



**Karen Human Rights Group**  
Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

### Incident Report

October 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 / KHRG # 21-273-11

## Mu Traw District Incident Report: A man was injured by a landmine explosion in Dwe Lo Township, September 2021

*This Incident Report describes events occurring in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in September 2021. At 8:15 am on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2021, a villager living in Ma Htaw village tract stepped on a landmine while he was on his way to buy medicine for the village monks. As a result of the landmine explosion, he suffered wounds on his right foot and chest, and his left foot had to be amputated. Following the incident, his family sent him to Hpa-an hospital for further treatment.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Type of Incident</b>                                   | Landmine explosion  |
| <b>Date of Incident(s)</b>                                | September 11 <sup>th</sup> 2021   |
| <b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b> | A--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, <sup>2</sup> Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District |

| Victim Information |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>        | Saw <sup>3</sup> I---  |
| <b>Age</b>         | 30   |
| <b>Sex</b>         | Male   |
| <b>Nationality</b> | Karen  |
| <b>Family</b>      | Single   |
| <b>Occupation</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Religion</b>    | N/A  |
| <b>Position</b>    | Villager   |
| <b>Village</b>     | A--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District |

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in September 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.

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

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

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

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

Several sources have provided information on this landmine incident via phone call. These sources include witnesses, the mother of the victim and a former KHRG researcher who helped transport the landmine victim following the incident.

The first source witnessed the incident and helped support the victim and transport him from A--- village to O--- village. He also assisted in finding more contacts.

The second source is a villager from A--- village who travelled to the river earlier that day using the same road where Saw I--- stepped on the landmine. He shared the overall situation of the morning's events.

The third source is the victim's mother.

The fourth source is a relative of the first source and provided KHRG with photographs of the incident.

The fifth source is a former KHRG researcher who met the victim while the victim was being transported to the State Administration Council (SAC)<sup>4</sup> hospital in the Tactical Operations Command (TOC)<sup>5</sup> headquarters located between Hpapun Town and G--- village. He also shared photos documenting the incident with KHRG.

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

The first source was a witness to the incident. The remaining four sources are family members or local villagers who are familiar with either the victim or the situation.

## **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.**

At 8:15 am on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2021, Saw I---, a 30-year-old villager living in A--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District stepped on a landmine and was injured by the explosion. [He sustained injuries to both feet and his chest.] The landmine Saw I--- stepped on had been planted in the eastern part of A--- village in front of a Catholic church,

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Tactical Operations Command; made up of three battalions and a headquarters, usually under a Military Operations Command (MOC) and a Light Infantry Division (LID).

where the village road that leads to the river changes from a paved to a dirt road. After the incident, SAC soldiers who are based in the village [battalion number unspecified], brought Saw I--- back to his home, where a SAC army medic amputated his left foot and treated the wounds on his right foot and his chest. Villagers from A--- village and from H--- [a village close by] then sent him to a Karen National Union (KNU)<sup>6</sup> medic in H--- village to treat his wounds. After this, he was sent to O--- village to catch the boat running to K'Ma Moh (Ka Ma Maung) Town. His family members wanted to send him to Hpa-an for treatment [K'Ma Moh is on the way to Hpa-an]. But since it was late afternoon [too late to catch the boat], he was sent to Hpapun SAC hospital in the TOC headquarters for one night. On September 12<sup>th</sup> 2021, he was sent by a boat to travel to K'Ma Moh. He received care from healthcare workers at the SAC hospital in Taungalay, near Hpa-an, and was discharged on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2021.

As soon as the landmine exploded, the SAC soldiers based in the village ran to the location of the explosion and brought back pieces of the exploded landmine. They then showed these pieces to the village head and claimed that it was not their landmine. The A---village head shared that the SAC had not cared about previous landmine explosions [so villagers found it strange that they seemed to care about this explosion]. Villagers also found it suspicious that the SAC soldiers would bring the pieces of the landmine to the village head and claim it was not their landmine [because SAC soldiers do not normally do this following a landmine explosion]. Before the incident took place, the SAC told villagers to use only the road and not go off the road when they were going out of the village. This led villagers to suspect that it might have been an SAC landmine. Furthermore, according to villagers, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>7</sup> does not usually plant landmines on the road to Yon Sa Lin River, and they [the KNLA] were allowing villagers to use the road every day until the incident happened [i.e., the KNLA had not warned the villagers not to use the road]. Villagers explained that the KNLA usually informs them when it plants landmines and tells them which areas to avoid. However, the A--- village head said that they could not specify which armed group planted the landmine, and KHRG has not received any proof of which group planted the landmine that Saw I--- stepped on.

When the incident happened, Saw I---was on his way to the Yon Sa Lin riverbank to take a boat to K'Ma Moh to buy medicine for the village monks. He often volunteers to help the village monastery. According to one A--- villager who uses the same road where the incident happened, on the morning of the incident, there were other A--- villagers using that road going to the Yon Sa Lin riverbank but none of them stepped on the landmine.

Saw I--- has three siblings, and he is the youngest son in the family. After he was discharged from the hospital on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2021, he went to stay in W--- village. At present, Saw I--- and his family have not received any support.

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

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

The sources allowed KHRG to use the provided information.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

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



The first two photos (top) were taken on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2021 in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District. The first two photos (top left and right) show Saw I---, who was injured in a landmine explosion, being taken to a KNU medic located in H--- village to treat his wounds. The photo on the bottom left shows Saw I--- being placed in the boat at O--- village on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 for transportation to K'Ma Moh Town. The photo on the bottom right shows Saw I--- in the car that took him to K'Mah Moh Town for further treatment. [Photos: Local villager]

Further background reading on landmine explosions in Mu Traw District in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Mu Traw District Incident Report: One villager died and another two villagers were injured due to landmine explosions along a road in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District, July 2021,"](#) September 2021.
- ["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,"](#) September 2021.
- ["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.

## 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).

**Mutraw (Hpapun) District**

