



Incident Report

October 27th 2023 / KHRG # 23-109-11

Kler Lwee Htoo District Incident Report: Villagers arrested as human shields, and shelling and looting by the SAC in Moo Township, March 2023.

This Incident Report describes events occurring in Moo (Mone) Township, Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District in March 2023. On March 20th 2023, State Administration Council (SAC) Light Infantry Division (LID) #77 and its combined troops arrested 22 villagers when they entered A--- village and B--- village, in Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township. The SAC soldiers arrested those villagers to use them as human shields to protect themselves from attack. Moreover, the SAC soldiers confiscated money, gold, and jewellery from the villagers. On the same day, the SAC also shelled mortars and dropped bombs with drones in the area. Due to the shelling, some villagers' houses were damaged and cows were injured by the shrapnel.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Use of human shields, shelling, and looting.
Date of Incident(s)	March 20 th 2023
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A--- village and B--- village, Nah Tha Kway village tract ² , Moo Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District.

Victim Information					
Name	Saw ³ C---	Naw ⁴ D---	Naw E---	Saw S---	Saw H---
Age	44	38	6	40	39
Sex	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male
Nationality	Karen	Karen	Karen	Karen	Karen

¹ The present document is based on information received in March 2023. It was provided by a community member in Kler Lwee Htoo 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 A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

³ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name

⁴ Naw is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name

Family	Married	Married	-	Single	Married
Occupation	Farmer	Vendor	-	Daily labour	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist	Christian	-	Animism	Buddhist
Position	Villager	Villager	-	Villager	Villager
Village	A--- village	A--- village	A--- village	A--- village	A--- village

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Unknown	Unknown	Light Infantry Division (LID) ⁵ #77 and its combined troops	Combined soldiers from many places	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

KHRG's researcher conducted interviews with three victims and a victim's family member.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

Three of those who provided this information were victims, and one was a victim's family member. [There were 22 arrested villagers in total but the KHRG researcher conducted interviews with only three victims and a victim's family].

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 March 20th 2023, at 4:30 am, the State Administration Council (SAC)⁶ soldiers based in Nah Tha Kway's bridge [located in] Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township, Kler Lwee Htoo

⁵ A Light Infantry Division (LID) of the Burma military is commanded by a brigadier general, and consists often light infantry battalions specially trained in counter-insurgency, jungle warfare, search and destroy operations against ethnic insurgents. They were first incorporated into the Burma military in 1966. LIDs are organised under three Tactical Operations Commands, commanded by a colonel, three battalions each and one reserve, one field artillery battalion, one armoured squadron and other support units. Each division is directly under the command of the Chief of Staff (Army).

⁶ 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

District, indiscriminately shelled eight [rounds of] mortars: three mortar shells landed at A--- village, and five mortar shells landed beside the village. At about 5:30 am, the SAC soldiers who were based in Yay Twin Kone, the entrance of A--- village, indiscriminately shelled 67 [rounds of] mortars in total. 17 mortar shells landed in B--- village, 10 mortar shells landed in F--- village, and 40 mortar shells landed in B--- village's farm. As a result, the villagers' houses were damaged and cows and buffalo were injured. Later that morning, at 10:50 am, the SAC drones dropped bombs three times at YI--- village, Moo special area, Moo Township. Six bombs were dropped in total. Due to the shelling and bombing, many villagers in Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township, were temporarily displaced to another place and returned to these villages after the shelling. The SAC soldiers also took 700,000 kyat [334 USD]⁷ from Naw G---, a villager from Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township and two phones, including her daughters' phone.

On March 20th 2023, about 50 to 70 soldiers from SAC Light Infantry Division (LID) #77 and its combined troops, entered A--- village and B--- village, Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township. When the SAC LID #77 and its combined troops entered B--- village and A--- village, they destroyed villagers' houses, broke villagers' locks, and mixed villagers' rice with chillies and turmeric so villagers could not eat them. The SAC arrested 22 villagers in total, including female and male villagers and children. They were Saw H---, Saw I---, Saw J--- (14 years old), Saw K--- (15 years old), Saw L---, Saw M---, Saw N--- (17 years old), Saw O---, Saw C---, Saw P---, Saw Q---, Saw R---, Saw S---, Saw T---, Saw U---, Saw V---, Naw D---, Naw E--- (6 years old), Saw W---, and Saw X---, and two other villagers [names unknown]. Before taking the [arrested] villagers with them, the SAC released six villagers, two of whom have physical disabilities. The SAC soldiers tied the remaining [arrested] villagers with rope and asked them to go [walk] in front [of them] as human shields. The SAC also threatened those arrested villagers, saying that they would kill them if Karen [Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁸] soldiers attacked [them; the SAC soldiers] on the way.

At the time that those villagers were arrested, the SAC asked Naw D--- [a female villager arrested and used as a human shield] many questions because they [the SAC] saw a video on the phone of her husband, named Saw Y---, and his friends in soldier clothes [therefore suspecting him of being part of an ethnic armed group]. The SAC also took a gold-saving box, including a gold earring and around 700,000 kyat [334 USD]. In addition, the SAC took a gold ring and jewellery, which cost about 250,000 kyats [119 USD] from Naw Z--- (Naw D---'s neighbour).

On March 21st 2023, the SAC soldiers released two elderly villagers, after which there were 14 villagers who remained arrested. There were three children remaining among the 14 arrested villagers. They were Saw J--- (14 years old), Saw K--- (15 years old), and Saw N--- (17 years old).

Saw C---, [one of the villagers from A--- village, Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township taken as a human shield,] explained: *"After arresting us, they tied up our hands; 7-8 people in a set. They did not tell us where they were going to take us. They were so aggressive communicating with us so we dare not refuse to follow them once they arrested us. The soldiers said, 'Don't you dare to escape! If you do so, we will shoot you to death.' How would we dare to escape when they are that aggressive? We dare not even move".*

The SAC put those arrested villagers into B--- school's classroom and locked the door. The arrested villagers had to live, eat, sleep, and use a trash bin as a toilet, in the room where they

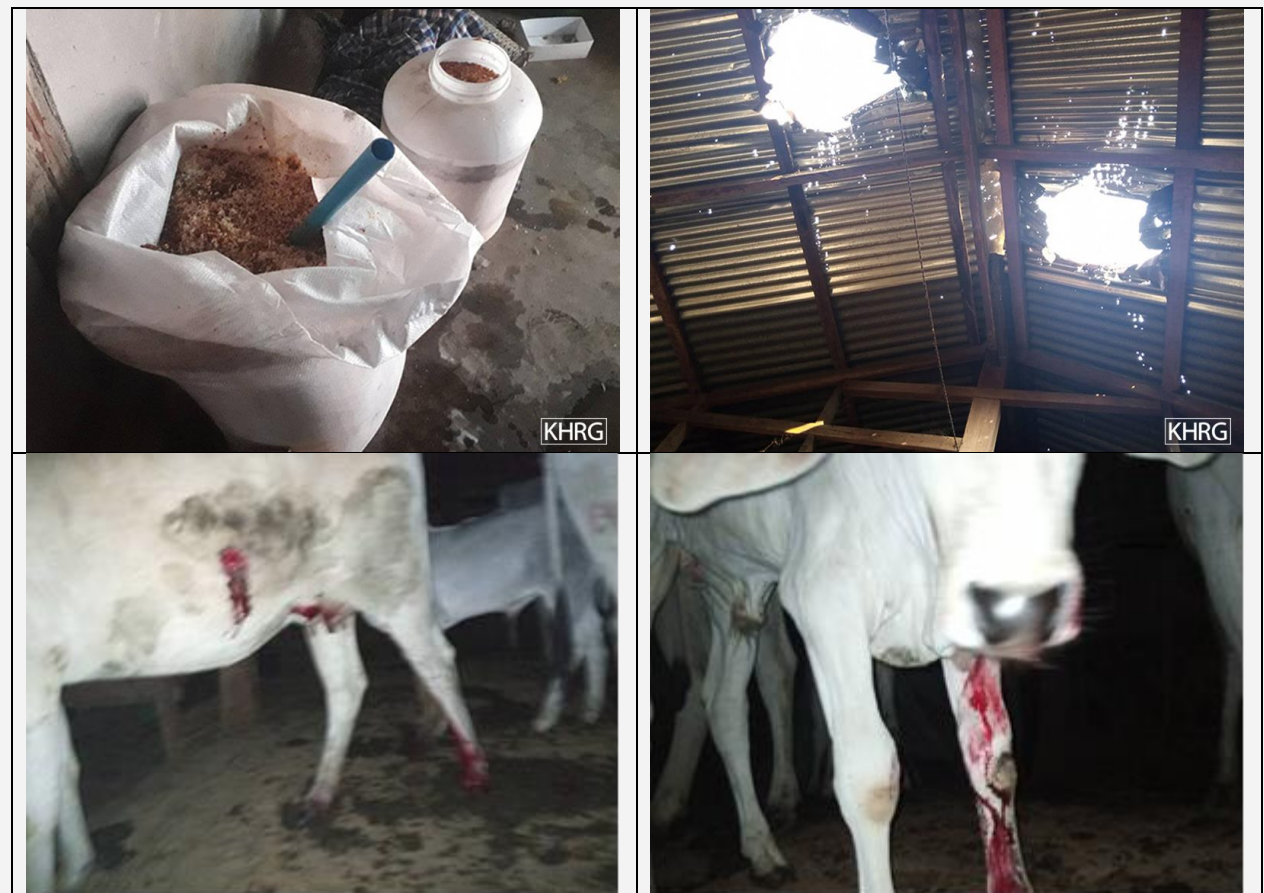
Burma/Myanmar and leads the Military Cabinet of Myanmar, the executive branch of the government. Min Aung Hlaing assumed the role of SAC chairperson following the coup.

⁷ All conversion estimates for Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate as of July 17th 2023 at 1 USD = 2,097.01 MMK, conversion rate available at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

⁸ The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) is the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU).

were detained for five days. The SAC opened the door once a day for the arrested villagers to clean their hands, legs and take a bath. After the SAC soldiers took a shower and washed their uniforms, they hung their clothes in front of [the classroom] where the arrested villagers were kept. The SAC did not hang their uniforms at the place where they slept in order to prevent [KNLA soldiers] from attacking them. The SAC soldiers said they arrested villagers to prevent [KNLA soldiers] from attacking [them] and would not do anything to those arrested.

After five days, on March 24th 2023, the SAC took those arrested villagers far away from the village they stayed in and told them: *“You can go home now!”*. And the SAC continued on their journey. However, the SAC left the villagers tied with the rope in the forest, to prevent them from posing a threat in the short term. One of the victims explained: *“Because of this arrest, we were afraid, and one of the children got sick [shock]; it seems that this child was very afraid. Some elders also had to take medicine after returning to the village.”*



The photo on the top left shows villagers’ rice mixed with chillies and turmeric by the SAC [so that villagers are unable to eat it]. The photo on the top right shows a villager’s house damaged by the SAC shelling in Nah Tha Kway village tract, Moo Township. The two photos at the bottom show a villager’s cows injured from mortar shrapnel. The two photos at the top were taken by KHRG on March 28th 2023. The two photos at the bottom were received from a Kler Lwee Htoo District KNU researcher on March 28th 2023. [Photos: KHRG/KNU]

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The victims gave permission to use and publish this information.

Further background reading on the situation on human shields, shelling and looting in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports.

- [“Doo Tha Htoo District Situation Update: Two villagers were killed and 17 villagers were injured by SAC’s indiscriminate shelling in Kyeh Htoh Township \(December 2022 to February 2023\)”](#), August 2023
- [“Shadow of Death: Use of civilians as human shields by the State Administration Council \(SAC\) in Southeast Burma since the coup”](#), July 2023
- [“Why would they target us?”: Exploring patterns of the Burma Army’s retaliatory abuses against villagers across Southeast Burma”](#), June 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 Myanmar. 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.

Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District

