



Incident Report

January 11th 2023/ KHRG # 22-262-I1

Mu Traw District Incident Report: Two villagers were seriously injured in landmine explosions in Lu Thaw Township, April and May 2022

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in April and May 2022. This report highlights two landmine incidents, one of which occurred on April 8th 2022 and the other that occurred on May 16th 2022. On April 8th 2022 at 9:15 am, a 19-year-old man who lives in R--- village, Hkay Poo village tract stepped on a landmine while he was traveling near a State Administration Council (SAC) military road in E--- village, Hkay Poo village tract. The following month on May 16th 2022, a 27-year-old man who lives in L--- village, Hkay Poo village tract stepped on a landmine while he was returning home from his mother-in-law's house. Both of the victims received some financial support from Free Burma Rangers (FBR). Given the severity of the injuries sustained, both victims needed to have one of their legs amputated. The landmine incidents affected both victims' ability to continue to secure their livelihoods for themselves and their family members.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Table with 3 columns: Incident Type, Date, and Location. Row 1: Landmine explosion, April 8th 2022, May 16th 2022. Row 2: E--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District; L--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District.

Table with 3 columns: Name, Age, Sex, Ethnicity, Family. Row 1: Saw³ A---, 19 years old, Male, Karen, Single. Row 2: Saw W---, 27 years old, Male, Karen, Married.

¹ The present document is based on information received in July 2022. 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.

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

Occupation	Farmer	Farmer
Religion	Christian	Animist
Position	N/A	N/A
Village	R--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District	L--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District

Perpetrator Information				
Name(s)	Rank	Company/Battalion/Division	Based at	Commander's Name
Unknown (April 8 th incident)	Unknown	Unknown	SAC Hsa Law Kyoh army camp	Unknown
Unknown (May 16 th incident)	Unknown	SAC Infantry Battalion (IB) #705	SAC Khaw Daw Hkoh army camp, Hkay Poo village tract	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

On July 2nd 2022, a KHRG field researcher conducted interviews with each of the landmine victims, Saw A--- and Saw W---.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The two victims of the landmine explosions were interviewed and provided the details about the landmine explosions that resulted in their injuries.

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.

First Incident

On April 8th 2022 at 9:15 am, Saw A---, a 19-year-old villager living in R--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District, stepped on a M-14 landmine planted by State Administration Council (SAC)⁴ soldiers [M-14 landmines are exclusively used by the SAC]. The incident occurred while the victim and other villagers were travelling to buy food [in H--- village, Htee Tha Saw village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District]. It takes one day to travel round trip from R--- village to H--- village. Saw A--- stepped

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 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.

on a landmine planted in E--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Mu Traw District near the SAC military road [H--- road, close to Hsa Law Kyoh army camp].

Among the villagers [travelling with the victim] was a healthcare worker who helped to wrap the landmine victim's injury after the explosion. Villagers who travelled with the victim then sent him to the Y--- clinic [also known as T--- clinic] located in T--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District.

Later that night, at 12 am, Saw A--- was then sent to O--- clinic located in O--- village tract because there were not adequate medical supplies and no surgeon at Y--- clinic. The victim had to stay at the O--- clinic on April 9th 2022 before his left leg was amputated below his knee on April 10th 2022. There was inadequate medicine at the O--- clinic [for the procedure] so the healthcare workers had to buy [additional] medicine [anaesthetics]. It is hard for the healthcare workers from the clinic to go and buy medicine in town because of the difficulty of travelling [SAC confiscate medicine if villagers are caught transporting it]. The victim stated that, as a young man, it was really distressing for him to be told that his leg needed to be cut off. Thara⁵ P--- [a healthcare worker] amputated his leg. He was hospitalised for about three months. His parents took care of him at the clinic.

The victim has been gradually recovering from his injury at the O--- clinic [as reported to KHRG in July 2022]. Free Burma Rangers (FBR)⁶ provided 10,000 baht [USD 288.35]⁷ for his medical expenses. Saw A--- was discharged in July 2022 from the clinic. He had to use crutches to be able to walk after returning to his home. The victim is a farmer who works on his hill farmland. It is now difficult for him to go and work on his farmland since his left leg was amputated. There was no one else to support him financially except FBR. Other villagers also strive to secure their livelihoods so it was difficult for them to assist Saw A---. Living in a mountainous area, it is difficult to travel and conduct other business because of the transportation challenges. Therefore, villagers have to rely on their farmlands for their income.

There has been no mine risk awareness training provided to the villagers living in R--- village. Additionally, there are no signs showing where landmines are being planted in the areas close to the village. Villagers are at high risk when they are not sure about where landmines are being planted. Even after the landmine incident, the villagers still use the SAC military road in E--- village to travel, but do so in fear. The local leaders reminded villagers to avoid the places where landmines are planted [they had indicated to villagers the general areas where landmines were planted]. Therefore, villagers are now very careful when they are travelling.

Second Incident

On May 16th 2022 at 10:30 pm, Saw W---, a 27-year-old villager living in L--- village, Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District, stepped on a landmine [the type of the landmine is unknown] planted by SAC Infantry Battalion (IB)⁸ #705. The villager was walking

⁵ *Thara* (male) or *tharamu* (female) is a Karen term used for any teacher, pastor, or any person to whom one wishes to show respect.

⁶ Founded in 1997 in response to Tatmadaw offensives, Free Burma Rangers (FBR) is a multi-ethnic humanitarian relief organisation that specialises in providing emergency health care, shelter, food and clothing to civilians in war zones and prioritises assisting IDPs. In addition to their relief activities the FBR also conducts capacity building trainings (sometimes jointly with KHRG), documents human rights violations and advocates regularly on the situation in Burma/Myanmar. There are currently 71 active FBR teams that go on 2-4 missions a year.

⁷ All conversion estimates for the baht in this report are based on the December 22nd 2022 official market rate of 1 baht to USD 0.028 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/thb-to-usd-rate>).

⁸ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Burma Army 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. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

on Ma Doo Loo [hill] road with his mother, returning from visiting his mother-in-law [village unknown]. Villagers assume that the landmine was planted by SAC IB #705, as the battalion is based in Khaw Daw Hkoh army camp in S--- village, Hkay Poo village tract and frequently travel on Ma Doo Loo [hill] road.

As soon as the incident happened, the victim's mother asked him to stay at the incident location. She then returned to her village [L--- village] to call other villagers for help. The victim stayed and wrapped the injury sustained on his left leg with his longyi [a long piece of fabric worn around the waist in Burma] to stop the bleeding. It took Saw W---'s mother two hours of walking to get to her village. Villagers from L--- village came to the incident location, wrapped the victim's injury and administered an anaesthetic injection. After the incident [receiving the injection], he was taken back to his mother-in-law's village [which was closer than his home village].

In the evening on May 17th 2022, the victim was carried by the local villagers to Y--- clinic (also known as T--- clinic), located in Hkay Poo village tract, Lu Thaw Township to treat his injuries. He was sent [carried] on foot, which took about half a day. After he arrived at the Y--- clinic, the healthcare workers at the clinic cleaned and wrapped up his injured leg. After that, he was transferred [four hours away] to the O--- clinic which is located in I--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township. Saw W---'s left leg was amputated on the same day. The victim needed a blood transfusion during his operation at O--- clinic. The father of the victim paid from his labour wages to cover his son's blood transfusion. The clinic had insufficient medicine when the victim was getting treated [during his recovery], as it is hard to transport the medicine because of the long distance.

Due to the loss of his leg, Saw W--- is facing difficulties securing his livelihood. It has also been difficult for the victim's wife to take up her husband's responsibilities for their livelihood. Although the incident happened only to the victim, it has affected the rest of the family members as well. There was no one in the family to work when the wife accompanied her husband to the hospital. She also visited him at the hospital during the three months that he was hospitalised. [Even under normal circumstances, the family would face challenges to earn their livelihood, and those concerns persisted after the accident.] The victim expressed concern that the farmlands would not produce enough food to last the whole year and travel restrictions would inhibit looking elsewhere for jobs. FBR provided the victim with 10,000 baht [USD 288.35] to assist in covering his medical expenses. He had to buy some medicine himself because of inadequate medical supplies at the clinic.

The victim and other villagers living in L--- village have never attended mine risk awareness training so it is hard for the villagers to take preventive measures [they may not be aware of these measures] when they have to travel. Now, the victim is facing difficulties earning a livelihood because unable to work on his farm.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

Both landmine victims gave KHRG permission to use the information they provided.



These photos were taken on July 2nd 2022 at T--- Clinic where Saw A--- (photo on the left) and Saw W--- (photo on the right) received treatment. [Photo: KHRG]

Further background reading on the security and human rights situation in Mu Traw District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: SAC indiscriminate mortar shelling, an attack of a villager by an SAC soldier, People’s Defence Force \(PDF\) activity and a landmine incident, February to April 2022”](#), December 2022.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: Militarisation, displacement, humanitarian aid, landmines and the impact of COVID-19 in Bu Tho Township, June to August 2021”](#), August 2022.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: SAC shelling, displacement of villagers, livelihood challenges, healthcare and education situation, and landmine incidents, April to May 2022”](#), July 2022.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: Arrests, threats and physical assault of villagers, mortar shelling, air strikes and a landmine incident in Bu Tho and Dwe Lo townships, December 2021 to March 2022”](#), July 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.

Mutraw (Hpapun) District

