



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

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Taw Oo District Short Update: Air strikes, displacement and property damage in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, July 2023

This Short Update describes events that occurred in Daw Hpa Hkoh (Thandaunggyi) Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District, in July 2023. In July 2023, the State Administration Council (SAC) conducted air strikes on two villages in Htee Thar Saw village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. Due to these air strikes, at least six houses, two religious buildings and one rice barn were damaged. Over two thousand villagers from Htee Thar Saw village tract fled for safety from their villages. These displaced villagers are in need of emergency support including food, shelter and medicine.¹

Airstrike in A--- village

On July 18th 2023, at around 10 am, two State Administration Council (SAC)² military jets conducted air strikes twice on A--- village, Htee Thar Saw village tract³, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. As a result, one church and four civilian houses were damaged. There are approximately 120 households in A--- village. No villagers were injured or killed by the air strikes because they fled during the incident. More than 2,000 villagers from A--- village, as well as from other neighbouring villages in Htee Thar Saw village tract, have fled in fear of the SAC air strikes. Some villagers have fled to Thaw Yet Ket area and some have fled to Toungoo Town in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. According to a local villager from Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, four pregnant women gave birth to their babies while being displaced by the air strikes.

Airstrike in B--- village

On July 22nd 2023, two SAC aircraft conducted air strikes on B--- village, Htee Thar Saw village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township eight times. The air strikes damaged the Roman Catholic nunnery, one rice barn and two villagers' houses. As a result, the Roman Catholic nunnery was completely destroyed by the two bombs dropped. On July 23rd 2023, at around 2 pm, three SAC

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 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.

³ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

aircraft conducted air strikes again on B--- village, Htee Tar Shaw village tract, dropping bombs more than 13 times. There were no civilians injured or killed by the air strikes. Properties were damaged and animals, including dogs, chickens and ducks, were killed. B--- village is located approximately 1.5 kilometres from A--- village and so villagers had [already] fled because of the air strikes that took place on July 18th. In fear of the air strikes, all villagers from B--- village and from the other four neighbouring villages in Htee Tar Saw village tract have fled from their villages for safety.

Situation of displaced villagers

Villagers from A--- village and B--- village remain displaced as of mid-August 2023 and are in urgent need of food, shelter and medicine. Three community-based organisations have provided some support to the displaced villagers [that fled to Toungoo Town], including a humanitarian aid organisation, a religious group and a women's organisation [these organisations prefer not to be named for security reasons]. The organisations have provided food rations (mainly rice) and some cash assistance, but according to a villager interviewed from Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, the amount remains insufficient to support villagers for much time. Following the air strikes, the SAC soldiers set up a temporary army camp in A--- and B--- villages, brought weaponry and looted villagers' property, including rice. Local villagers, therefore, cannot return to their villages and continue to be displaced.



These photos were taken in July 2023 in A--- village, Htee Tar Saw village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. They show the damages to some villagers' houses caused by the SAC air strikes on July 18th 2023. [Photos: Local villager]





These photos were taken in July 2023 in B--- village, Htee Thar Saw village tract, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. They show a Roman Catholic nunnery destroyed by the SAC air strike on July 22nd 2023. [Photos: Local villager]

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

- [“Why would they target us?”: Exploring patterns of the Burma Army's retaliatory abuses against villagers across Southeast Burma](#), June 2023
- [Kler Lwee Htoo District Situation Update: Arbitrary arrest, shelling, air strikes and displacement, November 2022](#), June 2023.
- [Kler Lwee Htoo District Situation Update: Air strikes, displacement and humanitarian aid, January to April 2022](#), February 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.

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District

