>6</sup> The Joint Monitoring Committee was established at the Myanmar state and regional level in late 2015 to monitor signatories' adherence to the October 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. It considers the majority of its monitoring to be based on territorial disputes, but has been slow to respond to complaints over breaches of the NCA code of conduct and lacks a formal complaint mechanism, or any enforcement powers. For more information see, "[Majority of joint ceasefire monitoring committee complaints are territorial disputes](#)," The Irrawaddy, July 2017.

<sup>7</sup> The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

<sup>8</sup> The Karen National Union is the main Karen group opposing the government.

area with military ammunition. They said that the fighting broke out because this violated the NCA Code of Conduct.<sup>9</sup>

At 1:00 PM, after the fighting had ended, Saw B--- and Saw C--- were shot by Tatmadaw soldiers while participating in a funeral procession (in the middle of the village). Saw B--- was shot once in the pit of the neck and once on the side of his body. Saw C--- was shot in the pit of his neck and the bullet went through to the back of his shoulder. Tatmadaw soldiers shot directly at the villagers attending the funeral. Most of them were able to run for cover.

According to the victims (and the other villagers interviewed), the Tatmadaw had been informed that they would be attending a funeral procession, so in shooting at them, the Tatmadaw soldiers violated the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and their right to engage in traditional Karen practices.

Other villagers immediately came to help the two victims, but it was not until later in the evening that they could be sent to the hospital. It was JMC Saw H--- himself who came to assist the two villagers who were injured and sent them to K'Ma Moh [Ka Ma Maung] hospital. Because their injuries were too serious, the two injured villagers needed to be taken to Hpa-an Hospital. Saw H--- rented a car to send these two men to the hospital in Hpa-an.

The victims did not know which battalion or division the Tatmadaw soldiers were from. The KNLA Company #3 Commander and Saw H--- were asked later. They explained that the Battalion Commander, Aung Naing Htun had gone to Kyaw K'Loh village (east Pweh Wa Muh), so the Deputy Battalion Commander Naung Htun was in charge at the time of the incident.

According to the victims, no action was taken by the Tatmadaw to help them nor was any compensation offered to help with the medical bills. [JMC] Saw H--- provided 50,000 kyats (USD 35.75)<sup>10</sup> to each of the victims who were injured and paid for their transportation to the hospital. The K'Ma Moh administrator also provided 50,000 kyats to each of the victims, as did I---, who is a nurse at the K'Ma Moh hospital. Even with this financial assistance, the two injured villagers were not able to cover all of their medical bills and so had to borrow money from other villagers. The victims still need to return to the hospital for medical treatment, and they do not know how much more they will be charged for medicine and treatment.

There are no village agency strategies to help people protect themselves against this kind of human rights violations.

#### **Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details**

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

Saw B--- gave permission for the information he provided to be used. He will also go to court to provide testimony if someone pays for his transportation. Saw C--- also gave permission to use the information he provided. It can be used for publication as well.

<sup>9</sup> On October 15<sup>th</sup> 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups, a [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement \(NCA\)](#) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the Karen National Union. It was followed by the adoption of a Code of Conduct by the signatories in November 2015. In February 2018, two additional armed ethnic groups signed the NCA under pressure from the Burma/Myanmar government.

<sup>10</sup> All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 official market rate.



These photos were taken on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 in A---village, Lay Hpoh Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township. They show the injuries suffered by the two victims. [Photos: KHRG]

Further background reading on human rights violations committed by the Tatmadaw in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Southeast Myanmar Field Report: Militarisation, environmental pollution and sexual violence against children, July to December 2019”](#), (February 2020)
- [“Thaton Interviews: Skirmishes between the Tatmadaw/BGF and the DKBA Splinter Group resulting in displacement in Kye Htoh \(Kyaikto\) Township, June 2019”](#), (December 2019)
- [“Hpa-an District Interview: Land confiscation by the Tatmadaw in T’Nay Hsah Township, March 2019”](#), (December 2019)
- [“Hpapun Situation Update: Militarisation, extortion and gold mining activities harming villagers in Dwe Lo Township, June to July 2019”](#), (November 2019)

### 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](http://www.khr.org).