



Incident Report

December 19th 2023 / KHRG # 23-208-11

Dooplaya District Incident Report: A villager was killed by SAC shelling in Noh T’Kaw (Kyainseikgyi) Township, June 2023.

This Incident Report describes events occurring in Noh T’Kaw (Kyainseikgyi) Township, Dooplaya District, in June 2023. Since the 2021 military coup, fighting often happens in this area between the State Administration Council (SAC) and combined forces of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and People’s Defence Force (PDF). SAC soldiers frequently fire rounds of mortar into villages, and damage villagers’ houses. On June 30th 2023, SAC soldiers indiscriminately fired rounds of mortar into C--- village, and one of the mortar shells landed and exploded next to a villager’s hut, killing the owner. SAC also threatened and tortured a villager, accusing him of having connections with the PDF and KNLA. ¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	A villager was killed by SAC shelling
Date of Incident(s)	June 30 th 2023
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	C--- village, Noh T’Kaw village tract ² , Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District.

Victim Information	
Name	Saw ³ S---
Age	44
Sex	Male
Nationality	Karen
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Gardener
Religion	Christian

¹ The present document is based on information received in July 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.

³ Saw is a S’Gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person’s name.

Position	-
Village	C--- village, Noh T’Kaw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District.

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander’s Name
Unknown	Unknown	Infantry Battalion (IB) ⁴ #283	Ther Ter (Thon Taing) village, Noh T’Kaw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township.	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.
A KHRG researcher received this information from Saw D---, a local leader from Noh T’Kaw village tract, and collected information from villagers living where the incident happened.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.
The KHRG researcher interviewed Saw D---, a local leader, regarding this incident. The KHRG researcher also spoke with villagers from C--- village, the victim’s village.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

<p>Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) <u>when</u> the incident happened, 2) <u>where</u> it happened, 3) <u>what</u> happened, 4) <u>how</u> it happened, 5) <u>who</u> was involved, and 6) <u>why</u> 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.</p>
<p>Since the February 2021 military coup, fighting has frequently occurred in Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District, between State Administration Council (SAC)⁵ forces and local armed resistance forces. On January 4th 2023, the SAC conducted air strikes and indiscriminate shelling on Noh T’Kaw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District. On this occasion, there were no properties damaged or people killed.</p> <p>In another incident [on an unknown date in early 2023], the SAC fired rounds of mortar onto the village road in C--- village, Noh T’Kaw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District, killing a villager’s cow. After they fired the mortars, SAC soldiers came into the village and</p>

⁴ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Burma military 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. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

⁵ 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.

threatened and tortured the cattle's owner, named Saw L---, accusing him of having connections with the People's Defence Force (PDF)⁶ and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁷. Some of Saw L---'s belongings were damaged by the SAC soldiers.

On June 29th 2023, at 6pm, KNLA Battalion #17, Company #2, and PDF forces attacked SAC Infantry Battalion (IB) #283, located close to Ther Ter (Tho Taing) village, Noh T'Kaw village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District, by drone. In retaliation, the SAC indiscriminately fired rounds of mortar into C--- village. Some villagers took shelter in bunkers. The SAC continued to shell mortars into the village until 11 pm. Three houses were damaged by the shelling. One house was seriously damaged, and the other two houses were less severely damaged. Saw D---, a local leader from C--- village, explained: *"On June 29th 2023, the SAC soldiers shelled mortar shells into our village [C--- village]. Four mortar shells landed in the village. One of the mortar shells landed on a villager's house, but no one was injured because the house owner was not in the house. The house owner might have died if they had stayed in the house. One of the mortar shells landed on the road in the village, and the nearby houses were damaged by the shrapnel of the mortar shells. For instance, the mirrors, walls, and roofs of the house were broken."*

Once again, on June 30th 2023, at about 8 pm, SAC soldiers fired rounds of mortar into C--- village, killing Saw S---, a 44-year-old villager. He was seriously injured on his head and arm from shrapnel whilst lying in a hammock outside his house. Other villagers did not know he was injured at the time, but a villager found his body the next morning and it appeared he had died instantly. As explained by Saw D---, the local leader, *"On June 30th 2023, the SAC shelled mortar shells and landed between C--- and M--- villages. Due to this shelling, a villager was killed by the shrapnel of the mortar shells. The shrapnel of the mortar shells hit his head and arm, so he passed away immediately."*

Due to the shelling and the ongoing SAC operations, some villagers fled from their village to another area [unidentified place]. However, as villagers are unable to predict the situation, most continue to live in the village and wait to see how the situation unfolds. It is difficult for villagers to relocate to another area because of [SAC's] travel restrictions. Moreover, it is challenging for villagers to continue their livelihood activities if they relocate to another area [such as lacking ability to start new jobs in a new area]. Saw D--- added: *"SAC's operations caused fear and worry for the villagers. The villagers were facing challenges due to this killing incident. This kind of incident has an impact on villagers both physically and mentally. We always thought about when the shelling would happen. Our fear is increasing gradually. As civilians, we want to have the freedom to travel, work, and live. We want to live our lives without fear. We want the human rights organisations and international leaders [stakeholders] to consider us and have better plans for civilians."*

⁶ 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 formalised the PDF on May 5th 2021 as a precursor to a federal army.

⁷ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.



The top two photos were taken on July 1st 2023, by a KHRG researcher in C--- village, Noh T’Kaw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District. The top-left photo shows Saw S---, the 44-year-old villager killed by SAC shelling on June 30th 2023, after his body was cleaned. The top-right photo shows his rubber tree damaged by SAC shelling. KHRG received the two photos at the bottom from a local villager on September 1st 2023. These two photos show Saw S---’s body, having been killed by shrapnel from SAC shelling while he was sleeping on a hammock. [Photos: KHRG/villager]

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The local leader interviewed provided permission for the information to be used.

Further background reading on indiscriminate shelling in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Taw Oo District Incident Report: Killings, property destruction, and indiscriminate shelling by the SAC in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township \(July 2023\)”](#), November 2023.
- [“Mergui-Tavoy District Incident Report: Two villagers killed and two injured by the SAC shelling in Ler Muh Lah Township, July 2023”](#), November 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.

Dooplaya (Southeastern Karen State) District

