



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

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Mergui-Tavoy District Short Update: A 32-year-old villager abused his wife in Ler K'Saw Township (November 2023)

This Short Update describes events occurring in Ler K'Saw Township, Mergui-Tavoy District, during the period of November 2023. On November 24th 2023, a 32-year-old villager from V--- village, Sa Tein village tract, Ler K'Saw Township, named Ko G---, beat his 36-year-old wife named Sayarma P---. Sayarma P--- is the principal of the school and also the bread winner for her family. The husband, who does not work, asked his wife for money and used it to buy opium and methamphetamines. When Sayarma P--- did not give him money, Ko G--- physically abused her by kicking, beating, and punching her. After a year of receiving such abuse, the survivor moved to her father's place in Myeik Town, Mergui-Tavoy District, which is under State Administration Council (SAC) control.¹

On November 24th 2023, a 36-year-old teacher from V--- village, Sa Tein village tract², Ler K'Saw Township, Mergui-Tavoy District, named Sayarma³ P---, experienced domestic abuse committed by her 32-year-old husband, named Ko⁴ G---. The survivor explained that her husband did not work, but he used to be a plantation worker until he started using drugs. He is addicted to drugs and the only thing he does is using drugs [opium and methamphetamines]. If he does not get to use drugs, he will find a problem [complaining and finding fault with Sayarma P---] to abuse and beat his wife. When she cannot give him money, he will kick her with his legs and punch her [, as it happened on November 24th 2023].

According to Sayarma P---: *"My husband is not interested in working on anything for our livelihood. He is only crazy, addicted to drugs and asks for money from me to buy drugs. I have a 6-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter to feed so I cannot give him money every time he asks. So, he kicks me, punches me and beats me whenever I cannot give him money and he doesn't have money to buy drugs. In our family, no one [else] is working so we don't have money."* As they have two kids to take care of, Sayarma P--- cannot give money to her husband all the time and she needs to save money for her kids.

Ko G--- has abused her many times over the course of one year. [As the survivor explained,] she tried to endure this situation because she loves him and for her kids' [benefit]. Every time

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

³ 'Sayarma' (female) is a Burmese term used for any teacher, pastor, or any person to whom one wishes to show respect.

⁴ 'Ko' is a Burmese title meaning older brother. It can be used for relatives as well as non-relatives.

her husband beat her, the people from neighbouring houses just watched: they did not come to stop him or help her.

She explained that she can no longer bear the domestic violence that her husband committed against her anymore. After the latest incident [on November 24th 2023], a KHRG researcher and [his] uncle helped Sayarma P--- by transporting her and her kids to her father's house in Z--- Section of Myeik Town, Mergui-Tavoy District [which is under State Administration Council (SAC)⁵ control].

Further background reading on the situation of gender-based violence in Southeast Burma/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 KNU/KNLA-PC soldier raped a child and attempted to rape another child in Kruh Tuh Township \(April and September 2023\)"](#), October 2024.
- ["Taw Oo District Incident Report: An SAC soldier committed conflict-related sexual violence against a 90-year-old villager in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township \(November 2023\)"](#), September 2024.
- ["Dooplaya District Incident Report: A 60-year-old male villager raped two children in Kruh Tuh Township, April 2023"](#), November 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.

⁵ 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.

