



**Incident Report**

January 6<sup>th</sup> 2023 / KHRG # 22-151-I1

**Dooplaya District Incident Report: Rape and killing of two adolescent sisters in Waw Ray Township, April 2022**

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Waw Ray (Win Yay) Township, Dooplaya District in April 2022, including the rape and killing of two adolescent sisters. Four local male villagers, including an uncle of the victims, were involved in this incident.<sup>1</sup>*

**Part 1 – Incident Details**

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Rape and killing
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	April 24 <sup>th</sup> 2022
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract <sup>2</sup> , Waw Ray (Win Yay) Township, Dooplaya District

Victim Information		
<b>Name</b>	Naw <sup>3</sup> S---	Naw R---
<b>Age</b>	12 years old	9 years old
<b>Sex</b>	Female	Female
<b>Nationality</b>	Karen	Karen
<b>Family</b>	Single	Single
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	Student
<b>Religion</b>	Buddhist	Buddhist
<b>Position</b>	Villager	Villager
<b>Village</b>	Lay Hpoh village	Lay Hpoh village

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

<b>Perpetrator Information (Civilians)</b>			
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Village</b>
Saw <sup>4</sup> Maung Chit Soe	39	Unknown	Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District
Saw Soe Win Than	23	Unknown	Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District
Saw Eh Doh Htoo	27	Unknown	Lay Naw village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District
Saw Hpa Eh Tee (uncle of the victims)	35	Unknown	Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

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

I [KHRG staff member] conducted interviews with the victims' family members and local community leaders who were involved in finding the corpses of the victims as well as in the investigation.

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

The sources were involved in the investigation and saw the dead body of the two 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 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, Naw S---, 12 years old, and Naw R---, 9 years old, disappeared after going out to find [wild] vegetables in the [nearby] plantations. They are the daughters of U<sup>5</sup> A--- and Naw W---, living in Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray (Win Yay) Township, Dooplaya District. After realising that the two girls had disappeared, their family, relatives and other villagers looked for them around the village and nearby plantations. Finally, the bodies of the two girls were found on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 between 9 am and 10 am, one mile

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

<sup>5</sup> U is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

away from the village. Following that, family and villagers informed the local village leaders, the Karen National Police Force (KNPF)<sup>6</sup> and local Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>7</sup> Company #2 about the incident so that they would examine and investigate the case.

The two girls were found dead, with extensive wounds and bruises all over their bodies. Their hands and feet were bound. A community member who saw the corpses explained: *“When they were found, they were lying on the ground. Their hands were bound and a piece of cloth was tied around their eyes. But their clothes were on them. [...] They had injury marks on their bodies. Naw S---’s head was smashed flat from her ear to her eye on the left side. [...] She had injuries on her back like she was dragged on the ground. Naw R--- also had injuries on the left side of her head. Both of her legs seemed to be broken as they were all twisted. There were bruises all over their [both girls’] body and groin. Both of them had their anus torn.”* Local authorities also found some semen in the female organs [vagina] of both victims. The local authorities who examined the bodies were the village security officers, the village head, the KNPF, the KNLA and health workers from Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) and Burma Medical Association (BMA). The local authorities and villagers believe that the victims were raped, tortured and killed.

According to a local health worker, we [those investigating] did not have any examination materials at the local level. She explained, *“I did not have any technologies to use for checking the body. I just went to check whether the bodies of the children had any signs related to sexual violence or not. I just used materials to protect myself such as gloves and a mask. There were no other materials that we used for checking.”* However, the clothes of the victims were taken by the KNPF for the investigation [no further information was provided regarding that investigation].

According to the local villagers who provided information [including the victims’ family], initially, the KNPF and KNLA could not identify any perpetrator. However, they questioned some villagers who seemed to have a suspicious connection to this incident. Among them, Saw Hpa Eh Tee, an uncle [brother of the mother] of the victims, was questioned by the KNPF because he also disappeared on the day that the incident happened. However, the KNPF released him after a few days of questioning. He was released because there was no evidence.

The KNPF and KNLA continued to investigate more clues and evidence with the help of local security. Meanwhile, the parents also visited a shaman [AL1][TB2] in the area to help find out more clues. During one visit to a shaman on April 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 in Payathonesu Town [Waw Ray Township], the spirit of their daughters entered the body of the shaman and said that *“the person who killed us is Uncle Saw Maung Chit Soe”* [not an actual uncle of the victims; uncle is used here merely as a familiar term]. Another shaman also said that the perpetrators’ houses are not far from the victims’ house, and that [one of] the perpetrators has dark skin and is aged around 30 to 40 years old.

With these clues, the KNPF assigned some village security officers to continue trying to identify suspects, and also to monitor the situation of any suspected villagers. During the investigation, the security guards became suspicious of Saw Maung Chit Soe due to some of his words and activities. According to the victims’ parents, Saw Maung Chit Soe’s actions were suspicious because he was friendly to the victims’ family before the incident happened (he used to visit their home often), but after the incident happened, he did not visit the victims’ family anymore. When the victim’s parents visited him, he would not face them. He had some marks on his face like it was scratched by someone. And he would put on Th’Na Hka [traditional make up applied in the form of a paste made from ground bark] on his face, as though to cover up the scratch

<sup>6</sup> The Karen National Police Force is the law enforcement agency of the Karen National Union. It was established in 1991.

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

marks. According to the neighbour, he never applied Th'Na Hka to his face before.

The village security officers reported the situation to the KNPF who later ordered the village security officers to bring any suspected villagers to the KNPF office in Thay K'Teh village in order to conduct an in-person investigation. On May 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, the village security officers sent Saw Maung Chit Soe, together with two other suspected villagers, Saw Soe Win Than and Saw Eh Doh Htoo, to be investigated by the KNPF. The uncle [AL3][TB4][Saw Hpa Eh Tee] was sent on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2022. Eventually, the perpetrators confessed to the KNPF and KNLA that they committed this abuse.

[According to the confessions,] at first, the uncle Saw Hpa Eh Tee and a Lay Naw villager, Saw Eh Doh Htoo, convinced the children [two girls] to follow them to the incident place [a plantation near the river]. They had already been watching for when the two children would leave home to find vegetables in the plantations. They [the two perpetrators] went ahead of them [the girls] and waited at the stream. When the two girls arrived at the plantation, the perpetrators approached and convinced them to follow them further for fishing and finding vegetables. When they arrived at the stream, four perpetrators met up and brought the children to the incident place. When they arrived at the incident place, the perpetrators tore the sarongs off of the girls, which they then tore up in order to tie up the girls. Only three of the men (not the girls' uncle [Saw Hpa Eh Tee]) raped the girls. However, he [Saw Hpa Eh Tee] remained just beside the girls while they were raped. The three perpetrators (not Saw Hpa Eh Tee) were drunk. According to the confession, the perpetrators had been planning this for weeks and they made it happen when they got the chance.

The case is currently [at the time of the initial interviews] being handled by the township KNPF and local Karen National Union (KNU)<sup>8</sup> authorities. According to the victims' family, the case will be processed further according to KNU law.

The victims' family is concerned about retaliation from the perpetrators and the perpetrators' families if the perpetrators are not arrested and punished or if they are only sentenced for a few years. [In many rape cases, even if found guilty, the perpetrators are only required to provide financial compensation to the survivor and/or family.] The family, especially the mother and father of the two girls, are still experiencing trauma and mental health issues due to this violent abuse inflicted upon their daughters. The mother could not sleep or eat properly since the incident happened. She is always in bed. She has not been going around in the village or outside as she used to do. They are in need of counselling. They have spent almost 1,000,000 kyats [USD 476.19]<sup>9</sup> to follow the case, including travel costs, so they are also experiencing financial hardship now.

Follow up: On September 28<sup>th</sup> 2022, the KNU Dooplaya District Court determined the punishment for each of the perpetrators. Saw Eh Doh Htoo was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and hard labour, Saw Soe Win Than was sentenced to 17 years imprisonment and hard labour, whereas the two other were given the death sentence. [KHRG did not receive further information about whether the latter two were put to death, but according to KNU policy, punishment is implemented 40 days after the sentencing.]

The mother is still experiencing trauma and having difficulty sleeping.

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

<sup>8</sup> The Karen National Union is the main Karen group opposing the government.

<sup>9</sup> All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the December 21<sup>st</sup> 2022 official market rate of 1,000 kyats to USD 0.48 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate>).

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

The victims' family gave permission to publish this information.



These photos were taken on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 in Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District. The photos show the corpse of 12-year-old Naw S--- after it was found. *[Photos: Local villager]*



These photos were taken on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 in Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District. The photos show the corpse of 9-year-old Naw R--- after it was found. *[Photos: Local villager]*



This photo was taken on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 in Lay Hpoh village, Kwee K'Saw Kyee village tract, Waw Ray Township, Dooplaya District. This photo shows the bamboo basket of the two victims with the vegetables and fish that they had gathered the day of the incident. *[Photo: Local villager]*

Further background reading on sexual violence, including against children, in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["\*Taw Oo District Incident Report: Rape case in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, August 2020\*"](#), February 2021.
- ["\*Dooplaya District Incident Report: Child rape in Noh T'Kaw Township, November 2020\*"](#), January 2021.
- ["\*Dooplaya District Incident Report: Child rape case in Noh T'Kaw Township, July 2020\*"](#), November 2020.

### 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

# Dooplaya (Southeastern Karen State) District



KHRG