



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

February 28th 2024 / KHRG # 23-146-S1

Dooplaya District Situation Update: SAC indiscriminate shelling and healthcare and livelihood challenges (February to April 2023).

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Waw Ray (Win Yay) Township, and Noh T'Kaw (Kyainseikgyi) Township, Dooplaya District, from February to April 2023. These include challenges related to accessing healthcare in remote areas due to logistical difficulties of transportation to medical clinics and financial struggles. The SAC also increased their military activities, causing large-scale displacement of villagers. Moreover, villagers encountered livelihood challenges due to a low yield of produce from plantations, price inflation, and fears to travel to the market to sell goods.¹

Healthcare challenges

Villagers from Waw Ray Township faced difficulties to access healthcare services. For instance, villages such as Kyaw Meh village, in Htee Hpa Htaw village tract², and Kyer Hkyaw village, in Kyaw B'Loo village tract, are far from any main roads, which creates challenges for villagers needing to travel to local clinics. The nearest clinic is located in Htee Hpa Htaw village, Htee Hpa Htaw village tract, which is located 10 minutes away by motorbike from Kyaw Meh village and 35 minutes away from Kyer Hkyaw village. The cost of transportation is high, which places financial burdens on villagers who need treatment. Moreover, villagers often lacked internet access and phone signal, making it difficult to arrange transportation to clinics or hospitals for those needing treatment. There are no nurses nor any other clinics in these villages, other than in Htee Hpa Htaw village, resulting in struggles for villagers to access medicine if they could not reach the clinics. In addition, there were no pharmacies in villages to purchase medicines.

In these villages, common illnesses were high fevers, diarrhoea, and high blood pressure. When patients presented with severe sicknesses that could not be treated in a nearby clinic, the patients were transferred to the town hospitals. These Burma government-run hospitals are in Kyainseikgyi Town, Noh T'Kaw Township, and Mawlamyine city, Mon State, for example, and can take several hours for villagers to travel to by motorbike. Villagers have complained that, in the government hospitals, the staff did not provide proper healthcare and talked rudely to them when they did not have much money to pay for their treatment.

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

Similarly, villagers living in internally displaced persons (IDPs) settlements in Kaw T'Ree Township, including pregnant women and people living with polio, encountered similar difficulties to access healthcare. They struggled to access transportation to free clinics to receive medicine, lacked [nearby] pharmacies to purchase medicine, and were sometimes sent to [nearby] Burma government-run hospital in Noh T'Kaw Township. These internally displaced villagers lived in the forest, which created logistical challenges for any kind of support to reach them. Villagers often relied on making medicine from herbs to drink and as ointment for treatments.

Military activity: SAC indiscriminate shelling into civilian areas

In March 2023, State Administration Council (SAC)³ soldiers stationed in Ker village, Ker village tract, Waw Ray Township, shelled artillery weapons into Waw P'Theh village and Ker village in Ker village tract, and Htee Hter village, which is close to Ker village tract, in Waw Ray Township. The shelling damaged four houses and one motorbike in Waw P'Theh village. Due to the incident, villagers from the three villages were forced to flee to a forest near the borderland of Mon State. The number of displaced people was over one thousand.

SAC soldiers had also indiscriminately shelled artillery weapons into villages in Kaw T'Ree Township [on several occasions], resulting in villagers fleeing to other places for safety.⁴ Most villagers did not dare to return to their homes, although some male villagers did return home temporarily to check on their properties and livestock during the night.

Livelihood challenges in Waw Ray Township

Villagers from Waw Ray Township faced many livelihood challenges in this period. Villagers from Waw Ray Township primarily work in plantations, in activities such as extracting rubber, or growing betel nut, limes and lemons. Due to not having enough water nor enough equipment to adequately tend to their plantations, many rubber, betel nut, lime, and lemon plantations did not grow much produce as the leaves turned yellow, indicating dehydration. As a result, villagers did not have much produce to sell. When villagers purchased staple foods and other goods, they had to pay high prices. For example, one sack of rice cost them about 50,000 kyat [23.80 USD⁵] but in the past, one or two years ago, one sack of rice was roughly 15,000-20,000 kyat [7.14–9.52 USD]. Moreover, villagers also often did not dare to go and sell their fruit produce in the market as their journey was too dangerous because of fighting on the road.

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 See: KHRG, "[Dooplaya District Short Update: Killing, house burning, shelling, and displacement, from January to February 2023](#)", December 2023; KHRG, "[Dooplaya District Situation Update: Indiscriminate shelling of villages causing displacement and livelihood difficulties \(March to May 2023\)](#)", January 2024; KHRG "[Dooplaya District Incident Report: Threat, forced labour, indiscriminate shelling and looting in Kaw T'Ree Township, March 15th 2023.](#)", June 2023.

⁵ All conversion estimates for Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate as of January 30th 2024 at 1 USD = 2,100.07 MMK, conversion rate available at <<https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>>

Further background reading on the situation in Dooplaya District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Dooplaya District Situation Update: Indiscriminate shelling of villages causing displacement and livelihood difficulties \(March to May 2023\)”](#), January 2024.
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: Killing, house burning, shelling, and displacement, from January to February 2023”](#), December 2023.
- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: Threat, forced labour, indiscriminate shelling and looting in Kaw T’Ree Township, March 15th 2023”](#), June 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, 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.khr.org.



Legend

- Town
- Major Road
- - Kawthoolei Township boundary
- Village
- - Sub-Road
- - Kawthoolei District boundary
- Village tract point
- - Tatmadaw Road
- Army Base
- Water
- Army Camp

Elevation (meter)

35 - 15	493 - 841
15 - 96	841 - 1,337
96 - 261	1,337 - 2,016
261 - 493	2,016 - 5,711

Map ID: KHRG_District_Map_Dooplaya
Date: 25-Aug-2022
Size: 33.11 X 46.8 inches

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