



Incident Report

October 28th 2024 / KHRG # 23-342-11

Dooplaya District Incident Report: A KNU/KNLA-PC soldier raped a child and attempted to rape another child in Kruh Tuh Township (April and September 2023).

This incident report describes events occurring in Kruh Tuh Township (Kyonedoe), Dooplaya District. On April 24th 2023, a KNU/KNLA Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC) soldier named Saw Thar Soe (from Battalion #776) sexually assaulted and attempted to rape a 16-year-old girl, Naw A---, near her village. On September 9th 2023, the same perpetrator raped a 16-year-old girl, Naw B---, at his house. The survivors reported the case to the Karen National Police Force (KNPF) through the Karen Women Organisation (KWO). However, the perpetrator's Battalion Commander, Zar Tin Mar, obstructed his arrest. As the perpetrator was not arrested and continued to live close to the survivors, they felt unsafe in their homes. Therefore, a KWO leader arranged support and a safer accommodation for the girls. The perpetrator subsequently fled to Thailand and no further action was taken against him.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Sexual violence against two children [by a KNU/KNLA Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC) ² soldier].
Date of Incident(s)	April 24 th 2023 and September 9 th 2023.
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	C--- village, Meh Theh village tract ³ , Kruh Tuh Township, Dooplaya District.

Victim Information

Name	Naw ⁴ B---	Naw A---
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¹ The present document is based on information received in November 2023 (and an update in August 2024). 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 KNU/KNLA-PC is an armed group based in the Htoh Kaw Koh village tract area, Hpa-an District. It split from the Karen National Union (KNU) and signed a ceasefire agreement with the Myanmar government in 2007, but refused to transform into a Border Guard Force (BGF) in 2010. It signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015 (and are still part of it after the 2021 coup). They currently operate in Hpa-an and Dooplaya districts.

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

⁴ 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

Age	16 years old	16 years old
Gender	Woman	Woman
Ethnicity	Karen	Karen
Marital Status	Married	Single
Occupation	[Daily labourer]	[Daily labourer]
Religion	Buddhism	Buddhism
Position	Villager	Villager
Village	C--- village, Meh Theh village tract	C--- village, Meh Theh village tract

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Saw ⁵ Thar Soe	Soldier	KNU/KNLA-PC Battalion #776	Lah Aee Ther village, Ghaw Hkee Htu village tract, Kruh Tuh Township, Dooplaya District.	Battalion Commander Zar Tin Mar

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A staff member of the Karen Women's Organisation (KWO) in Kruh Tuh Township informed [KHRG] about this incident. On October 24th 2023, [a KHRG researcher] conducted an interview with a KWO staff member. [The KHRG researcher] also spoke to Naw B--- [and Naw A---, while they were staying in a safe location arranged by KWO]. [In August 2024, the KHRG researcher conducted another interview with the same KWO staff member.]

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

This information was provided [and verified] by Naw B---, and the KWO staff member who supported the survivors after the incidents.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On September 9th 2023, at about 12 am, a KNU/KNLA-Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC) soldier named Saw Thar Soe raped a 16-year-old girl called Naw B---. Naw B--- reported [to KWO] that the perpetrator raped her at his home [on that day], despite her attempts to escape. [The girl went to the perpetrator's house to access internet connection.] As no one else was present at the incident site, there were no other witnesses.

⁵ 'Saw' is male honorific title in S'gaw Karen language.

Before Saw Thar Soe raped Naw B---, he had sexually assaulted [and attempted to rape] a friend of Naw B--- named Naw A---, on April 24th 2023, at around 11 pm [on a road in or near the village]. Although Saw Thar Soe was unable to rape Naw A---, he managed to forcibly kiss her and grab her breast. Since Naw A--- was terrified to report the incident, the case remained unreported [until September 13th 2023]. [However, after hearing that Naw B--- had been attacked by the same perpetrator, Naw A--- explained her experiences to Naw B---].

After Saw Thar Soe raped Naw B--- [and after getting to know that he had also attempted to rape Naw A---], Naw B--- did not want to give up on the case [and wanted to seek justice]. [On September 10th 2023, she] tried to report the case to KNU/KNLA-PC Battalion [#776] Commander, named Zar Tin Mar, but he was not present [at the place] that day. On September 13th 2023, both survivors reported the case to KWO who went to the Kruh Tuh Township police office [Karen National Police Force (KNPF)⁶] and [successfully] reported the case.

A local [KWO] staff member from D--- village, Htee Ghuh Thaw village tract, Kruh Tuh Township, named Naw E---, explained: *“At first, the police [KNPF] went to arrest the perpetrator, Saw Thar Soe. However, his [KNU/KNLA-PC] Commander, Zar Tin Mar, said: ‘He is my soldier’, so the police [KNPF] returned [did not arrest him]. He [the KNU-KNLA-PC Commander] said that he [the perpetrator] was his member [under his command]. After that, we [KWO and the survivors] waited for further information, but he [Zar Tin Mar] did not say anything. He did not say anything, even when people [villagers] asked him [about the perpetrator]. Later, the perpetrator disappeared. When we tried to ask about him, we [eventually] heard that he had fled to Thailand.”* KWO staff and the survivors’ families think that the Kruh Tuh Township [KNPF] police did not dare to arrest Saw Thar Soe because he is a KNU/KNLA-PC soldier [under the command of a different armed group, not under the Karen National Union (KNU)⁷]. Even though the case was documented [by the KNPF police], no further action was taken.

As Saw Thar Soe verbally threatened these two survivors [during the incidents] that he would kill them if they reported this case, these two girls were afraid to stay at their homes [after having reported the incidents to the police and given the fact that the perpetrator lived near them]. Therefore, KWO supported the survivors and arranged for them to be accommodated in a safer KWO house [location censored] for their security.

Since the perpetrator has not been arrested, the survivors [and their families] are concerned about their safety. The KWO staff member wants local authorities to hold the perpetrator accountable.

Update received on August 2024:

On August 6th 2024, KHRG was informed by a KWO staff member that the perpetrator fled to Thailand [on an unknown date], so the case could not be pursued further [by the KNPF police]. The survivors stayed at the KWO house for two to three months, before moving to their relatives’ village. A KWO staff member, Naw E---, personally provided food for the survivors, and she also requested that leaders [local leaders or organisations] provide some support for the survivors’ living expenses. The victims did not receive any formal support but were helped by the KWO staff member personally. Naw A--- has suffered from a mental illness [details unknown] since she was born. Both survivors are working as daily labourers to earn a living.

⁶ The Karen National Police Force is the law enforcement agency of the Karen National Union. It was established in 1991.

⁷ The Karen National Union (KNU) is the main Karen political organisation. It was established in 1947 and has been in conflict with the government since 1949. The KNU wields power across large areas of Southeast Myanmar and has been calling for the creation of a democratic federal system since 1976. Although it signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in 2015, relations with the government remain tense.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

A member of KWO provided this information and gave permission to KHRG to use the information. [The researcher also spoke with the survivors and informed about the publication of this information.]

Further background reading on sexual violence in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Undeniable: War crimes, crimes against humanity and 30 years of villagers' testimonies in rural Southeast Burma"](#), December 2022.
- ["Dooplaya District Incident Report: A 60-year-old male villager raped two children in Kruh Tuh Township, April 2023"](#), November 2023.
- ["Mu Traw District Incident Report: An SAC sargeant sexually abused a 7 year old child in an army camp, March 2023"](#), November 2023.
- ["Dooplaya District Report: Rape and killing of two adolescent sisters in Waw Ray Township, April 2022"](#), January 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

