



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

March 31st 2023 / KHRG # 22-335-S1

Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: Arbitrary arrest and detention, looting and property damage, indiscriminate shelling, SAC militarisation, movement restrictions, and livelihood challenges, June to September 2022

This Situation Update describes events that occurred in Ler Doh Soh, Ler Mu Lah and K'ser Doh townships, Mergui-Tavoy District during the period between June and September 2022, including looting, property damage, restriction of movement, arbitrary arrest and torture, killing, indiscriminate shelling, skirmishes, verbal threats against villagers, and villagers' livelihood situation. Throughout the reporting period, villagers have faced insecurity as a result of State Administration Council (SAC) activity. During the reporting period, the SAC indiscriminately fired mortar shells and fighting took place between the SAC and the People's Defence Force (PDF), Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Dawei East Forest People's Defence Force (EDF). Villagers were arbitrarily arrested, including three villagers from A--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, Dawei Town, Ler Doh Soh Township, who were arrested, detained and tortured. Two villagers from H--- place, Htee Ler Klay area were charged with violating a counter-terrorism law. Other villagers were arrested and used as human shields. Villagers' houses were looted and the SAC implemented the four cuts strategy; taking villagers food supplies away as part of their counter-insurgency strategy.¹

Arbitrary arrest and detention following SAC activities

On June 13th 2022, State Administration Council (SAC)² Infantry Battalion (IB)³ #401 conducted a military operation in A--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, Dawei Town, Ler Doh Soh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District [to clear the road going through the village for military purposes].

¹ The present document is based on information received from June to September 2022. It was provided by a community member in Mergui-Tavoy 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 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.

³ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are understrength 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 an unknown date in June 2022], SAC troops [of an unknown battalion], who were on duty at a checkpoint in Saw Pyar village, Htee Ler Klay area, also went to conduct a military operation [to clear the road] in A--- village. They had to pass over Mway Hauk mountain between Saw Pyar village and A--- village. When they entered into A--- village at 9:30 am, they indiscriminately fired small and big guns [in order to clear the area]. They [SAC soldiers] took the weapons they had left in the monastery in A--- village before leaving the village. [KHRG was unable to verify when the soldiers initially left the weapons in the monastery.] Some villagers fled as they feared indiscriminate shelling and arrests by SAC soldiers. They returned to their village on July 3rd 2022.

Again, on July 5th 2022, an unidentified SAC troop that was on duty at the checkpoint in Saw Pyar village, went to A--- village and indiscriminately fired 15 rounds of mortar shells into the village. A monastery was damaged by the shelling, but no villagers were hit as they were able to flee from their village [in time].

On the same day [on July 5th 2022], they [an unknown SAC troop] arrested U⁴ B--- (aged 25), Maung⁵ C--- (aged 25) and Maung D--- (aged 17) from A--- village. They were arrested when they returned to A--- village after working on their hill plantation. They were taken to Myiet Town, Ler Mu Lah Township, where they were kept in an SAC army camp for two months. This information was provided by Maung C---'s older brother. Then [in the first week of September 2022], the SAC brought those three arrested villagers to the detention centre in the army camp of IB #401, based in Tha Pyay Chaung village, Dawei Town. In the detention centre, SAC soldiers tortured those three arrested villagers [during their interrogation]. SAC soldiers interrogated the villagers while they [the soldiers] were under the influence of alcohol. During the interrogation, they kicked the villagers and hit them with their guns. [Sometimes,] they woke the villagers up at 12:30 am to interrogate and torture them. They questioned the villagers about whether they had communication with the People's Defence Force (PDF)⁶ or not. Those three detained villagers were tortured as they did not know anything about what the SAC soldiers asked them. The SAC soldiers fed the villagers rice as though it was dog food. The villagers were detained in the detention centre [in IB #401 army camp] for a month. After a month of detention, the villagers were sent to a police station in Dawei Town [in the first week of October 2022]. [Family members of the arrested villagers] had to bribe SAC police if they wanted to send things [food and other items] to the arrested villagers or to visit them. The arrested villagers faced serious health problems as a result of the suffering [they endured] from torture. [KHRG did not receive any further updates regarding their situation.]

On July 5th 2022, SAC Infantry Battalion (IB) #401, #402, #406, #407 and #408, based in Dawei Town, also arbitrarily arrested two villagers from E--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, three villagers from F--- village, Htee Ler Klay area and one villager from G--- village, Htee Ler Klay area. The SAC arrested them without providing a reason. Those arrested villagers were also severely tortured, with the SAC kicking and punching those villagers and hitting them with their guns. Their whereabouts remain unknown [as of March 2023].

On July 8th 2022, SAC soldiers [unknown battalion number] arrested two villagers in H--- place located in G--- village [between Mittar Myo Town and Dawei Town], Htee Ler Klay area. These

⁴ U is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

⁵ Maung is a Burmese male honorific title used before a person's name.

⁶ The People's Defence Force (PDF) is an armed resistance established independently as local civilian militias operating across the country. Following the February 1st 2021 military coup and the ongoing brutal violence enacted by the junta, the majority of these groups began working with the National Unity Government (NUG), a body claiming to be the legitimate government of Myanmar, which then formalized the PDF on May 5th 2021 as a precursor to a federal army.

two villagers, originally from K--- village, K'Mu Htway village tract⁷, Ler Doh Soh Township, were arrested when they were travelling by car to G--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh So Township, after having bought food [rice and snacks] and household items [water pipes and water tanks] in Dawei Town. The driver was Saw⁸ I---, 21 years old, and the passenger was Saw J---, aged 17 years. The SAC soldiers kept the arrested villagers' car in the SAC police station in Mittar Myo [Way Ta Eh] Town and brought them to Dawei Town. Their family members were not allowed to communicate or meet with them. Saw J--- is just a teenager. They [their families] could not give food to the victims directly but had to give it to the SAC instead. The SAC charged these two villagers with [an unknown section of] the counter-terrorism law. [Before the incident,] Saw I--- worked as a plantation worker to earn a living. [According to an update received from a local villager on November 7th 2022, Saw I--- and Saw J--- were sentenced to 20 years in jail in the second week of August 2022. They were also charged with section 505(a) of the Burmese penal code⁹, which outlaws making a statement or rumour with intent to cause any army officer or soldier to mutiny or disregard their duty. As of November 2022, the villagers have not faced a trial for this charge yet.]

On September 13th 2022, the SAC [unknown battalion number], which was sheltering in B'Wa Pin monastery [unknown location], arrested 130 villagers and violence erupted on in B'Wa Pin village, Ler Doh Soh Township. Villagers were violently punched, kicked, and hit with guns [by SAC soldiers]. Villagers' property, such as their motorcycles, gold, money and food, was looted and villagers were bullied unfairly [by SAC soldiers]. Phones were also taken without being returned. [Some of the arrested villagers were also reportedly used as human shields.] On September 15th 2022, in the morning, the villagers who were being used as human shields were released.

In September [exact date unknown], about 50 SAC soldiers [unknown battalion number] based in B'Wa Pin village's monastery travelled by truck and arrested two villagers in O--- village, Ler Doh Soh Township. They also arrested villagers in F--- and G--- villages, Ler Doh Soh Township. According to a local villager, the SAC arrested more than 100 villagers in total [in those villages]. Villagers reported that the SAC were potentially going to use the arrested villagers as human shields. A villager also reported that the SAC threatened to burn villagers' houses down. [It is unknown what happened to the arrested villagers.]

SAC looting and property damage

In the morning of July 6th 2022, SAC IB #401, #402, #406, #407 and #408, based in Dawei Town, entered houses in G--- village, Dhar Thway Kyouk (Htee Ler Klay) village tract, Ler Doh Soh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. Then, they searched villagers' houses, scattering their property all over and destroying rice and other food items. Then, they looted money, alcohol and food owned by villagers. They fired at villagers' houses, causing damage to the houses [in order to threaten them], and destroyed windows, doors, clothes, and other household items in the village. They also confiscated two motorbikes [and one refrigerator] owned by villagers.

In addition, on July 6th 2022 in the late afternoon, the SAC soldiers confiscated things from a local food shop (La Thar Yar family's rice shop) in F--- village, Dhar Thway Kyouk (Htee Ler Klay) village tract, Ler Doh Soh Township. G--- and F--- villages are very close.

⁷ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

⁸ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

⁹ The Burmese Penal Code is a colonial era penal code which was first formulated in 1861. There have been several amendments to the code, one in 1974, and again in 2015. Yet most amendments relate to updating terminology and increasing the amount of fines in line with inflation. The Burmese Penal Code is available here, [Burmese Penal Code](#). For further information see "[Bill seeks to modernize parts of Burma's penal code.](#)"

SAC shelling and military activities

The following describes a series of events that happened in Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, throughout August 2022.

After armed clashes that happened in July 2022 [between unidentified armed actors], an SAC battalion from Th'Pyay Chaung village, Dawei-Myeik Town, Mergui-Tavoy District set up four checkpoints in Htee Ler Klay area. In July 2022 [specific date unknown], they set up one checkpoint in P'Keri village, one in Shi Mine village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, one in Th'Pyar village and one in Bhyaw Daw Wa village to interrogate travelling villagers. On August 1st 2022, SAC soldiers questioned and checked people who travelled through their checkpoints. On August 2nd 2022, the soldiers threatened the local community, saying that they were going to launch an attack in Htee Ler Klay area. On August 3rd 2022, the SAC soldiers verbally threatened young people who travelled through their checkpoints. On August 4th 2022, the SAC soldiers threatened villagers, saying that they would open fire everywhere [in the area]. On August 5th 2022 at 4:30 pm, SAC soldiers were drunk and opened fire [in the air]. Villagers who travelled to work on their plantations got tired of these [threats].

After the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)¹⁰ and PDF entered into P'Ka Ree village, SAC soldiers fired mortar shells into E--- village, Htee Ler Klay area [specific date unknown, but probably before August 6th 2022]. A house and two cars were damaged in the village.

On August 6th 2022, SAC and Border Guard Force (BGF)¹¹ soldiers from the checkpoint in Shi Mine village arrested a woman while she was traveling to Dawei Town and threatened to rape her [KHRG could not identify which village she was from]. A villager from Shi Mine village went to apologize to the SAC and BGF soldiers to get them to release her. She was released shortly afterwards.

On August 7th 2022, the SAC sent [an unknown number of] soldiers to Shi Mine village. On August 8th 2022, SAC soldiers cursed at and questioned villagers when they patrolled the area beside the road near Shi Mine village. They mainly targeted young people and men.

On August 9th 2022, the SAC began to conduct military operations in the area [Htee Ler Klay area]. According to villagers from L--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, about 30 SAC soldiers travelled to A--- village, Htee Ler Klay area to conduct a military operation. Later the same day, around midnight, SAC soldiers fired three rounds of mortar shells [in an unknown area]. Villagers did not know where the shells landed and exploded, so they did not feel secure when they slept during the night. On August 10th 2022 at around 9 am, villagers heard gunfire sounds.

On August 10th 2022, in the morning, SAC soldiers killed Maung Aung Chit, a villager from Shi Mine village, Htee Ler Klay area. Villagers did not know where SAC soldiers buried the villager but, according to villagers who witnessed the incident, they tortured the victim before fatally shooting him.

On August 11th 2022, at around 8:30 pm, SAC soldiers fired guns, causing villagers from Htee Ler Klay village, Htee Ler Klay area, to flee from their village during the night. The next morning, villagers returned to their village. On August 13th 2022, SAC soldiers [indiscriminately] fired

¹⁰ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

¹¹ Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw.

mortar shells in the village's vicinity as they heard that PDF soldiers were travelling to the village. On August 14th 2022, the PDF destroyed SAC-owned [unidentified] products in Dawei Htee Khee area. Therefore, the SAC started to [indiscriminately] fire mortar shells [into the area]. Villagers heard the sound of exploding mortar shells at 9:30 pm. On August 15th 2022, over 100 SAC soldiers [unknown battalion number] launched a military operation in Dawei Htee Khee area. Due to these activities, local villagers fled from their villages [to an unknown location]. That same evening, at 7:30 pm, SAC soldiers began to fire mortar shells. On August 16th 2022, in the afternoon, an unknown SAC battalion based in Tha Pyay Chaung village fired one mortar shell into Htee Ler Klay area. At 6 pm, PDF soldiers travelled through Htee Ler Klay area and drove to Boke Pyin area by car, for reasons unknown by local villagers.

According to a local villager, on August 17th 2022, at 9 am, an unknown SAC battalion based in Tha Pya Chaung village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, fired two mortar shells into M--- village, Htee Ler Klay area. At 12 pm [on the same day], the PDF attacked SAC soldiers [unknown battalion number] from P'Ka Ree police station in P'Ka Ree village, Htee Ler Klay area. The fighting lasted about 30 minutes. Villagers were unaware of the PDF soldiers' presence. A moment after the fighting, unknown SAC troops based in Tha Pyay Chaung village fired mortar shells around N--- village, Htee Ler Klay area.

On August 18th 2022, an SAC troop [temporarily based in N--- village] left the village without previously informing villagers. According to a villager from N--- village, in the evening, soldiers went to buy alcohol in the village and brought guns with them. Every day, they [SAC soldiers wearing plain clothes] patrolled the village.

On August 19th 2022, fighting happened between the PDF and SAC [unknown battalion number] in Yay Wine village, Htee Ler Klay area. Due to the fighting, Yay Wine villagers fled from their village [to an unknown area]. At 9 pm, SAC troops [unknown battalion number] indiscriminately fired two rounds of mortar shells. [It remains unknown where they landed.]

On August 20th 2022, PDF and SAC activities increased in the area. At 9 pm, the PDF and KNLA [unknown battalion number] attacked the P'Ka Ree SAC police station in Htee Ler Klay area. The fighting lasted two hours. After the fighting, an unknown SAC troop based in Tha Pyay Chaung village indiscriminately fired two rounds of mortar shells in Htee Ler Klay area.

On August 21st 2022, SAC troops conducted a military operation in Yay Wine village, Htee Ler Klay area. According to a villager from N--- village, the SAC that launched the military operation in Yay Wine village was IB #401, a battalion of more than 40 soldiers. At 7:30 pm, fighting took place between SAC IB #401 and the local PDF in Yay Wine village. Some villagers fled to the monastery nearby while others fled to their relatives' houses. On August 22nd 2022, about 500 villagers from Klon Htar village, Wah Kone village tract, Ler Doh Soh Township, fled from their village to the forest [due to the armed clashes]. On August 23rd 2022, the situation calmed down.

On August 24th 2022, SAC soldiers from the checkpoint in P'Ka Ree village forced a villager to pay 10,000 kyats [USD 4.76]¹² when he was travelling to K'Pout area, K'Pout village tract, Ler Mu Lah Township. The name of the villager is Z---. He came to K'Pout area to attend the funeral of his older brother.

On August 25th 2022 at 11:00 pm, the SAC flew a helicopter to conduct a military reconnaissance operation in A'Say Taw area. On August 26th 2022, SAC troops [of an unknown battalion] left Dawei Town and travelled to P'Kari village by military trucks. They stayed overnight in P'Ka Ree village. The next morning, they left P'Ka Ree village and they travelled to

¹² All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the March 31st 2022 mid-market rate of 1000 kyats to USD 0.48 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate>).

Thin Kan village, Ler Doh Soh Township. Then, fighting happened in Thin Kan village between the SAC and PDF. As a result, villagers fled from their village to the forest. It was raining in the forest.

On August 27th 2022, the situation was calm in Htee Ler Klay area until 7:30 pm, when the SAC fired [an unknown number of] mortar shells into Yay Wine village, [Htee Ler Klay area]. Some houses were damaged due to the shelling. At 9:30 pm, the SAC flew a helicopter again to conduct military reconnaissance in A'Say Taw area.

On August 28th 2022, the situation improved as the SAC did not [carry out military activities]. Villagers from Htee Ler Klay area reported that they heard the sound of mortar shells on August 29th 2022.

In August 2022 [unknown precise date], SAC soldiers shot dead a villager in Kay Indri Yar Zar village, Dawei Khee area. Villagers reported that SAC soldiers were patrolling the area near P'Ka Ree village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, on August 30th 2022. That same evening, the SAC launched a military operation in Ba Wa Pin Nar village, Ler Doh Soh Township. On August 31st 2022 at 4:00 pm, Dawei East Forest People's Defence Force (EDF), PDF and KNLA launched a group attack [in an unknown location in Ler Doh Soh Township] against the SAC [unknown battalion number] by using a trip-wire bomb. At 5:00 pm, they attacked the SAC again using another trip-wire bomb.

SAC activities and militarisation

On July 9th 2022, SAC IB #406, #407, #408 and #402, based in Dawei Town, travelled to Htee Khee area. According to villagers, they fired guns as they wanted [in order to threaten villagers] when they travelled in the area.

On August 1st 2022, SAC troops [unknown battalion number] based in Dawei Town set up checkpoints in the eastern area of Way Ta Eh area, K'Ser Doh Township. On August 2nd 2022, they [the SAC] forced villagers from Htee Ler Klay area to leave their area. On August 3rd 2022, the SAC increased their activity by questioning and checking villagers who travelled. They [SAC] mainly targeted young people when they questioned villagers. On August 4th 2022, the movement of villagers decreased. On August 5th 2022, SAC soldiers from Th'Pyay Chaung village fired mortar shells around the village. SAC soldiers, based in P'Ka Ree police station, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, fired mortar shells into E--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. Villagers did not know which battalion they [the SAC soldiers] were from. SAC soldiers fired four rounds of mortar shells into E--- village. One of the mortar shells hit a house in the village. Currently, villagers from E--- village have fled from their village [KHRG does not know where they displaced to]. SAC soldiers fired mortar shells into E--- village because they heard that PDF members were staying in the village.

On August 14th 2022, SAC soldiers [unknown battalion number], who were dwelling P'Ka Ree village, Ler Doh Soh Township, travelled to pick up soldiers who returned from B'Wa Pin village. In the evening, SAC soldiers were shooting with guns and artillery weapons [near] G--- village, Htee Ler Klay area, even though the PDF and KNLA did not attack the SAC. However, when they [the same SAC soldiers] reached Y--- village, Ler Doh Soh Township, they fired more artillery weapons [around the village]. There was one unexploded (60 mm) mortar shell that remained in E--- village, according to displaced villager from N--- village.

On August 16th 2022, in the morning, KNLA, PDF, EDF, Dawei Defence Team (DDT), Dawei Guerrilla Revolutionary Force (DGRF), and other unknown armed groups [against the SAC] were having a meeting in the middle of A--- village, Ler Doh Soh Township. After the meeting, [the combined] armed groups carried out a military offensive [against the SAC]. Thus, villagers of A--- village were worried that the SAC would use armed force [in response to the clash]. An

SAC security aircraft also flew over Ler Doh Soh Township more than three times [that day]. At 3 pm, the SAC shelled two artillery weapons in X--- village, Ler Doh Soh Township, said a villager who lives near Yay Wine village.

Skirmishes and restrictions on movement

On July 6th 2022, fighting happened between Dawei Defence Team [also known as the PDF] and an unknown SAC troop in Meh Chaung village, Htee Ler Klay area. In retaliation, the SAC troop forced villagers in the area to leave their villages. Those villages are Tha Pyar, Taung Poke, K'Than and Meh Chaung village in Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township. However, villagers did not leave their villages. Then, the SAC set up one checkpoint in Shi Mine area (Meh Chaung village) and one checkpoint in Tha Pyar village. They also set up one checkpoint in P'Ka Ree village, Htee Ler Klay area. The SAC questioned villagers who travelled through those checkpoints and extorted money from them. They restricted villagers' movements. They set up many checkpoints in order to control and monitor the situation in the villages.

On September 1st 2022, an SAC troop from an unknown Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)¹³ based in Dawei Town went to conduct a military operation in Htee Ler Klay area, Ler Doh Soh Township. As a result, fighting broke out between the SAC and PDF/KNLA in E--- village, located in Htee Ler Klay area. Approximately 30 minutes after the fighting, the SAC soldiers indiscriminately fired [an unknown number of] mortar shells [in Htee Ler Klay area]. At 11:30 am, fighting also happened in Th'Yet Ngote village, Ler Doh Soh Township [between unidentified armed actors]. Likewise, at 12:00 pm, fighting happened on Peh Ma Tat mountain near F--- village, Ler Doh Soh Township. At 3:00 pm, the PDF and KNLA attacked an SAC troop in G--- village, Htee Ler Klay area.

On September 2nd 2022, fighting took place between the PDF/KNLA and SAC [unknown battalion numbers] throughout the day. On September 3rd 2022 at 8:00 am, fighting [between PDF/KNLA and SAC] happened twice, [including one clash] at 4:00 pm. Due to the fighting, local villagers fled to monasteries located in E--- village and Ya Mu Zu village. Some villagers in Ler Doh Soh Township fled to forests. Those displaced people are local villagers including elderly people, pregnant women and disabled people. They need medical and other essential support. On September 6th 2022, SAC soldiers set up a temporary army camp in Ba Wa Pin Chaung Pyar (Khee Tu Khee) village, [unknown village tract], K'Ser Doh Township.

SAC four cuts strategy

On September 1st 2022, the SAC [unknown battalion number] started to use the four cuts strategy¹⁴ in villages in A'Say Taw area, Ler Doh Soh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. According to a local villager, in the first week of September 2022, the SAC ordered that people could not transport more than five sacks of rice per car. They confiscated things from cars when their owners left them unattended. A villager reported that owners had to go and get their things [that had been confiscated] after they were told to.

¹³ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. Most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are understrength 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.

¹⁴ In Burma/Myanmar, the scorched earth policy of '*pyat lay pyat*', literally 'cut the four cuts', was a counter-insurgency strategy employed by the Tatmadaw as early as the 1950s, and officially adopted in the mid-1960s, aiming to destroy links between insurgents and sources of funding, supplies, intelligence, and recruits from local villages. See Martin Smith. *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999 pp. 258-262.

According to a local fish seller from A'Say Taw area, Ler Doh Soh Township, on September 9th 2022, SAC soldiers demanded fish and meat from [another] fish seller without paying money.

On September 10th 2022, a villager from Ler Doh Soh Township [exact location unknown] transported 10 sacks of rice in his car. He said that he transported 10 sacks of rice with a permission letter from [SAC] Byaw Taw Wa checkpoint in Ler Doh Soh Township. When he arrived at P'Ka Ree checkpoint, SAC soldiers confiscated nine sacks of his rice, so was only able to keep only one sack of rice. On September 12th 2022, SAC soldiers [unknown battalion number] said to villagers from A'Say Taw area, Ler Doh Soh Township, that they could not transport rice anymore. Therefore, people who transported rice did not travel through SAC checkpoints any longer. A local villager cautioned that people would die of hunger if they could not transport rice.

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

- ["Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: Military activity, shelling and displacement, May to June 2022"](#), January 2023.
- ["Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: SAC military activities and travel restrictions, livelihood challenges, education, an armed clash, displacement and indiscriminate shelling by the SAC, April to May 2022"](#), December 2022.
- ["Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: Fighting and displacement, property damage, deaths caused by landmine explosion, travel restrictions, and the COVID-19 situation, December 2021 to February 2022"](#), June 2022.
- ["Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: SAC militia shoots teenage villager, CDM and protester protection, SAC troop movement, arbitrary taxation and livelihood, healthcare and education challenges, March 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.

Mergui-Tavoy (Tanintharyi) District

