



**Incident Report**

August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022 / KHRG # 22-143-I1

**Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC shot at villagers, resulting in the death of two villagers in Kaw T’Ree Township, April 2022**

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Kaw T’Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District in April 2022, including the arbitrary killing of two civilians by the State Administration Council (SAC) and the displacement of villagers. Villagers from Maw Hpoh Kloh village were returning to their displacement site when they were shot at by SAC soldiers. One villager was shot in the chest twice and died immediately. Another villager was injured by a bullet to the stomach, but died shortly afterward because the SAC soldiers took the bodies of the victims and prevented the injured villager from being able to receive medical treatment. The families of the victims are relying on their relatives’ support to survive.<sup>1</sup>*

**Part 1 – Incident Details**

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Arbitrary killing
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	April 8 <sup>th</sup> 2022
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	Kwee Hser Hpaw village, Maw Hkee village tract, Kaw T’Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District

Victim Information		
<b>Name</b>	Saw <sup>2</sup> Baw Hkaw	Saw Ta Thoo
<b>Age</b>	50	32
<b>Sex</b>	Male	Male
<b>Nationality</b>	Karen	Karen
<b>Family</b>	Married	Married
<b>Occupation</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Religion</b>	Unknown (likely Buddhist)	Unknown (likely Buddhist)
<b>Position</b>	Villager	Villager

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in April 2022. It was provided by a community member in Dooplaya 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> Saw is a S’gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person’s name.

<b>Village</b>	Maw Hpoh Kloh, Maw Hkee village tract	Maw Hpoh Kloh, Maw Hkee village tract
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<b>Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)</b>				
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Commander's Name</b>
Unknown	Unknown	SAC LIB #560, 561, 585, 559	Unknown	Commander Myint Kyaw

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

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

KHRG staff conducted an interview over the phone with a villager who witnessed the incident.

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

The interviewee witnessed the incident and knows the victims.

## **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 April 8<sup>th</sup> 2022, two villagers from Maw Hpoh Kloh village, Maw Hkee village tract were shot by the State Administration Council (SAC)<sup>3</sup> in Kwee Hser Hpaw village, Maw Hkee village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township. One died immediately; the other died as a result of being denied medical care. Local villagers do not know which SAC group is responsible because the troops had recently rotated. According to Karen Information Center (KIC), the soldiers were from SAC Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)<sup>4</sup> #560, 561, 585 and 559, led by Commander Myint Kyaw.<sup>5</sup>

[On March 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>6</sup> attacked the SAC camp in Maw Hkee village.] Villagers in Maw Hpoh Kloh and Maw Hkee fled before the SAC camp was attacked by the KNLA [on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2022]. [The SAC retaliated and re-occupied the camp on April 6<sup>th</sup> 2022]. Villagers heard [were informed by the KNLA] that the SAC were going to attack the camp prior to the re-occupation on April 6<sup>th</sup>, and also saw SAC troop reinforcement and increased SAC activity in the village. [Therefore, villagers who had previously displaced knew not to return to the village. Those who had previously chosen to remain in the village knew to

<sup>3</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 Burma/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>4</sup> A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. 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, particularly following the signing of the NCA. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

<sup>5</sup> This information was taken from the [Karen Information Centre \(KIC\) facebook page](#), from a post dated April 8<sup>th</sup> 2021.

<sup>6</sup> The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

displace to other areas.] Some villagers in Maw Hpoh Kloh sought shelter nearby in Kwee Hser Hpaw village [Maw Hkee village tract].

Two Maw Hpoh Kloh villagers [Baw Hkaw, aged around 50 years old, and his nephew, Saw Ta Thoo, aged around 32 years old] were among the displaced and had been staying in Kwee Hser Hpaw village for a while. On the day of the incident, they had travelled back home to Maw Hpoh Kloh village with a tractor to collect coconuts and bananas to make a sacrifice [as part of a Buddhist practice]. Some other female villagers including their wives and children also went with them. After collecting the fruit, they returned to Kwee Hser Hpaw village. Meanwhile, around 30 SAC soldiers arrived at the village [Kwee Hser Hpaw] ahead of them [and were stationed at the entrance of the village, where they could see traffic entering and leaving]. When the villagers arrived at the entrance of the village at around 10:30 am, two KNLA soldiers passed them on a motorbike. When the SAC soldiers saw them [the vehicles on the road], they fired their guns, hitting two civilians. [Although the SAC may have been shooting at the KNLA, given the nature of the wounds (see below), it is likely that the SAC also intentionally shot at the civilians.]

One of the victims, Saw Ta Thoo, was driving the tractor and his wife and other villagers [including Saw Baw Hkaw] were in the [back of the] tractor [where the load is usually carried]. Two men in the tractor were hit by the bullets from the SAC soldiers, Saw Ta Thoo and Saw Baw Hkaw. Saw Ta Thoo died straight away as he was shot twice in the chest. He fell from the tractor as he was driving. Then, the tractor hit a tree and stopped. His wife went down from the tractor and called to him but he was not alive anymore. The other victim, the uncle [Saw Baw Hkaw], was shot once in his stomach but he did not die right away. The villagers in Kwee Hser Hpaw watched the SAC move the bodies away from the site of the incident [so that the villagers could not retrieve them]. Saw Baw Hkaw was still alive.

Saw H--- [who witnessed the incident] requested that the SAC give the injured villager, Saw Baw Hkaw, back to the villagers as he was still alive. Saw H--- was hoping to send Saw Baw Hkaw to a hospital across the border in Thailand, to be able to save him. However, the SAC did not allow him to do so. None of the villagers dared to complain about this as they were terrified by the scene made by the SAC soldiers. Saw Baw Hkaw died after a moment [around one hour after he was shot]. Villagers told the SAC soldiers that the two dead men were just normal villagers and requested [that the SAC soldiers return the bodies so that they could] bury the corpses. The SAC soldiers gave the corpses of the two villagers back to the family, and they were buried at their homes after the SAC soldiers had left the village [the same day as the incident].

Both victims were married. They were both from Maw Hpoh Kloh village. Saw Ta Thoo is survived by his wife (who was seven months pregnant at the time of reporting) and a 7-year-old daughter. Saw Baw Hkaw is survived by his wife and three daughters. Saw Baw Hkaw's oldest daughter is 10 years old. The families have to rely on their relatives to survive. [They did not receive compensation.]

The villagers who witnessed this incident recalled that fighting occurred between the SAC and KNLA in Kwee Hser Hpaw village [where Maw Hpoh Kloh villagers had fled due to fighting and military activities in their own village] shortly after the incident. Prior to this fighting, the SAC stopped villagers who travelled on the road and kept them among the soldiers. [These villagers were likely used as human shields during the fighting.] During the fighting, the SAC fired a few mortars [the specific number is unknown] into Kwee Hser Hpaw village.

Although fighting was frequent in the area around Maw Hkee village [since March 2022], some male villagers still managed to live in the village, whereas their families fled to other villages. After this killing incident, most of the remaining villagers from Maw Hkee village tract fled to the Thai border as they were highly concerned for their safety. [This is the first time a villager had

been shot dead in the village since the coup.] Some villagers from Maw Hpoh Kloh fled to K---village [a Thai-Karen village] in Thailand.

There are around 67 households in Maw Hpoh Kloh village and more than 10 households in Kwee Hser Hpaw village. [The number of households in Maw Hkee village is unknown.] Most households in these three villages have now fled. Villagers left their livestock, stocks of rice and household materials, when they displaced. Villagers in Maw Hkee village tract have faced around two months of displacement. Sometimes, displaced villagers sneak back into the village to take some of their paddy to their displacement site. However, it is dangerous because the SAC often patrol the village and fighting can happen at any time between the SAC and the local Karen armed groups (KNLA, Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA)<sup>7</sup> and Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO)<sup>8</sup>).

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

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

The interviewee gave permission to use this information.

Further background reading on the situation regarding SAC activities and human rights violations in Dooplaya District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Dooplaya District Situation Update: Fighting, indiscriminate shelling, displacement, landmine injuries, travel restrictions and torture, December 2021 to February 2022”](#), June 2022.
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: A woman was killed by mortar shrapnel during indiscriminate shelling by armed groups, February 2022”](#), March 2022.
- [“Dooplaya District Situation Update: Indiscriminate shelling, fighting, forced labour, peace talks, and the COVID-19 pandemic, August to September 2021”](#), February 2022.
- [“Dooplaya District Interview: Looting, fighting, forced labour and COVID-19 infections, September 2021”](#), January 2022.

### **About KHRG**

Founded in 1992, the Karen Human Rights Group is an independent local organisation committed to improving the human rights situation in Southeast Burma. 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](http://www.khrq.org).

<sup>7</sup> In 1994, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) split from the KNLA over religious considerations. In 2010, the majority of DKBA troops transformed into BGFs, but one faction refused and changed its name to Democratic Karen Benevolent Army in 2012. In 2015, the DKBA Splinter Group split from this faction. It is active in Hpapun and Hpa-an districts, and it has not signed the NCA.

<sup>8</sup> The Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) was formed in 1947 by the Karen National Union and is the precursor to the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). Today the KNDO refers to a militia force of local volunteers trained and equipped by the KNLA and incorporated into its battalion and command structure; its members wear uniforms and typically commit to two-year terms of service.

# Dooplaya (Southeastern Karen State) District

