



Incident Report

January 10th 2022 / KHRG # 21-294-11

Mu Traw District Incident Report: Torture of three villagers in Dwe Lo Township by an SAC officer, August 2021

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District during August 2021. Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) soldiers attacked State Administration Council (SAC) troops who had entered Karen National Union (KNU) territory. After the attack, an SAC officer tortured three of the local villagers.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Torture
Date of Incident(s)	August 15 th 2021
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, ² Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District

Victim Information			
Name	U ³ B---	C---	D---
Age	46	32	30
Sex	Male	Male	Male
Nationality	Karen	-	-
Family	Married	-	-
Occupation	Shopkeeper	-	-
Religion	Buddhist	-	-

¹ The present document is based on information received in August 2021. It was provided by a community member in Mu Traw 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 U is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

Position	Local villager	Local villager	Local villager
Village	A--- village	A--- village	A--- village

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Zaw Min Htaik	Lieutenant Colonel	Light Infantry Battalion #407	Tanintharyi Township	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A villager from A--- village informed a KHRG researcher about this incident. The researcher then went to interview U E---, a A--- villager who witnessed the incident.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The person who shared this information was a first-hand witness to 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 15th 2021, an incident of torture occurred in A--- village, Ma Htaaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District. The victims were U B--- (46 years old), U C--- (32 years old) and D--- (30 years old), all from A--- village. The perpetrator was Lieutenant Colonel Zaw Min Htaik from State Administration Council (SAC)⁴ Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)⁵ #407 [based in Tanintharyi Township, Mergui-Tavoy District].

⁴ 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.

⁵ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Yet up to date information regarding the size of battalions is hard to come by. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

Earlier in the day [on August 15th], Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁶ soldiers from Battalion #102 attacked SAC troops⁷ from LIB #407 in the middle of the road at A--- village [presumably due to trespass into Karen National Union (KNU)⁸ territory]. There were no casualties on either side. After the fighting, however, Lieutenant Colonel Zaw Min Htaik from SAC LIB #407 gathered the villagers from A--- village (about 40 to 50 villagers) in the middle of the road and then tortured three of them by punching them and kicking them with his military boots. According to U E--- [one of the villagers who had been gathered in the road and witnessed the torture]: *“I thought I would die in the middle of the road of the village.”*

They [the SAC] also conducted indiscriminate shelling at the entrance to the village and inside the village.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

U E--- gave permission for KHRG to use this information.

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

- [“Mu Traw District Short Update: Torture, fighting, indiscriminate shelling, and threats by SAC soldiers have resulted in fear and displacement of villagers in Dwe Lo Township, August 2021”](#), December 2021.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: Airstrikes, fighting, indiscriminate shelling and landmine contamination resulted in the displacement of villagers, one injury and one death in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District, March to May 2021”](#), December 2021.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: Landmine contamination, indiscriminate shelling, arbitrary taxation, movement of troops, and livelihood, education and healthcare situation, May to June 2021”](#), September 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.

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

⁷ Tatmadaw is the term most commonly used in referring to Myanmar’s armed forces. 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.

⁸ 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.

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.

Mutraw (Hpapun) District

