



Incident Report

July 19th 2023 / KHRG # 23-221-I1

Taw Oo District Incident Report: A male villager was severely injured and a female villager died from SAC indiscriminate shelling in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, in June 2023.

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Daw Hpa Khoh (Thandaunggyi) Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District in June 2023. On June 17th 2023, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) soldiers attacked a State Administration Council (SAC) army camp near A--- village, Sin Pin Gyi village tract, Daw Hpa Khoh Township, and fighting broke out. After the skirmish, the SAC soldiers fired mortar shells into A--- village. As a result, a male villager was seriously injured and a female villager died. The SAC did not provide any compensation to the victims and their family members. Due to the severe injuries that the villager suffered, he now cannot work well to sustain a livelihood for himself and his family.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Indiscriminate shelling
Date of Incident(s)	June 17 th 2023
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	A--- village, Sin Pin Gyi village tract, ² Daw Hpa Khoh Township, Taw Oo District

Victim Information		
Name	Saw ³ B---	Naw ⁴ C---
Age	38	62
Sex	Male	Female
Nationality	Karen	Karen
Family	Married	Married

¹ The present document is based on information documented by a KHRG staff member in July 2023. 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.

Occupation	Hill plantation worker	Hill plantation worker
Religion	Christian	Christian
Position	Village security guard	Villager
Village	A--- village	A--- village

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Unknown	Unknown	Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) ⁵ #592, under Military Operations Command (MOC) ⁶ #20	Army camp near A--- village	Captain Soe Win

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A villager from Taw Oo District, who had previously attended a Village Agency Workshop (VAW)⁷ conducted by KHRG, informed a KHRG staff member regarding this shelling case. The villager shared a contact number of the victim (Saw B---) with KHRG. In order to get to know more about this incident, a KHRG staff member called the victim over the phone and interviewed him.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The information provider is a victim of the shelling. He experienced and witnessed the incident.

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.

⁵ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Light 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 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

⁶ Military Operations Command (MOC) is comprised of ten battalions for offensive operations. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs) made up of three battalions each.

⁷ Conducted at the community level, KHRG facilitates Village Agency Workshops (VAW) across Southeast Burma that provide a space for villagers to share their experiences and strengthen their self-protection strategies, by gaining knowledge about international human rights standards and available national mechanisms that they can use to claim and defend their rights.

On the morning of June 17th 2023, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁸ soldiers attacked a State Administration Council (SAC)⁹ army camp near A--- village, Sin Pin Gyi village tract, Daw Hpa Khoh Township, Taw Oo District, and fighting occurred. Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #592, which is under Military Operations Command (MOC) #20, is based in this army camp [near A--- village]. In response, on June 17th 2023, at around 8:00 am, SAC soldiers [from LIB #592] indiscriminately fired mortar shells into A--- village. As a result, one villager was seriously injured and another villager died. In addition, the mortar shelling damaged one house, owned by the injured villager. The injured villager is Saw B---, who is 38 years old. He is survived by a daughter and a wife. The deceased villager is Naw C---, who was 62 years old. Naw C--- was Saw B---'s mother-in-law.

When the SAC fired mortar shells, Saw B--- and Naw C--- were together in their house. Saw B---'s wife and daughter were in Toungoo Town, Daw Hpa Khoh Township at that time. The SAC fired more than ten rounds of mortar shells into the village. According to Saw B---, the SAC fired 40 mm or 60 mm mortars. Many mortar shells landed and exploded near Saw B---'s house. One mortar shell landed and exploded in the kitchen of his house. Due to the explosion, Saw B--- and his mother-in-law were hit by the shrapnel. The shrapnel hit Naw C---'s chest and head and she died on the spot. Saw B--- was seriously injured all over his body. The shrapnel was embedded in his body, including his lower leg, thigh and arm. Two small pieces of shrapnel were also embedded in his left eye. Due to this eye injury, he can no longer see.

After the shelling on June 17th 2023, Saw B--- was sent to Toungoo Hospital, in Toungoo Town, to get medical treatment. All the medical costs, including the transportation cost, were around 2 million kyat [952 USD].¹⁰ He had to pay this medical cost without receiving any financial support. At Toungoo Hospital, the doctor lacked capacity to remove the shrapnel in his body. Therefore, the doctor suggested that he should go to get medical treatment and surgery in a hospital in Yangon. His mother-in-law was buried on June 18th 2023. When she was buried, Saw B--- could not go to her funeral because he was hospitalised in Toungoo Hospital.

Captain Soe Win, who is based in the SAC army camp near A---'s village, was attending a worship service in A--- village whilst his soldiers were firing mortar shells into the village. He later found out that Saw B--- was seriously injured by the shelling and that his mother-in-law passed away. On June 18th 2023, he went to see [A---'s] village head and told him that his soldiers had made a mistake regarding this incident. So, he apologised to the village head for what his soldiers had done. However, he did not provide any compensation for the victim and his family members. He did not take any action or give punishment to his soldiers either.

Due to the shelling, only Saw B---'s house was damaged in the village. The roof of his house and his kitchen were damaged. As of July 2023, other villagers already repaired his damaged roof and kitchen.

Saw B--- let his wife know what happened to him but he did not let his daughter know about what happened to him and her grandmother because his daughter has a congenital heart disease [and would therefore be sensitive to shock]. Due to his severe injuries, Saw B--- can no longer work to support his family's livelihood. He told KHRG: *"I think I cannot work well*

⁸ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ All conversion estimates for Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate as of July 19th 2023 at 1 USD = 2,100.09 MMK, conversion rate available at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

anymore like before. One of my legs was injured and I cannot walk well. The shrapnel were embedded in my thigh and arm. A doctor said that they cannot remove them. As I am a plantation worker, I think I won't be able to work like before. Due to my eye injury, I cannot see things anymore [from one eye]. My leg and arm were also injured. How can I work well like before? I think I cannot do heavy work anymore."

[On July 13th 2023, Saw B--- travelled to Yangon to undergo further surgery on his eye to fix nerve damage. As of July 18th 2023, he is currently waiting for surgery on his eye. The medical cost of this surgery is at least 3 million kyat [1,428 USD], as explained by the eye surgeon. In addition, he will need to get further treatment to remove the shrapnel embedded in his body in another hospital.]



These photos were taken in the third week of June 2023, in Toungoo Hospital, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. These photos show Saw B---, an injured villager from A--- village, Sin Pin Gyi village tract, Daw Hpa Khoh Township. He was injured by SAC indiscriminate shelling on June 17th 2023. He was injured all over his body, including leg, hand and his left eye. [Photo: local 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 victim gave KHRG permission to use and publish the information.

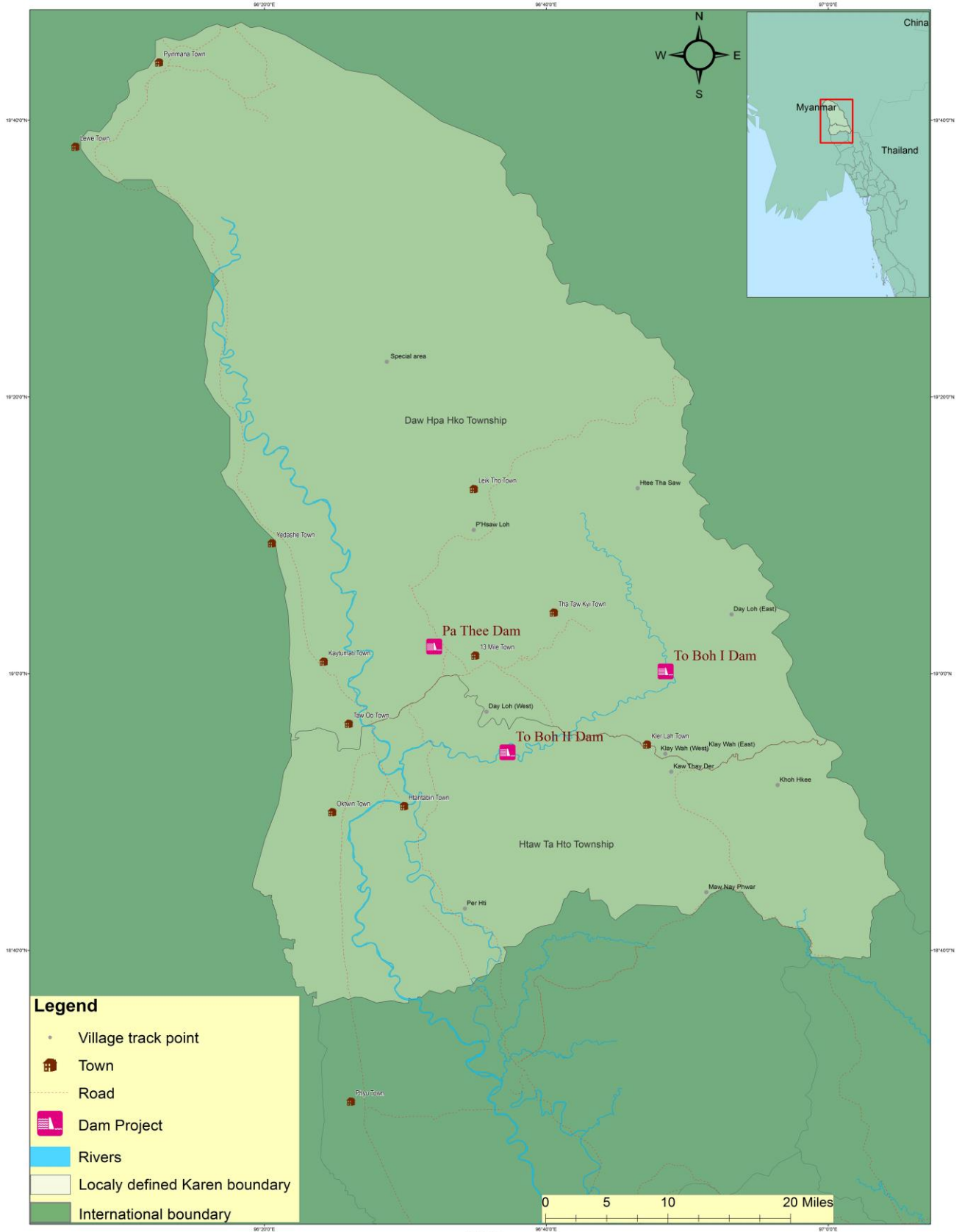
Further background reading on the situation of indiscriminate shelling in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: Threat, forced labour, indiscriminate shelling and looting in Kaw T’Ree Township, March 15th 2023”](#), June 2023.
- [“Kler Lwee Htoo District Situation Update: Arbitrary arrest, shelling, air strikes and displacement, November 2022”](#), 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.khrg.org.

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District



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