



## Incident Report

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 / KHRG # 23-429+276-I1

## Taw Oo District Incident Report: SAC indiscriminate shelling killed a villager and damaged houses in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township (August 2023)

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Daw Hpa Hkoh (Thandaunggyi) Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District, in August 2023. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023, the State Administration Council (SAC) indiscriminately fired three rounds of mortar shells into Thandaunggyi Town, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. The shelling damaged three villagers' houses and a road used by villagers. On August 26<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #304 indiscriminately fired three rounds of 120 mm mortar into A--- village, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. A female villager, Ma Z---, was seriously injured by the shelling. She received treatment at a hospital, but she later died from the injuries.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Indiscriminate shelling by the State Administration Council (SAC) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	August 22 <sup>nd</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> 2023
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	Section B--- in Thandaunggyi Town and A--- village, Special area, in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District

Victim Information				
<b>Name</b>	Naw <sup>3</sup> C---	Naw D---	Saw <sup>4</sup> E---	Ma <sup>5</sup> Z---
<b>Age</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	48 years

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in December 2023. It was provided by a community member in Taw Oo 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Naw is a S'Gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

<sup>4</sup> Saw is a S'Gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

<sup>5</sup> Ma is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

<b>Gender</b>	Woman	Woman	Man	Woman
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Karen	Karen	Karen	Unknown
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	Married	Married	Married
<b>Occupation</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Religion</b>	Christian	Christian	Christian	Unknown
<b>Position</b>	Villager	Villager	Villager	Villager
<b>Village</b>	Section B---, Thandaunggyi Town	Section B---, Thandaunggyi Town	Section B---, Thandaunggyi Town	A--- village, Special area

<b>Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)</b>				
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Commander's Name</b>
Unknown	Unknown	Artillery Unit [unknown number]	Bu Yint Naung Tat Myot army camp in Thandaunggyi Town	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) <sup>6</sup> #304	Yay Tar Shay Town, Bago Division	Unknown

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

### **1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.**

A Karen National Union (KNU)<sup>7</sup> police officer from Day Loh Mu Lar Hta area, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District, informed a KHRG researcher regarding the first incident. Afterwards, on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2023, the researcher met with a local villager who witnessed the incident, and whose house was damaged in the shelling, and conducted an interview with him. The villager was in the incident place when it happened and therefore knew the details of the incident. A KHRG researcher also contacted a local villager from Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District, by phone to collect information regarding the second incident.

### **2. Explain how the source verified this information.**

The information is verified because the researcher gathered information from one of the victims of the first incident and other villagers from the incident location. In addition, the researcher went to the incident place to investigate what happened. For the second incident, a local villager, who had spoken with the injured victim before her death, provided the information to the KHRG researcher.

<sup>6</sup> A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. Most Light 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. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

<sup>7</sup> The Karen National Union (KNU) is the main Karen political organisation. It was established in 1947 and has been in conflict with the Burma government since 1949. The KNU wields power across large areas of Southeast Burma 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 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

#### **Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.**

##### *First incident*

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023, at 8:30 pm, State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers indiscriminately fired three rounds of mortar shells into Thandaunggyi Town, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. One of the mortars landed and exploded in Section B--- of Thandaunggyi Town. It damaged three villagers' houses and the road next to the houses, which is used by villagers. The owners of these damaged houses are Naw C---, Naw D--- and Saw E---. Other mortar shells landed in areas outside the town. This SAC troop is based in an Artillery Unit at Bu Yint Naung Tat Myot army camp in Thandaunggyi Town. It seemed that the SAC fired mortar shells because they heard a mine explosion from a road in Thandaunggyi Town. Ba Yint Naung Tat Myot army camp is about a 30-minute motorbike journey from Section #B---, in Thandaunggyi Town.

One of the owners of a house damaged by the shelling was not in Thandaunggyi when the SAC was conducting indiscriminate shelling. He was out of the town at the time and so he was not hit by the shelling. The owners of the other two damaged houses sheltered underneath their houses whilst the shelling happened. Therefore, they were also not hit by the shelling.

This SAC troop often fired rounds of mortar into Thandaunggyi Town [in August and September 2023]. It happened once every one or two weeks. Due to the SAC indiscriminate shelling [in August 22<sup>nd</sup>], villagers from Section B--- in Thandaunggyi Town were frightened and feared for their safety, but the villagers could not do anything [to stop the attacks]. No villagers were killed or injured by this shelling incident, nor were any animals [livestock] killed or injured. No schools nor churches were damaged.

##### *Second Incident*

On August 26<sup>th</sup> 2023, at around 4 pm, soldiers from SAC Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #304 indiscriminately fired three rounds of 120 mm mortars into A--- village, Special area, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township. LIB #304 is based in Yay Tar Shay Town, Bago Division [and local villagers do not know why they were in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township]. Two of the mortar shells landed next to the village. Another mortar shell landed inside A--- village, next to Ma Z---, a 48-year-old villager, whilst she was walking on a road in the village. She was hit by shrapnel from the exploded mortar shell. She sustained injuries to her stomach and [the back of her] head.

After the incident, a medic from the People's Defence Force (PDF)<sup>8</sup> and a medic from the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>9</sup> provided treatment for her injuries. After that, [on the same day], she was taken to Taw Oo Hospital. The next day, on August 27<sup>th</sup> 2023, she passed away in the hospital as her injuries were [too] serious. On August 28<sup>th</sup> 2023, Ma Z---'s body was brought to A--- village and she was buried in the village cemetery. Ma Z---'s husband had

<sup>8</sup> The People's Defence Force (PDF) is an armed resistance established independently as local civilian militias operating across the country. Following the February 1st 2021 military coup and the ongoing brutal violence enacted by the junta, the majority of these groups began working with the National Unity Government (NUG), a body claiming to be the legitimate government of Burma/Myanmar, which then formalized the PDF on May 5th 2021 as a precursor to a federal army.

<sup>9</sup> The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) is the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU).

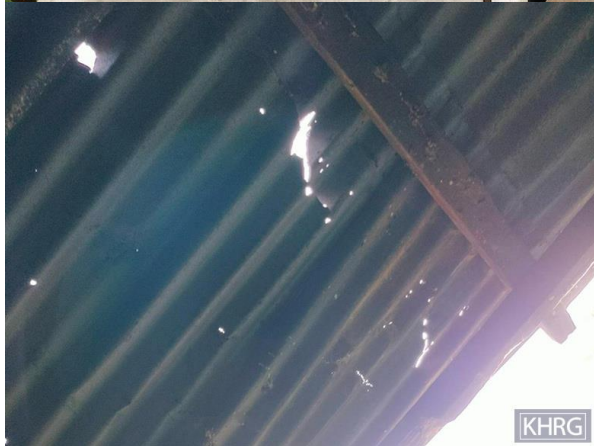
passed away many years earlier and she is survived by four children. The victim's family has not received any financial support other than a donation of 200,000 kyat [95 USD<sup>10</sup>] from the PDF and KNLA.

Due to this SAC shelling, some villagers' cattle were injured and some trees were damaged. According to a local villager, the SAC often indiscriminately fired mortar shells into this village, and so many of the villagers were temporarily displaced at the time.

#### **Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details**

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

The villagers from Thandaunggyi Town and a villager who talked to Ma Z---'s family members gave KHRG permission to publish this information.



These three photos were taken on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 in Thandaunggyi Town, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023, an SAC troop indiscriminately fired three rounds of mortar into Section B---, Thandaunggyi Town. These photos show some villagers' houses damaged by the SAC shelling. [Photo: KHRG]

<sup>10</sup> All conversion estimates for the kyat in this report are based on the official market rate of 1 USD = 2101 MMK as of February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 <[www.xe.com/currency/mmk-burmese-kyat](http://www.xe.com/currency/mmk-burmese-kyat)>



The photo on the left was taken on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 in A--- village, Special area, Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, Taw Oo District. It shows a 48-year-old villager, Ma Z---, injured by the shrapnel of the 120mm mortar. Ma Z--- later died at the hospital due to the severity of the injuries. *[Photo: local villager]*

Further background reading on the situation on indiscriminate shelling in Taw Oo District can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Taw Oo District Situation Update: Fighting, shelling, and house burning in Thandaung Town, and air strikes in Htaw Ta Htoo Township \(January to July 2023\)”](#), January 2023
- [“Striking Fear: Impacts of State Administration Council \(SAC\) shelling on villagers’ lives in Southeast Burma \(January to October 2023\)”](#), December 2023
- [“Taw Oo District Incident Report: Killings, property destruction, and indiscriminate shelling by the SAC in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township \(July 2023\)”](#), 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.khrq.org](http://www.khrq.org).

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District Map

SEVEN KNU ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT



- Legend**
- Town
  - Village
  - Village tract point
  - Army Base
  - Army Camp
  - Major Road
  - - - Sub-Road
  - Water
  - Kawthoolei Township boundary
  - Kawthoolei District boundary

**Elevation (meter)**

35 - 15	493 - 841
15 - 96	841 - 1,337
96 - 261	1,337 - 2,016
261 - 493	2,016 - 5,711

Map ID: KHRG\_District\_Map\_Taw Oo  
 Date: 19-Jul-2022  
 Size: 33.11 X 46.8 inches

