



Incident Report

December 14th 2021 / KHRG # 21-271-11

Doo Tha Htoo District Incident Report: SAC shot on sight a pregnant woman and her husband in Paw Township, September 2021

This Incident Report describes an incident that occurred in A--- village, A--- village tract, Paw (Paung) [also known as Maw S’Ko] Township, Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District. After troops from multiple State Administration Council (SAC) battalions cooperated to occupy the Karen National Liberation (KNLA) army camp at A--- village on August 24th, about 200 SAC soldiers set up several temporary bases and imposed a curfew in the A--- community. Villagers began to face livelihood challenges because they could not go out at night to hunt, fish, or look after their livestock and farms. Some villagers went out at night to fish anyway, in order to feed their families. While one couple was out of their house on the evening of September 4th 2021, the SAC soldiers patrolling the village encountered and shot both of them at 10:46 pm. Other villagers could not go help them, or their 4-year-old daughter who was also present, until the SAC’s curfew lifted at 4:00 am the next morning. Their daughter now lives in the care of her grandmother. On September 5th, the day after the shooting, a number of SAC soldiers entered the village and gave the female victim’s mother 300,000 kyats [USD 168.54] in an attempt to prevent her from disclosing the killings.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Table with 2 columns: Incident Detail, Description. Rows include Type of Incident (Shoot on sight), Date of Incident(s) (September 4th 2021), and Incident Location (A--- village, A--- village tract, Paw Township, Doo Tha Htoo District).

Table with 2 columns: Victim Information, Details. Rows include Name (Naw³ E---, Saw⁴ P---) and Age (27, 28).

¹ The present document is based on information received in September 2021. It was provided by a community member in Kler Lwee Htoo 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 Naw is a S’gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person’s name.

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

Sex	Female	Male
Nationality	Karen	Karen
Family	Married	Married
Religion	N/A	N/A
Village	A---	A---

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
SAC soldiers	Unknown	Unknown	Temporarily based around A--- village	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

After KHRG learned from the Karen Information Centre (KIC) website that SAC soldiers had shot two villagers on sight, KHRG researchers conducted interviews with two local villagers to gather information about the incident.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

A KHRG researcher spoke with two villagers who live in A--- village and who are familiar with the incident.

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 August 24th 2021, several State Administration Council (SAC)⁵ battalions [battalion numbers unknown] attacked and occupied the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁶ army camp at A-- village. They were able to do so because, earlier in August, two leaders of the local KNLA in Doo Tha Htoo District passed away due to illness [one leader was confirmed to have died of COVID-19; the exact cause of the other leader's death is unknown], leaving the local KNLA administration within A--- army camp in a fragile state [grieving the deaths of their leaders].

⁵ The State Administration Council (SAC) is the executive governing body created in the aftermath of the February 1st 2021 military coup. It was established by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on February 2nd 2021, and is composed of eight military officers and eight civilians. The chairperson serves as the de facto head of government of Myanmar and leads the Military Cabinet of Myanmar, the executive branch of the government. Min Aung Hlaing assumed the role of SAC chairperson following the coup.

⁶ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

After the SAC occupied the KNLA army camp, about 200 SAC soldiers set up many small temporary bases near A--- village to allow them to defend the territory they were now occupying. The troops imposed a curfew on the community that started at 6:00 p.m. [to 4:00 am]. The curfew has prevented villagers from fishing, hunting, looking after their livestock, and working late on their farms during the evening and night to support their livelihood. After a week of this curfew, villagers were facing difficulties getting sufficient food, especially fish, for their families, so some villagers snuck out of their houses during curfew in order to fish.

On the evening of September 4th, one of the families in A--- village left their house to go to the stream near their house to fish. In the words of local villager, Naw T---, *“The army announced a night curfew. But since they [the family] have to find food to eat, they went to search for food. But they just went to search at the stream [...] just beside their house.”* Saw P--- was going to fish, and his wife, Naw E---, who was five months pregnant, and their 4-year-old daughter did not feel secure staying at home without him due to the presence of SAC troops that were based close to and patrolling in their village. Therefore, Naw E--- and their daughter waited for him at another villager’s house opposite their own while he was fishing. Unfortunately, the family encountered an SAC patrol on their way back to their house. The SAC soldiers questioned them, asking, *“Why do you open [turn on] the torch light?”* They [the soldiers] then shot at them at about 10:46 pm, while Saw P--- was carrying his daughter in his arms.

Naw E--- was shot approximately 12 times: one shot to her belly, two shots to her head and eight or nine shots to her thighs, until her thighs were destroyed by the bullets. The soldiers shot twice at Saw P---’s head; both shots struck his head near his right ear, and at least one bullet lodged in his head. Though other villagers heard the gunshots, it was too risky to help them [the couple] immediately due to the curfew and the nightly SAC patrols. Naw T--- said, *“No one dared to go there. Everyone stayed silently in their houses. No one dared to go outside of their houses.”* Villagers could not help the family until 4:00 am on the morning of September 5th. The couple’s 4-year-old daughter was found with her parents’ bodies when other villagers came to help them the next morning. According to local villager Naw T---, *“She [their daughter] was just there. She cried for a long time and after she got tired, she fell asleep. She woke up the next morning, when people went and picked her up [at 4:00 am].”*

Naw E--- died shortly after the villagers arrived to help. Saw P--- was alive when the other villagers arrived but he was still unconscious. At approximately 9:00 am on September 5th, three SAC military trucks full of soldiers entered the village and went to the victims’ house. They met with Naw E---’s mother and told her that they [SAC soldiers] shot them [the couple] because they didn’t obey the 6:00 pm curfew. The soldiers expressed no guilt and offered no apology. They also bribed the victim’s mother by offering her 500,000 kyats [USD 280.90]⁷ to prevent her from disclosing the killings to the public [she was only given 300,000 kyats [USD 168.54] even though the soldiers originally said they would pay her 500,000 kyats]. One villager, Naw K--- from A--- village, said, *“A person’s life cannot be exchanged for 500,000 kyats. Think about that. If their wife or kid gets killed, will they accept the 500,000 kyats as compensation? Two people along with an unborn baby died. We cannot exchange the life of three people for 500,000 kyats. You [anyone] might really feel embittered if your family member gets killed. The civilians are innocent so they should not treat them that way.”*

At about noon on September 5th, an ambulance called by the SAC arrived and took the deceased woman and her injured husband to Mawlamyine Hospital. Since the SAC did not want the case to become public, many SAC soldiers guarded them at the hospital and they allowed only two relatives to accompany them to the hospital. At the hospital, medical personnel found that Naw E---’s unborn child had also died. Her corpse was cremated in Mawlamyine. Saw P--- was transferred to a hospital in Yangon, as medical personnel at Mawlamyine Hospital were unable

⁷ All conversion estimates for the kyat are based on the December 13th 2021 mid-market exchange rate of 1,000 kyats to USD 0.56 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate>).

to treat him. Having received no further communication related to Saw P---, villagers living in A-- village believe that Saw P--- died of his injuries in the hospital in Yangon.

Their 4-year-old daughter is now staying with her [maternal] grandmother and needs mental healthcare services, but she has not received any mental healthcare support or compensation [for raising the child]. Her grandmother has to raise her alone in a difficult and insecure situation. One of the villagers, Naw K---, said, *“That 4-year-old girl who was left behind should get social acceptance [understanding/special consideration] because her parents are dead. It will be better if she gets aid. [...] The kid still has to obtain education in the future. [...] she can live a good life if she lives under the shade [common saying in Karen and Burmese meaning: if she gets protection and access to the opportunities she needs for her future].”*

As a consequence of this incident of shooting on sight and of SAC military operations in the community, all villagers, especially women and children, feel unsafe and do not feel secure going anywhere outside of the village. Villagers want the SAC to retreat from their village because their lives will be more peaceful without the soldiers' presence in the community. As Naw T--- said, *“We want to live peacefully. But we feel sad since they [SAC] bully us, the villagers. We don't know what to do and how to do [live their lives when they are made to feel powerless by the SAC]. They treat us as they want. We want soldiers not to be present here [in the village], so we can work peacefully. But now, we have to be scared. We can't do anything but be afraid of them. Now we can't go anywhere. We want to live peacefully. [...] I don't want these soldiers to stay in the village. I want to live peacefully. But now, no one can go to anywhere. We have to worry that they will kill more people. Now they have killed that couple as an example so we have to be more afraid.”*

The case has not been taken to either the police or the courts, and the victims' families remain without access to justice for their children [Naw E--- and Saw P---]. Since there is no justice or accountability under the junta, the victims' families and other villagers live in fear of the SAC authorities. One villager, Naw K---, demands justice for the two villagers who were shot by the SAC. In her words, *“[W]e cannot forgive it [the SAC killing]. We would like them to be charged in accordance with the law. Those who were killed are barely over 20 years of age. They should still be alive. We do not know, they might have become rich people in their future. We do not know, the baby inside her [Naw E---'s] belly might have become a country's leader. That baby had to die in the mother's belly, so there is no justice. It is also linked with ethnic issues because it seems like Karen people are their target.. [...] We cannot exchange the life of a person for 500,000 kyats. They [the perpetrators] should face trial in both civilian court and military court. They should resolve this case openly. They should also do so in accordance with the law.”*

She also added, *“They [SAC military] uses arms against civilians. If everyone is armed [against each other] these hatreds will never end [there will never be peace]. They should not harm the civilians because the civilians are innocent. If a civilian has done something wrong, that person should be punished for what they have done. But now they [the SAC] are arresting and shooting civilians who are innocent. If the country's situation becomes worse, we will fight as well.”*

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

Local villagers have given KHRG permission to use the information they provided.

Further background reading on the situation on human rights violations committed by SAC forces in the Doo Tha Htoo District of Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Doo Tha Htoo Short Update: Looting by BGF and SAC soldiers, June 21st 2021,"](#) July 2021.
- ["Doo Tha Htoo Situation Update: Fighting and indiscriminate shelling by SAC forces, April to May 2021,"](#) June 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.khrq.org.

Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District

