



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

September 16th 2021 / KHRG # 21-205-I1

Mu Traw District Incident Report: A 10-year-old boy was injured after stepping on a tripwire that detonated a landmine in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, June 2021

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in June 2021. On June 29th 2021, a 10-year-old boy from H--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District stepped on a tripwire that detonated a landmine at a place between T--- and K--- villages, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District. As a result of the explosion, he sustained injuries to his face, chin/neck, leg and belly but not serious enough to require surgical intervention. With the father of the victim already deceased, the mother is caring for 10 children on her own, thus the family is facing difficulties and is in need of support.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Landmine explosion
Date of Incident(s)	June 29 th 2021
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A place between T--- and K--- villages, Ma Htaw village tract, ² Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information	
Name	Saw ³ W---
Age	10
Sex	Male
Nationality	Karen
Family	N/A
Occupation	N/A
Religion	Buddhist
Position	N/A

¹ The present document is based on information received in June 2021. 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.

² A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

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

Village

H--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Part 2 - Information Quality**1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.**

The information has been provided by the victim's brother.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The source is the victim's brother.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please use the space prepared below, and create an attachment if needed.

On June 29th 2021, at 2:30 pm, a villager named Saw W---, 10 years old, from H--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, stepped on a tripwire that detonated a landmine while he was returning home from [nearby] T--- village, where he had gone to retrieve a box that contained clothes and books. Before the incident, they [villagers] were informed by the local authorities that there is landmine contamination [in the area]. They were told to remain on the road and not to [wander into] areas in the vicinity of the road. On that day, Saw W--- and his brother went to get a box [of clothes and books] from T--- village. When they were returning home, they [realised that they] forgot a shirt at T--- village. They decided to hide the box somewhere in the bushes, because they were afraid someone would steal it, and went [returned to T--- village] to get the shirt.

Upon returning to the place where the box was hidden, Saw W---'s brother asked Saw W--- to go and get the box. It was at that point in time when he stepped on the [tripwire that detonated a] landmine. It was at a place between T--- and K--- villages, Ma Htaw village tract. Due to the explosion of the landmine, Saw W--- sustained injuries to his face, chin/neck, leg and belly. The injuries were not serious enough to require surgical intervention. After the incident, he was sent to the State Administration Council (SAC) military's⁴ Tactical Battalion #340 hospital situated in Hpapun Town to receive treatment. The medical staff was able to remove all of the shrapnel that hit his body. He is still recovering in the hospital.

⁴ The term most commonly used in referring to Myanmar's armed forces is Tatmadaw. The term has been used by KHRG throughout its reporting history, and most consistently during periods of civilian government. Since the February 1st 2021 coup and the military's establishment of the State Administration Council (SAC) as the executive governing body of Myanmar, Myanmar's armed forces have also come to be referred to as the SAC military. KHRG uses the term SAC military in specific reference to the Myanmar military since the February 1st 2021 coup. During previous periods of military rule, KHRG also used the names adopted by the military government in referring to the Tatmadaw (i.e. SLORC [State Law and Order Restoration Council] between 1988 to 1997, and SPDC [State Peace and Development Council] from 1998 to 2011), because these were the terms commonly used by villagers in KHRG research areas.

According to the victim's brother, these landmines were planted since May 2021 by the local Ethnic Armed Organisations. Even though Mine Risk Awareness training was provided to the villagers last year, the family of the landmine victim was not able to attend that training; they only received pamphlets containing landmine awareness information. No one has previously been injured due to landmine explosions in H--- village, and this was the first time that any landmine has exploded in [or near] the village. The local authorities have warned villagers not to go to places where there is landmine contamination. However, landmines have been planted near the road and surrounding areas and thus pose serious danger to local villagers. Furthermore, there are no signs indicating where landmines have been planted in the vicinity of the village.

At the time of reporting, Saw W--- was still recovering in the hospital. Since no support had been provided to him from any local organisations, DanChurchAid (DCA), through the assistance of KHRG, helped the victim by sending 500,000 kyats [USD 280.55]⁵ to the family for his medical costs.

The family of the landmine victim relies on farming for their livelihood. Farming has been difficult due to heavy droughts over the past few years. Some villagers still go and work in their hill fields but they have to be careful of landmines. After the father passed away a few years ago, the mother has struggled to provide for her family. She is taking care of 10 children on her own. Saw W--- attended only up to Grade 2. Because his mother has to struggle to take care of the family's needs, she is not able to keep all of her children in school.

Update from July 29th 2021: Saw W--- was discharged from the hospital on July 27th 2021. His injuries have not fully healed. The hospital provided him medicine but did not require him to go back to the hospital for any follow-up. It cost the family over 400,000 kyats [USD 224.39] in total for Saw W---'s medical care at the hospital.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The brother of the victim gave permission to KHRG to use this information.



⁵ All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the September 15th 2021 official market rate.



These photos were taken on July 27th 2021 in H--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District after the child was discharged from the hospital. The photos show the injuries that he sustained. At this time, the wounds have not healed fully. [Photos: Villagers]

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

- ["Mu Traw District Incident Report: Two villagers were seriously injured as a result of landmine explosions in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, June 2021"](#), July 2021.
- ["Mu Traw District Short Update: Skirmishes, indiscriminate shelling by the Tatmadaw and landmine contamination in Dwe Lo and Bu Tho townships, March and April 2021"](#), May 2021.
- ["Kler Lwe Htoo District Incident Report: Two villagers killed, one injured in a landmine explosion in Ler Doh Township, March 2021"](#), April 2021.

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.khrg.org.

Mutraw (Hpapun) District

