



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

March 31st 2022 / KHRG # 22-56-D1

Dooplaya District Short Update: A woman was killed by mortar shrapnel during indiscriminate shelling by armed groups, February 2022

This Short Update describes events occurring in Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District in February 2022. During an episode of indiscriminate shelling on February 18th 2022, a woman living in E--- village, Maung Ma Ywar Thit village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township was seriously injured on her right arm by shrapnel from an exploded mortar and died immediately from the injury. As sporadic fighting and indiscriminate shelling continued to take place, villagers living in E--- village and other nearby villages had to flee.¹

On February 17th 2022, a group of State Administration Council (SAC)² troops [unspecified battalion number] trespassed into E--- village, Maung Ma Ywar Thit village tract³, Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District, located in Karen National Union (KNU)⁴-controlled territory. As a result, at about 8:00 am that day, fighting broke out between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁵ and SAC troops⁶.

¹ The present document is based on information received in February 2022. It was provided by a community member in Dooplaya 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 A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

⁴ 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 Myanmar 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.

⁵ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

⁶ The term most commonly used in referring to Myanmar's armed forces is Tatmadaw. The term has been used by KHRG throughout its reporting history, and most consistently during periods of civilian government. Since the February 1st 2021 coup and the military's establishment of the State Administration Council (SAC) as the executive governing body of Myanmar, Myanmar's armed forces have also come to be referred to as the SAC military. KHRG uses the term SAC military in specific reference to the Myanmar military since the February 1st 2021 coup. During previous periods of military rule, KHRG also used the names adopted by the military government in referring to the Tatmadaw (i.e. SLORC [State Law and Order Restoration Council] between 1988 to 1997, and SPDC [State Peace and Development Council] from 1998 to 2011), because these were the terms commonly used by villagers in KHRG research areas.

On February 18th 2022 at about 9:00 am, fighting occurred again between armed groups [KNLA and SAC troops] in E--- village, Maung Ma Ywar Thit village tract. That morning, a villager named Naw⁷ Pu Tin, aged about 41 years old and living in E--- village, was hit by shrapnel from an exploded mortar during a period of indiscriminate shelling [it is unknown which armed group fired the mortar]. [The shrapnel of the mortar hit her underarm causing a large and deep wound around major arteries.] She died immediately.

That day, the shelling began after she and her husband, who had previously been displaced on February 3rd 2022, returned to their village [without their children], in order to feed their livestock. Her husband had tied up the cows near their house and had gone to the front of the house. She had fed the pigs and then went to the kitchen. A mortar then fell near her house and the exploded mortar shrapnel hit her, resulting in her death. Her husband was not injured. That same day, other displaced villagers from the same village also returned to their village when the situation seemed calmer, in order to feed their livestock and to get food.

All villagers from E---village, as well as O--- village, H--- village and T---village in Kaw T'Ree Township had to flee [as a result of the fighting]. Only a few older people stayed in the village during the fighting between the two armed groups. The victim's husband and five of their children (one of their children currently lives in Bangkok) are currently staying at a monastery in Kawkareik Town along with other displaced villagers. The villagers who have displaced to the monastery get food that is prepared by the senior monk.

The SAC soldiers are now staying in villagers' houses and the monastery in E---village, making it dangerous for the villagers to return. Every displaced person from the four villages wants to return to their home. However, many of these villagers do not dare to return yet due to the ongoing insecurity in their villages.



This photo was taken on February 18th 2022 in E---village, Maung Ma Ywar Thit village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District. The photo shows a woman named Naw Pu Tin who died immediately after being hit by exploded mortar shrapnel during indiscriminate shelling in her village. [Photo: Local villager]

Further background reading on the situation of fighting, shelling and displacement in Dooplaya District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Dooplaya District Situation Update: Indiscriminate shelling, fighting, forced labour, peace talks, and the COVID-19 pandemic, August to September 2021"](#), February 2022.

⁷ Naw is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: Skirmishes between armed groups and indiscriminate shelling result in displacement, casualties and destruction of villagers’ property \(October 2021\)”](#), December 2021.
- [“Dooplaya District Situation Update: SAC interrogation and arbitrary arrest, arbitrary killing, and displacement due to fighting in Mu Traw District, April to May 2021”](#), December 2021.

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.

Dooplaya (Southeastern Karen State) District



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