



## Incident Report

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 / KHRG # 23-60-I1

## Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager was fatally shot by SAC soldiers while hunting in the forest, February 2023

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in February 2023. On February 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, at 4:30 pm, a 28-year-old villager named Saw W---, who lived in Y-- - village, Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District, was fatally shot by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers while he and his friend were hunting in the forest area known as A-- [place], Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township. There has been no action taken by SAC after the death of the victim. As for Y--- villagers, they depend on their farmlands to secure their livelihood. Y--- village is close to an SAC army camp and the villagers have to work in fear of SAC soldiers. This makes it harder for the villagers to go and work on their farmlands to secure their livelihood, particularly after the news of Saw W---'s death.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	State Administration Council (SAC) <sup>2</sup> soldiers shot and killed a villager
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	February 7 <sup>th</sup> 2023
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	A--- place, Ler Muh Plaw village tract <sup>3</sup> , Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District

Victim Information	
<b>Name</b>	Saw <sup>4</sup> W---
<b>Age</b>	28 years old

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in February 2023. It was provided by a community member in Mu Traw 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 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> A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

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

<b>Sex</b>	Male
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Karen
<b>Family</b>	Single
<b>Occupation</b>	Hill farmer
<b>Religion</b>	Animist
<b>Position</b>	Villager
<b>Village</b>	Y--- village, Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District

<b>Perpetrator Information</b>				
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Company/Battalion/Division</b>	<b>Based at</b>	<b>Commander's Name</b>
Unknown	Unknown	SAC Infantry Battalion (IB) <sup>5</sup> #349	Hpah Ghaw Loh army camp, Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District	Unknown

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

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

A KHRG researcher conducted an interview on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2023 with the witness of the incident and the witness provided the information on the incident.

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

The information provider was accompanying the victim during the incident. This information is accurate and genuine because the information provider witnessed the incident himself.

## **Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident**

**Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please use the space prepared below, and create an attachment if needed.**

On February 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 4:30 pm Saw W---, a 28-year-old villager living in Y--- village, Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District, was fatally shot by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers from Infantry Battalion (IB) #349. [At the time of the incident,] the victim and his friend were hunting in a forest area known as A--- [place], located in Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township.

On the evening when the victim and his friend, Saw H---, were hunting, they encountered SAC soldiers. They were then shot at by the SAC soldiers, based at Hpah Ghaw Loh army camp, located in Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township. The SAC soldiers shot at Saw W---

<sup>5</sup> 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.

and two bullets penetrated his head, killing him on the spot. The SAC soldiers also shot at Saw H---, but he crawled [silently] among the bushes in fear [of SAC gunfire]. Then, the SAC soldiers stopped firing and Saw H--- started to run away from the soldiers. He was fired at by the SAC soldiers again, however, he was able to escape. Only the next morning the villagers from the same village came to the incident site to carry Saw W---'s corpse back to the site where Y--- villagers had been displaced to, in E--- area, with security provided by the Karen National Union (KNU)<sup>6</sup>.

Saw H--- recalled, *"When I heard the sound of the gun, he [the victim] fell down next to me. He laid [o]n my chest and [was] bleeding. I looked at him and he was not breathing. I was crawling among the dense bushes and the SAC soldiers chased me from behind. I could not run as the bushes were so dense. I got [out] from the bushes slowly [...]. Then, the SAC soldiers stopped firing. Then, the SAC soldiers were firing a few more [rounds]. After that, I went down to the stream and went up to the mountain."* Saw H--- witnessed that there were over 20 SAC soldiers marching in the area. [Even before the incident,] the SAC's military activities [patrolling and sending rations and troops to army camps] increased in Saw Muh Plaw village tract.

Saw W--- is survived by his mother, who now has been displaced to E--- area, located in Saw Muh Plaw village tract, along with other villagers from the victim's village. [According to Saw H---], the mother of the victim was grieving the death of her son, so she did not have an appetite to eat. It is a great loss for her because she [already] lost her husband and other children. Saw W--- [previously] had two brothers and a sister [all together four], but all three of them passed away and only Saw W--- was left alive among his siblings. When Saw W--- was 2 years old, Burma Army soldiers shot and killed his father, slit his body into parts and placed them separately on the road [put the dismembered parts of his father's body in different places]. After the death of his father, Saw W--- stayed with his mother. His mother was able to raise him in difficult conditions and kept him in school. After he graduated, he helped his mother to secure a livelihood by working on the farmland. The victim was the only child who was living with her. Now, she has no one in the family but herself. There has been no action taken [compensation] on this incident after the death of Saw W---.

The villagers living in Y--- village depend on their farmlands for their livelihood. Y--- village is close to the SAC army camp and the villagers have to work in fear of SAC soldiers. This makes it harder for the villagers to go and work on their farmlands to secure their livelihood, particularly after the news of Saw W---'s death.

[According to Saw H---,] villagers have expressed the desire for this type of incident to cease as villagers have been facing death and mourning for decades. Y--- villagers have also been facing a hard time working to secure their livelihood in the area, where there is landmine contamination. The villagers have never attended Mine Risk Awareness training to prevent them from getting injured or dying from landmine explosions.

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

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

The information provider and the victim's family allowed KHRG to use the information.

<sup>6</sup> The Karen National Union is the main Karen group opposing the government.



The photo was taken on February 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 at a displacement site in Saw Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw District, where Y--- villagers displaced to. It shows Saw W---'s corpse after he was killed by SAC soldiers while hunting in a nearby forest. *[Photo: KHRG]*

Further background reading on the security and human rights situation in Mu Traw District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager from Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township was seriously injured by a landmine explosion, May 2022,”](#) March 2023.
- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager from Ler Muh Plaw village tract, Lu Thaw Township was seriously injured by a landmine explosion, June 2022,”](#) February 2023.
- [“Mu Traw District Short Update: Air strikes and displacement, shelling, food shortages and health care, April to May 2022,”](#) February 2023.
- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager from Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township was seriously injured by a landmine explosion while undertaking village security, September 2022,”](#) February 2023.

### About KHRG

Founded in 1992, the 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](http://www.khr.org).

# Mutraw (Hpapun) District

