



## Incident Report

March 10<sup>th</sup> 2023 / KHRG # 22-396-I1

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

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in May 2022. On May 28<sup>th</sup> 2022, Saw W---, a 58-year-old man who lives in R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District stepped on a landmine planted by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers, seriously injuring his legs. Saw W--- lost his left leg back in 2011, making this the second time he was seriously injured by a landmine explosion. In the most recent incident, he was injured on the same leg [that had been amputated] and sustained slight injuries on his other leg and his arms. He is now facing difficulties in earning a livelihood. Because of this, he expressed his need of support from organisations [that specifically provide aid to landmine victims].<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Landmine explosion
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	May 28 <sup>th</sup> 2022
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	H--- place located in R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract <sup>2</sup> , Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District

Victim Information	
<b>Name</b>	Saw <sup>3</sup> W---
<b>Age</b>	58 years old
<b>Sex</b>	Male
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Karen
<b>Family</b>	Married
<b>Occupation</b>	Hill farmer

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in October 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>Religion</b>	Animist
<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 Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #37	Htaw Muh Pleh Meh army camp located in Ler Muh Plaw village	Unknown

## **Part 2 – Information Quality**

<b>1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.</b>
On September 7 <sup>th</sup> 2022, a KHRG researcher conducted an interview with the victim, Saw W---.

<b>2. Explain how the source verified this information.</b>
The victim provided the information on the incident.

## **Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident**

<p><b>Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) <u>when</u> the incident happened, 2) <u>where</u> it happened, 3) <u>what</u> happened, 4) <u>how</u> it happened, 5) <u>who</u> was involved, and 6) <u>why</u> 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.</b></p>
<p>On May 28<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 6:00 am, Saw W---, a 58-year-old villager from R---village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District, stepped on a landmine at H--- place located in R--- village, Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township. On that morning, Saw W--- was heading to his hill farmlands on a motorcycle road commonly used by villagers to work on their farmlands. The landmine was planted by State Administration Council (SAC)<sup>4</sup> soldiers, as villagers previously saw SAC soldiers from the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)<sup>5</sup> #37 plant landmines when they were travelling on that road.</p> <p>Back in 2011, when the victim was 47 years of age, he stepped on a landmine and severely injured his left leg. Since then, he was relying on his prosthetic leg to support him walking. On</p>

<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.

<sup>5</sup> A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, 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.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2022, when he stepped on a landmine again, he sustained injuries on [both] legs and arms. His prosthetic leg was also damaged. He called for help on his walkie talkie and R--- villagers came to help him. On May 29<sup>th</sup> 2022, Saw W--- was sent to O--- clinic [located in Ler Muh Plaw village tract] by [local] villagers for his treatment and recovery. The victim [spent about six months in the clinic but] has not fully recovered yet. [In December 2022] he was displaced along with other villagers in the forest [due to other shelling, air strike and fighting incidents in the area].

After the incident, it was really difficult for him to earn a livelihood because he was not able to work as he had been able to before. However, he said he was going to live his life to the best in difficulty [make the most out of his challenging circumstances]. The victim cannot work to secure his livelihood anymore due to his injuries and displacement caused by the shelling and air strikes in his area. Now that he has lost [one of] his legs and [sustained slight injuries to his right leg and his] arms, he cannot work as other villagers do. It became difficult for him to secure his future. As the victim of the incident expressed, he needs encouragement and support in order survive. He also needs support to secure basic supplies such as salt, glutamate powder [and other basic necessities] because he struggles to find a job to earn an income to support his family. [He received some financial support from his family and relatives following the incident, but it has been insufficient].

Villagers living in R--- village have never attended Mine Risk Awareness Training. It is hard for the villagers to determine the risk of landmine contamination in their village's area. As of [February 2023], no organisation has provided Saw W--- with a new prosthetic leg [as his previous prosthetic leg was damaged in the May 2022 landmine explosion]. He remains in need of financial support to cover his travel and medical expenses to treat his injuries as well as for his family's livelihood. He expressed the desire for the planting of landmines to decrease in the area where he resides.

#### **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 of the landmine incident gave KHRG permission to use the provided information.



This photo was taken on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2022. It shows Saw W--- recovering at O--- clinic from the injuries he sustained from a landmine explosion. [Photo: KHRG]

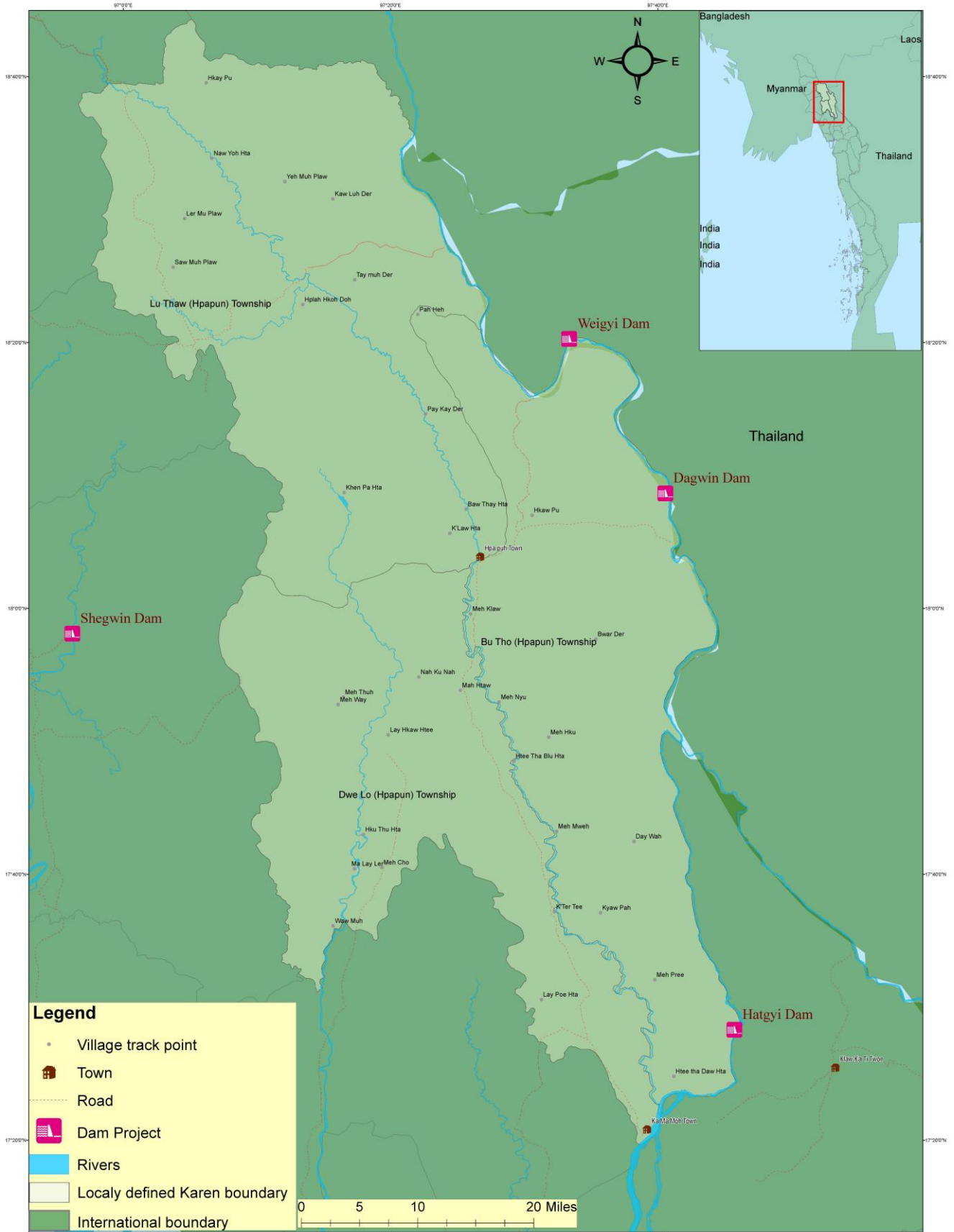
Further background reading on the security and human rights situation in Mu Traw District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager from Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township was seriously injured by a landmine explosion, June 2022”](#), February 2023.
- [“Mu Traw District Short Update: Air strikes and displacement, shelling, food shortages and health care, April to May 2022”](#), February 2023.
- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager from Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township was seriously injured by a landmine explosion while undertaking village security, September 2022”](#), February 2023.
- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: Two villagers were seriously injured in landmine explosions in Lu Thaw Township, April and May 2022”](#), January 2023.

### 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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