



## Incident Report

February 1<sup>st</sup> 2023/ KHRG # 22-262-I3

## Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager from Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township was seriously injured by a landmine explosion, June 2022

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in June 2022. On June 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, Saw U---, a 24-year-old man living in R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District, stepped on a landmine assumed by local villagers to have been planted by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers while he was foraging for vegetables with one of his brothers. As a villager whose livelihood depends on working on his hill farmlands daily, he is facing financial hardship. While he received financial support from friends and a relative who had resettled in a foreign country, it was insufficient to cover his medical expenses.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Landmine explosion
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	June 21 <sup>st</sup> 2022
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, <sup>2</sup> Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information	
<b>Name</b>	Saw <sup>3</sup> U---
<b>Age</b>	24 years old
<b>Sex</b>	Male
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Karen
<b>Family</b>	Single
<b>Occupation</b>	Farmer
<b>Religion</b>	Animist

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<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.

<b>Position</b>	Villager
<b>Village</b>	R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District

<b>Perpetrator Information</b>				
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Company/Battalion/Division</b>	<b>Based at</b>	<b>Commander's Name</b>
Unknown	Unknown	SAC soldiers (suspected)	SAC Htaw Muh Pleh Meh army camp	Unknown

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

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

The KHRG field researcher interviewed the victim, Saw U---, on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022, while he was recovering at A--- clinic located in Naw Yoh Hta village tract.

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

The victim provided the information about the landmine 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 June 21<sup>st</sup> 2022 at 9:25 am, a 24-year-old villager named Saw U--- from R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District stepped on a M-14 landmine while he was foraging for vegetables and hunting with his brother, E---. His right leg was seriously injured by the landmine explosion. His left leg was also partially injured, with landmine fragments stuck in it. The landmine was [assumed by local villagers to have been] planted by State Administration Council (SAC)<sup>4</sup> soldiers at T'Yaw Loo place, [close to Yee Ghaw Loh Der village, due to SAC activities in the area]. After the incident, Saw U---'s brother wrapped his injury [to prevent] bleeding. Then, the victim's brother carried him back to R--- village. It took them about an hour to walk back to the village.

After their return, villagers carried the victim in a hammock on foot [for half an hour] to A--- clinic, located in Naw Yoh Hta village tract, Lu Thaw Township for treatment. The victim arrived at the clinic at about 4:00 pm. On the morning of June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022, the doctors at the hospital amputated his right leg below his knee. Due to inadequate medical supplies and medicine at

<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 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.

the clinic, the victim was required to buy medicine himself, which cost over 2,000 baht [USD 60.77].<sup>5</sup> During the operation, the victim needed three to four bags of blood transfusion. His friends donated the blood that was needed for the operation and provided some financial support. At the hospital, the healthcare workers were only able to remove the landmine fragments stuck in his left leg later [due to insufficient medical supplies]. Saw U--- stayed at the hospital for about five months, from June 21<sup>st</sup> to November 2022. During this time, his brother, E---, looked after him. [He was provided a prosthetic leg to help him walk.] [As of December 2022], he is displaced in the forest along with other villagers due to ongoing fighting between armed groups, and did not fully recover yet.

In terms of medical expenses, his relatives who resettled in a foreign country provided him with some financial support. The victim also received 1,000 baht [USD 30.39] from his village tract, but the financial support was not enough to cover his medical expenses. No organisations provided him with any financial support yet.

Saw U--- is now having difficulty to travel and work as he lost one of his legs. In addition, he is living in a mountainous area and depends on his hill farmland to secure his livelihood. As the youngest child in the family, he has to take care of his parents. However, the victim's parents now have to take care of him after the incident, causing him to burden his parents financially. The victim said it is very distressing to lose one of his legs as a young man.

The SAC Htaw Muh Pleh Meh army camp has been based near R--- village for many years [before the victim was even born]. The villagers living there expressed their desire for the SAC soldiers to retreat from their area. However, SAC soldiers have increased their military activities such as patrolling, planting landmines, and even conducted shelling into villagers' farmlands. Villagers are afraid of working on their farmlands. Therefore, villagers have had to borrow rice from other villagers as they do not have enough food to secure their survival throughout the year.

The victim and other villagers living in the village have never attended Mine Risk Awareness Training. The local leaders [village heads and Karen National Union (KNU)<sup>6</sup> leaders] warned villagers about the landmine contamination in the area, but they do not know exactly where SAC landmines are planted. Therefore, villagers have to travel and work in fear of landmine explosions.

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

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

The victim permitted KHRG to use the information he provided.

<sup>5</sup> All conversion estimates for baht in this report are based on the January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023 official market rate of 1 baht to USD 0.0304 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/thb-to-usd-rate>).

<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 Burma 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.



This photo was taken on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022. It shows the landmine victim, Saw U---, recovering at A--- clinic. He now faces significant livelihood difficulties. [Photo: KHRG]

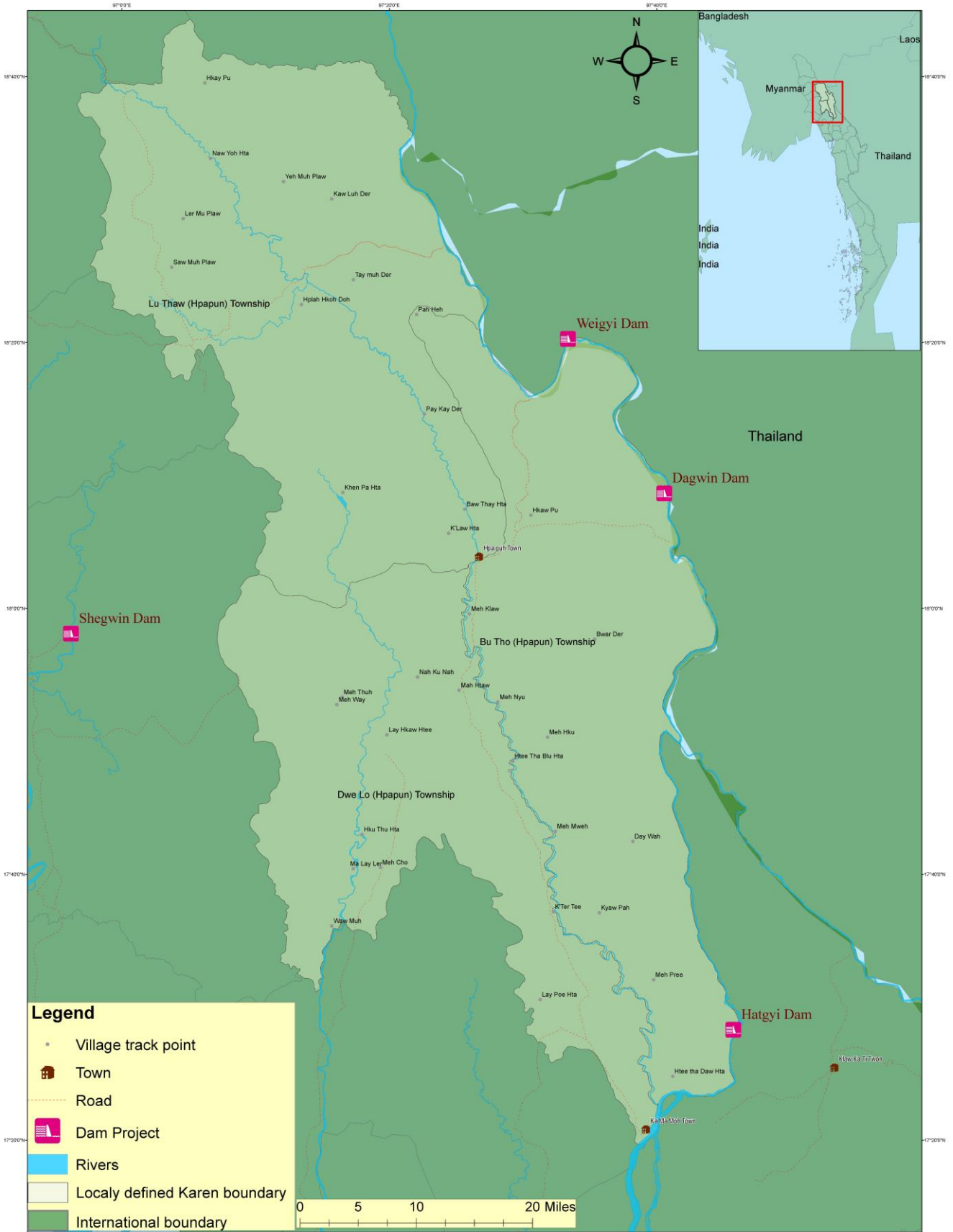
Further background reading on the security and human rights situation in Mu Traw District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: Two villagers were seriously injured in landmine explosions in Lu Thaw Township, April and May 2022”](#), January 2023.
- [“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.

### 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).

# Mutraw (Hpapun) District



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