



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

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Taw Oo District Short Update: One villager was killed and three villagers injured in SAC air strikes in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, November 2022

This Short Update describes events that occurred in Daw Hpa Hkoh (Thandaunggyi) Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District in November 2022. On the morning of November 26th 2022, local People's Defence Force (PDF) attacked a State Administration Council (SAC) army camp in Than Moe Taung village, Than Moe Taung village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. About two hours after the fighting, two SAC fighter jets launched air strikes in the fighting place, damaging villagers' property including houses and plantations. One villager died and three villagers were injured by the air strikes and gunfire. After the air strikes, SAC troops from four army camps indiscriminately fired mortar shells into the area. As a result, villagers from many villages, including Than Moe Taung village, fled their villages for safety.¹

On November 26th 2022 at around 6:30 am, local People's Defence Force (PDF)² attacked a State Administration Council (SAC)³ frontline army camp called Than Moe Taung army camp, located in Than Moe Taung village, Than Moe Taung village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. SAC Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)⁴ #605 is based in this army camp. Some villagers' houses are located close to this army camp. [One villager was injured by the gunfire].

At around 9:00 am, about two hours after the fighting [on the same day], two SAC fighter jets from Southern Command Headquarters flew to Than Moe Taung village in order to support LIB

¹ The present document is based on information received in November 2022. It was provided by a community member in Taw Oo 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 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 Burma/Myanmar, which then formalized the PDF on May 5th 2021 as a precursor to a federal army.

³ 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.

⁴ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. 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.

#605 as reinforcements. They [SAC fighter jets] dropped bombs [in the fighting area] and used machine guns, firing on the ground. Some of the bombs landed on villagers' houses [and plantations]. Some of the bombs that landed in the village did not explode. Due to the air strikes, more than 30 houses in Than Moe Taung village were damaged. Three villagers were injured and one villager died as a result of the air strikes.

Naw⁵ Marry Mya, a female villager of about 50 years of age from Than Moe Taung village, was hit below her left breast [by a bullet shot by an aircraft's machine gun] during the air strikes. The bullet went through her back. She died on the spot. She has three children. Naw Marry Mya's sister, a 60-year-old female villager named Naw A---, also sustained a graze gunshot wound to her head, which she survived. She was sent to Toungoo Hospital [in Toungoo Town, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District] for medical treatment. Naw A--- is single.

One of the bombs [from a fighter jet] exploded in and damaged the kitchen of Saw⁶ B---, a 60-year-old villager and father of three. The bomb shrapnel hit his left leg and his chest. He was sent to Toungoo Hospital to receive medical treatment, where his left leg was amputated.

Saw C---, a 60-year-old male villager, suffered a graze gunshot wound to his left cheek [fired during the clash between the PDF and SAC]. He has a daughter. Saw D---, another male villager about 30 years old, also sustained a graze gunshot wound to his head [shot by a fighter jet during the air strike]. He has four children. Both victims were sent to a clinic in Than Moe Taung village to receive medical treatment. This clinic is run by nuns from a local Roman Catholic Church.

After the air strikes [on November 26th 2022], SAC troops in army camps located near Leik Tho Town, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, namely Than Moe Taung army camp, Z'Let army camp, A'lel Chaung A'tet Ywar army camp, located in Than Moe Taung village, Than Moe Taung village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, and Mine Lon Aout Ywar army camp, located in Mine Lon village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, indiscriminately fired mortar shells in the area near Than Moe Taung village. LIB #603 is based in Z'Let army camp. SAC troops [from Z'Let army camp, A'lel Chaung A'tet Ywar army camp and Mine Lon Aout Ywar army camp] are located relatively far from the fighting place. They fired mortar shells in order to support the troops in Than Moe Taung army camp. Due to the indiscriminate shelling, local villagers in the area fled their villages for their security. Local villagers fled to their relatives' houses in other villages [KHRG was unable to find out which villages exactly] in order to seek refuge.

As villagers fled for their lives, they could not bury Naw Marry Mya [who passed away in the air strike] and they left her body in Than Moe Taung village. On November 27th 2022, a few villagers and some relatives [of Naw Marry Mya] were able to bury her body in a cemetery [in an unknown location]. As of November 30th 2022, displaced villagers from Than Moe Taung village and other villages were not able to return home.

After the fighting [on November 26th 2022], SAC troops patrolled in Than Moe Taung village and fired guns in the air. They also arrested male villagers that they came across for questioning and interrogating [on whether they have connections with the PDF]. Due to these actions, local villagers remain afraid to return to their homes.

⁵ Naw is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

⁶ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.



These photos were taken in November 2022 in Than Moe Taung village, Than Moe Taung village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. The two upper photos show bombs that SAC fighter jets dropped in the village. The bottom left photo shows villagers' plantations that were damaged by the air strike. The bottom right photo shows a roof of one villager's house damaged by the air strike. [Photos: KHRG]

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

- [“Taw Oo District Situation Update: Deliberate shooting of two villagers, military activity, including live-fire exercises into villages, fighting, shelling and displacement in Daw Hpa Hkoh and Htaw Ta Htoo townships, February to October 2022”](#), January 2023.
- [“Taw Oo District Incident Report: A villager died after he was shot by SAC troops in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, December 2022”](#), January 2023.
- [“Taw Oo District Short Update: Skirmishes, injuries due to SAC shelling and gunfire, threats against villagers and restriction of freedom of movement in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, December 2022”](#), January 2023.
- [“Taw Oo District Situation Update: Fighting, displacement, killing, and villagers' livelihoods in Htaw Ta Htoo Township, April to July 2022”](#), December 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.khrg.org.

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District

