



Incident Report

March 22th, 2024 / KHRG # 23-335-I1

Mergui-Tavoy District Incident Report: Arbitrary arrest and killing of a villager by the SAC in K'Ser Doh Township, October 2023

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in K'Ser Doh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District, in October 2023. On October 25th, State Administration Council (SAC) Infantry Battalion (IB) #403 arbitrarily arrested a 31-year-old male villager named Ko J--- whilst they were patrolling through his village in K'Ser Hkler area, K'Ser Doh Township. The reason for Ko J---'s arrest is unknown. Local villagers later found his dead body buried in a shallow grave in a nearby village. This incident caused insecurity and fear among villagers, causing many villagers to seek safety by fleeing to nearby villages or towns to evade potential harm.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Arbitrary arrest and killing of a villager
Date of Incident(s)	October 25 th 2023
Incident Location	B--- village and C--- village, K'Ser Hkler area, K'Ser Doh (Tha Yet Chaung) Township, Mergui-Tavoy District

Victim Information	
Name	Ko ² J---
Age	31 years old
Gender	Man
Ethnicity	Bamar
Marital Status	Unmarried
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Unknown

¹ The present document is based on information received in November 2023. It was provided by a community member in Mergui-Tavoy 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 'Ko' is a Burmese title meaning older brother. It can be used for relatives as well as non-relatives.

Village	B--- village, K'Ser Hkler area, K'Ser Doh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District
----------------	---

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Unknown	Unknown	Infantry Battalion (IB) ³ #403	Tha Yet Chaung army camp	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

Upon reading the information on social media, a KHRG researcher promptly contacted the local authorities to document detailed information and interviewed a villager named Ko N--- who helped to retrieve the victim's body.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The information is authentic as the villager who was interviewed, Ko N---, witnessed the incident first-hand and was involved in the retrieval of the victim's body.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On October 25th 2023, State Administration Council (SAC)⁴ Infantry Battalion (IB) #403, based in K'Ser Doh (Tha Yet Chaung) Town, were patrolling from their army camp to A--- village, K'Ser Hkler area, K'Ser Doh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. On their way, as the SAC soldiers passed through B--- village, in K'Ser Hkler area, they arrested a villager named Ko J---, a 31-year-old man. The reason for his arrest is unknown.

Later that day, after the SAC soldiers had left the village, villagers went to search for Ko J---, as they saw he had been arrested. The villagers went in groups of five or seven people to search every part of the village and nearby areas. When they reached C--- village, K'Ser Hkler area, they saw a fresh mound of soil and perceived the smell of a corpse. The villagers found Ko J---'s buried body; he had been tied with rope around his neck and his hands had been tied behind his back. The villagers dug his body up to conduct a funeral committal service.

³ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most 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. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

⁴ 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.

Villagers were afraid after this incident of the arrest and the killing of a villager by the SAC. Villagers sought safety by fleeing to nearby villages or towns to evade potential harm whenever they heard SAC troop movements near their village.



These two photos were taken in C--- village, K'Ser Hkler area, K'Ser Doh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. These photos show the body of Ko J--- who was arbitrarily arrested by the SAC on October 25th 2023. His body was later found by local villagers in a shallow grave and dug up to conduct proper burial. [Photos: 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 villager interviewed about this incident gave permission for the information to be shared.

Further background reading on the situation on arbitrary arrests and killing in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Mergui-Tavoy District Short Update: Killing, house burning, forced portering and use of civilians as human shields, in Ler K’Saw Township, July 2023”](#), December 2023
- [“Mergui-Tavoy District Short Update: SAC indiscriminate shelling, killing, arrests, torture, house burning, and villagers’ displacement in K’Ser Doh Township, June 2023”](#), November 2023
- [*In the Dark: The crime of enforced disappearance and its impact on the rural communities of Southeast Burma since the 2021 coup*](#), November 2023.
- [*Deadly Encounters: Killings of civilians by armed actors in Southeast Burma \(October 2022 - April 2023\)*](#), 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.

