



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

February 15th, 2024 / KHRG # 23-339-D1

Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling into villages causing displacement in Kaw T'Ree Township, November 2023.

This Short Update describes events that occurred in Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District, in November 2023. On November 2nd 2023, combined troops of Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Kaw Thoo Lei Army (KTLA) attacked State Administration Council (SAC) Infantry Battalion (IB) #32 army camp near A--- village, Maw Hkee village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, by drone, and fighting broke out. Following this, SAC troops heavily shelled into A--- village and surrounding villagers' plantations during the whole day. In fear, villagers from A--- village fled to B--- area, an internally displaced people (IDP) site. Moreover, the SAC shelling into A--- village created fear for villagers in neighbouring villages to live and work in their village.¹

SAC shelling after fighting in Kaw T'Ree Township

On November 2nd 2023, in the morning, at 7:20 am, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)² Battalion #201, combined with Kaw Thoo Lei Army (KTLA)³ troops, dropped three shells by drone into State Administration Council (SAC)⁴ Infantry Battalion (IB)⁵ #32 army camp near A---

¹ The present document is based on information received in November 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 The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed (KNLA) wing of the Karen National Union (KNU).

³ The Kaw Thoo Lei Army (KTLA) was founded on July 17th 2022 by Brigadier-General Nerdah Bo Mya. Nerdah Bo Mya, former Commander-In-Chief of the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO), was dismissed by the KNU in 2022. KTLA operates in two districts in Southeast Burma, in KNU-controlled areas, namely Mergui-Tavoy and Dooplaya districts. In Dooplaya District, they operate in alliance with resistance armed groups. KTLA battalions in Mergui-Tavoy District are in conflict with both SAC and KNLA troops.

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 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.

⁵ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are understrength 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 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

village, Maw Hkee village tract⁶, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District. SAC IB #32 Battalion Commander's name is Kyaw Zin Oo. Following the shelling, fighting broke out and stopped at 10:40 am. Though the fighting stopped, the SAC soldiers shelled [rounds of] 120mm, 81mm, and 60mm mortar shells and [fired rounds from an] RPG7 [rocket-propelled grenade launcher] into A--- village and nearby plantations for the whole remaining day. As a result, some shells landed on corn fields and pea plantations, creating fear for villagers to go and harvest rice and peas from the plantations, though it was time to harvest crops. [Due to the shelling, several buildings such as a church, a school and a house were damaged, but no villagers were injured.]

As reported by a local villager to KHRG, villagers from A--- village did not dare to live in their village, so they sought shelter in B--- area [an IDP site located at the Thai-Burma border]. Villagers from [nearby villages such as] C--- village and D--- village, in Maw Hkee village tract, were also living in fear. As a result of this incident, villagers feel that they must be wary when moving around their villages, working in plantations, or going to school, for example. They also feel trapped because of this fear of moving around.

Further background reading on the situation of indiscriminate shelling and displacement in Southeast Myanmar 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: A villager was killed by SAC shelling in Noh T’Kaw \(Kyainseikgyi\) Township, June 2023”](#), December 2023.
- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: Threat, forced labour, indiscriminate shelling and looting in Kaw T’Ree Township, March 15th 2023”](#), June 2023.
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: Indiscriminate shelling and a landmine explosion in Noh T’Kaw Township, June to September 2022”](#), April 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.khrq.org.

⁶ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

