



# Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

## Incident Report

November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 / KHRG # 23-142-I1

### Mu Traw District Incident Report: An SAC sergeant sexually abused a 7-year-old child in an army camp, March 2023

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in March 2023. On March 2023, a 31-year-old Sergeant sexually abused a seven-year-old girl, at a State Administration Council (SAC) army camp, where Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #340 is based. The perpetrator sexually abused the seven-year-old stepdaughter, who was living in the army camp with him and her mother, several times before. The girl reported what happened to her mother, and so they escaped from the army camp base. Later, they were assisted by the local leaders from Htee Th'Bluh Hta village tract.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Child sexual abuse
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	March 2023
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	State Administration Council (SAC) <sup>2</sup> army camp located in L--- village, Meh Klaw village tract, <sup>3</sup> Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information	
<b>Name</b>	A---
<b>Age</b>	7 years old
<b>Sex</b>	Female
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Bamar
<b>Occupation</b>	Student

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in April 2023. 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> 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>3</sup> A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

<b>Religion</b>	Buddhist
<b>Position</b>	Villager
<b>Village</b>	U--- village, near Mawlamyine Town, Mon State

<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>
[Censored for the security of the survivor and family]	Sergeant	Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #340	L--- village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun)	Thant Sin Maw, Major

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

### **1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.**

A KHRG field researcher first received this information from H--- village's authorities on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2023. After that, the KHRG researcher conducted an interview with E---, the mother of the victim/survivor, on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2023, and she provided the information.

### **2. Explain how the source verified this information.**

The victim's mother herself provided the information about the incident. The mother knew about the incident after her daughter disclosed it to her.

## **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 2023, a Sergeant (31 years old) abused a seven-year-old girl at a State Administration Council (SAC) army camp where Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)<sup>4</sup> #340 is based, located in L---village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District. LIB #340 is led by Major Thant Zin Maw. The perpetrator, who is the stepfather, sexually abused the child several times, in the absence of the mother.

The child had been attending kindergarten while she was living with her mother at the SAC army camp. The child's mother divorced [her first husband] from her first marriage when her daughter was one year old. When the daughter was six years old, E--- remarried. Later, E---- moved with her husband to SAC LIB #340 [army camp], where he is currently serving [as a

<sup>4</sup> 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.

sergeant for the SAC]. E--- had a second daughter with her [second] husband.

Living at the military camp, the mother was afraid of the sounds of shelling and faced difficulty in getting food. The food provided to the soldiers is not enough, and [hence many] soldiers are in debt. Sometimes, E---'s sister sent her money so that she could secure her family's livelihood each month. Although soldiers get paid from 150,000 kyat [71.43 USD]<sup>5</sup> up to 180,000 kyat [85.71 USD], this is not enough for the family members living in the military army camp to secure their livelihood. The sergeant [the perpetrator] got 230,000 kyat [109.52 USD] per month. Living in that army camp, women [wives of soldiers] were given about 5 bowls of rice and male soldiers received 8 to 10 bowls of rice per month. For children at 2 years of age and above, they receive 2 to 4 bowls of rice. Family members received 1 viss [1.68 kilograms] of oil, seeds, sugar, as well as dry food. They also received beans but they were rotted, so people sold them to nearby villagers and among themselves to feed chickens. Soldiers' family members had to spend the money or rations they received frugally.

[Before the daughter disclosed the abuse], the mother of the victim did not know about the crime committed by her husband. She started being suspicious of her husband when she saw him coming out of the room where her daughter slept. On that morning [unknown date in March 2023], when her husband went to work, E--- tried to ask her daughter about what the perpetrator did [in the room]. The victim's mother explained: *"I did not know when he [perpetrator] started to sexually abuse my elder daughter. I was suspicious but I did not think he was going to do this [harm] to my daughter. On that morning, at about 5:30 am, I woke up and saw he was coming out from my daughter's bedroom. I think he has been sexually abusing my daughter for a long time. Then [on that morning], I went to the toilet and came back to my daughter's room. My daughter was silently still on her bed. I looked at her head and face. I did not see anything strange. When my husband went to his office, at about 8:00 am, I asked my daughter what happened to her. I asked my daughter 'Did he come to your room last night?' My daughter said: 'Yes, he did. He opened my mosquito net.' My daughter was afraid to speak up about what had happened. Nevertheless, I kept asking her. I looked at her genitals [to check for injuries]. Then, I asked her to tell me exactly what had happened. I asked her: 'What did he ask you to do? Did he ask you to suck his genitals [perform fellatio]?' My daughter told me: 'Yes, he asked me to suck his genitals.' She also told me that the perpetrator had committed sexual abuse several times at this and that place [at different places in the house's compound]."*

After the child disclosed what happened to her mother, the mother was very anxious about continuing to live with her husband at the SAC army camp. She feels that she cannot trust her husband anymore. On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, the mother and her two daughters left the SAC army camp to return to [their village,] U--- village, located near Mawlamyine Town. To be able to return to Mawlamyine, the local leaders from Htee Th'Blut Hta village tract assisted them. On their way returning [to U---village], they were provided shelter and food by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>6</sup> soldiers at M---village, Htee Th'Blut Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District. The victim's mother explained: *"They [KNLA soldiers treated me warmly. What I already knew is that ethnic people [people pertaining to different ethnic groups] are honest and open-minded. Now, I experience it myself. I feel uncomfortable placing a burden on them with the situation that I am going through now. When they knew I don't eat fish, they prepared eggs and meat curry for me to eat."*

The victim's family stayed at M--- village where they were receiving assistance from the KNLA. Although the mother wanted to return to U--- village, her home, the local authorities asked

<sup>5</sup> All conversion estimates for the kyat are based on the August 2nd 2021 market exchange rate of 1,000 kyats to USD 0.48 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate>).

<sup>6</sup> The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) is the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU).

them to wait and see the situation. During April 2023, Htee Th'Bluh Hta village tract leaders and Karen National Police Force (KNPF)<sup>7</sup> sent the victim's family to K'Mah Moh Town, and from there they returned to U--- village, located near Mawlamyine Town. As of April 2023, the family safely arrived at U--- village. There has been no action taken against the perpetrator, as the incident remained unreported [to the SAC authorities].

## **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's family gave permission to use this information.

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

- [“Shadow of Death: Use of civilians as human shields by the State Administration Council \(SAC\) in Southeast Burma since the coup”](#), July 2023
- [“Mu Traw District Short Update: SAC indiscriminate shelling resulting in injured and killed, April 2023”](#), 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 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](http://www.khrg.org).

<sup>7</sup> The Karen National Police Force is the law enforcement agency of the Karen National Union. It was established in 1991.

# Mutraw (Hpapun) District

