



Incident Report

July 24th 2020 / KHRG # 20-69-I2

Mutraw District Incident Report: *A villager and his daughter injured by a Tatmadaw mortar shell in Dwe Lo Township, June 2020*

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in C--- Village, Lay Poe Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mutraw (Hpapun) District on June 2nd 2020. A villager and his daughter sustained injuries after the Tatmadaw¹ Light Infantry Battalion #405 fired a mortar shell into their village during a skirmish with the Karen National Liberation Army [KNLA].² The two victims could not afford to go to the hospital, so the village head had to borrow money to cover their treatment. The Tatmadaw did not take any responsibility for the incident and did not compensate the victims.³

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Shelling resulting in injuries
Date of Incident(s)	June 2 nd 2020
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	C--- Village, Lay Poe Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Victims Information		
Name	Saw ⁴ L---	Naw ⁵ S---
Age	57	13
Sex	Male	Female
Ethnicity	Karen	Karen
Family	Married	Single
Occupation	Hill Farmer	-
Religion	Buddhist	Buddhist
Position	Villager	Villager

¹ Tatmadaw refers to the Myanmar military.

² The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the KNU.

³ The present document is based on information received in July 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.

⁴ Saw is a S’gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person’s name.

⁵ Naw is a S’gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person’s name.

Village	C---	C---
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Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
N/A	Captain	LIB #405, MOC #8	Maw Lo Klo	Hlaing Htun (LIB Commander)

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

[The KHRG researcher interviewed one of the victims, Saw L---. The name of the Commander of the Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion #405 was provided by the KNLA.]

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The source experienced this incident first hand.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On Tuesday June 2nd 2020 at 3 pm, a father and his daughter were injured [by a mortar shell fired by the Tatmadaw] in C--- village, Lay Poe Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

On that day, fighting broke out between KNLA soldiers from Battalion #102, Company #3 and the Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion #405, Military Operations Command #8, near the Maw Lo Klo army camp. The Tatmadaw fired a mortar shell into C--- village, injuring 57-year-old Saw L--- and his 13-year-old daughter, Naw S--- [Saw L--- sustained an injury in his left upper thigh, while Naw S--- was injured on the right side of her abdomen].

[The Maw Lo Klo army camp is under the authority of LIB Commander Hlaing Htun]. He is the commander there and his soldiers are only supposed to fire their guns or mortars in war zones and practice areas. They violated the rights of the villagers when they fired the mortar shell into the village.

They [the Tatmadaw] did not take responsibility for the consequences [of the shelling] and they did not pay for the medical costs. After the father and his daughter got injured, the village head wanted to send them to K'Ma Moh hospital but they refused because they could not afford the medical costs. Therefore, the village head borrowed 30,000 kyats [USD 21.65]⁶ from Bo Maung Chit's⁷ wife to send the victims [to the hospital]. They were sent to the hospital on June 2nd and they came back home on June 8th. They [now] have to undergo a weekly medical check-up.

The incident happened because the Tatmadaw did not follow the NCA Code of Conduct⁸ and trespassed into the restricted areas [territory controlled by the Karen National Union]⁹ many

⁶ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the July 23rd 2020 official market rate of 1,386.11 kyats to USD 1.

⁷ Bo Maung Chit is the Commander of Border Guard Force Battalion #1014.

⁸ On October 15th 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.

times [without prior authorisation, in violation of section 10(B) of the Code of Conduct]. During that period, the KNU was taking measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Mu Traw District. Therefore, it [the multiple instances of trespassing] caused tensions between the two armed actors [Tatmadaw and KNLA]. The Tatmadaw also forced the Karen [KNU] health workers and the KNPF [Karen National Police Force]¹⁰ to leave the [COVID-19] screening checkpoints, which led to armed conflict [between the KNLA and the Tatmadaw].¹¹

The villagers do not have any strategy to protect themselves from these kinds of incidents. There were tensions and dissatisfaction between the two groups [Tatmadaw and KNLA], so they started firing at each other. The villagers did not know about or understand the case, so they do not know how to respond to this situation.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

Saw L--- [the victim] gave KHRG permission to use this information.

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

- [“Mu Traw District Interview: Shelling by the Tatmadaw resulting in temporary displacement in Lu Thaw Township, January to April 2020”](#), (June 2020)
- [“Mu Traw District: Tatmadaw soldiers killed a Karen community leader and a KNU forest ranger in March 2020”](#), (April 2020)
- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: Physical violence against a villager by Tatmadaw soldiers in Dwe Lo Township, January 2020”](#), (March 2020)

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.

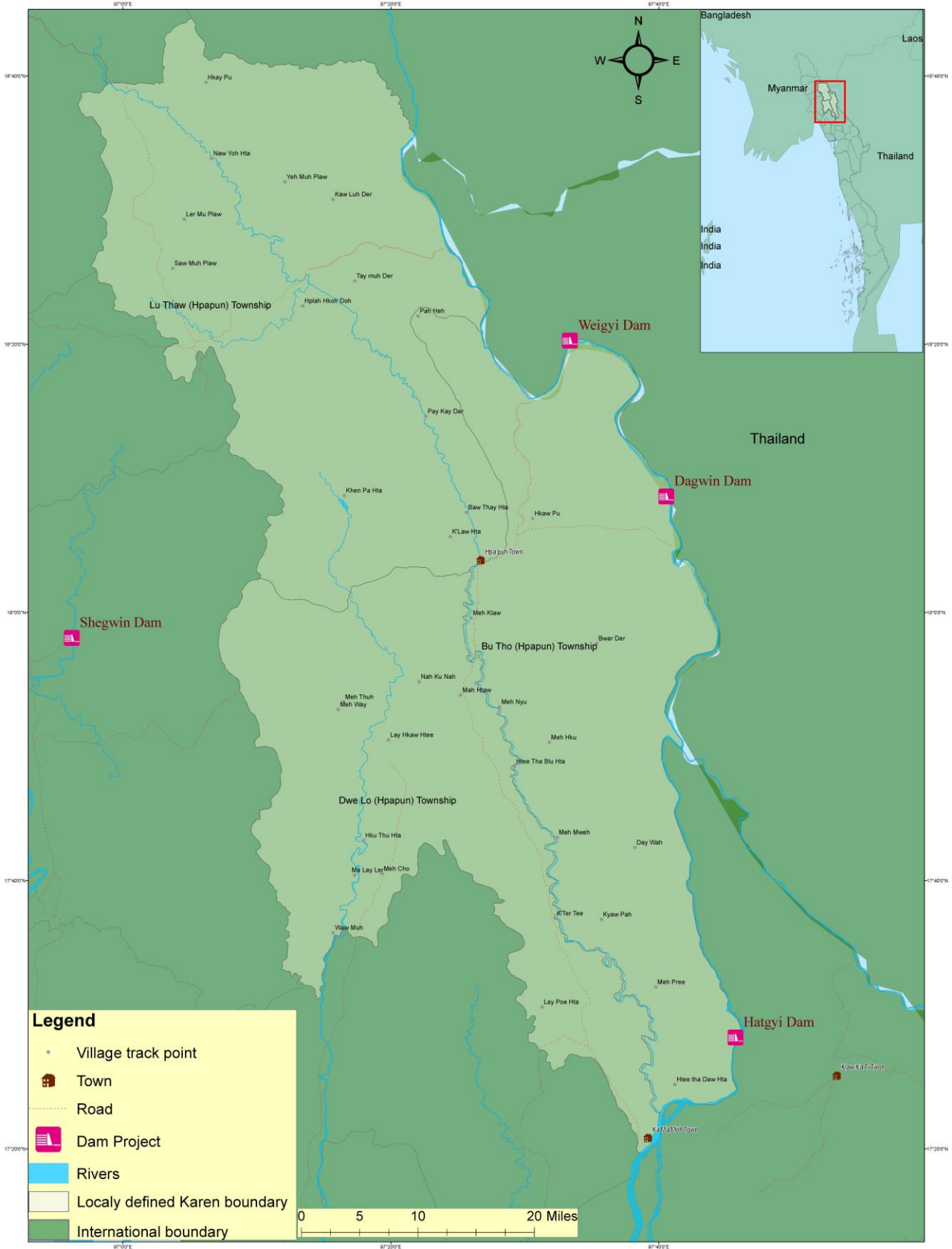
In February 2018, two additional armed ethnic groups signed the NCA under pressure from the Burma/Myanmar government.

⁹ The Karen National Union (KNU) is the main Karen political organisation. It was established in 1947 and has been in conflict with the Burma/Myanmar government since 1949. The KNU wields power across large areas of Southeast Myanmar and has been calling for the creation of a democratic federal system since 1976. Although it signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in 2015, relations with the government remain tense.

¹⁰ The Karen National Police Force is the law enforcement agency of the Karen National Union. It was established in 1991.

¹¹ See KHRG, [“Mu Traw District Short Update: Destruction of KNPF COVID-19 screening checkpoints by the Tatmadaw and skirmishes between the Tatmadaw and the KNLA in Dwe Lo Township, May 2020”](#), June 2020.

Mutraw (Hpapun) District



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