



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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### Short Update

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 / KHRG # 23-84+63-D1

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## Dooplaya District Short Update: Villagers' disappearances and imposition of martial law in Noh T'Kaw Township, from February to March 2023

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*This Short Update describes events that occurred in Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District during the period between February and March 2023. After martial law was declared in Seikgyi Town, 6 youngsters, as well as two friends, including a 13-year-old standard [grade] 4 student, were arrested by SAC soldiers because they did not travel within the limited time. The martial law was enacted by an SAC headquarter commander from Mawlamyine City on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2023, in Seikgyi Town, Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District, according to which no one could leave the house or travel after 6:00 pm. No one knows or has heard anything about the arrested people as of June 2023.<sup>1</sup>*

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On February 10<sup>th</sup> 2023, an State Administration Council (SAC)<sup>2</sup> headquarter commander from Mawlamyine City called for a meeting with village leaders and religious leaders in Seikgyi Town, Noh T'Kaw (Kyainseikgyi) Township and declared [arbitrary rules based on martial] law for villages [in the township] to follow. The headquarter commander enacted a rule forbidding people to go out of their house after 6:00 pm. [Since then,] those villagers that don't follow the law are arrested, [without possibility to pay for that person's release]. Muslim believers have to worship before 5:00 pm and Buddhist monks also have to go for the ritual morning food donation [alms giving] at 6:00 am; everyone must follow this law. [Even] a person with a critical medical condition is allowed to be sent to the hospital only after informing the village leaders, who will then inform [ask for permission to] SAC leaders.

[On the evening of that] 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 [the day the law was enacted], T---, a 13-year-old standard [grade] 4 student from S--- village, T'Kuh Hkee village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District, was arrested by the SAC on the road, after visiting a friend in M--- village, Wah Mah village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township. He was arrested on his way back to his village after arriving just after 6:00 pm. That day, when the SAC soldiers returned to W--- village, a seller witnessed them bringing a child with them. The student has been arrested since February, but no one has found him or heard anything about him, as of June 2023. The village leaders went to the same SAC Infantry Battalion #284 camp, based beside Seikgyi Town, and inquired

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<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in March, 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.

<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.

about T---, but the SAC told them that there were no children with them. At the time of arrest, T-- - was travelling on a motorbike with a friend named Saw U---, [a 22-year-old] from P--- village, Noh Taw Pla village tract. No one knows or has heard anything about where the child and his friend were sent.

[A few days after the declaration of martial law in Noh T’Kaw Township,] some young people were arrested [in Seikgyi Town] because they did not travel within the allowed time. Those arrested young people were taken from Seikgyi Town by SAC helicopter and brought to Mawlamyine City. No one knows how the arrested were treated. There were 6 young people in total who were arrested and sent to Mawlamyine on February 18<sup>th</sup> 2023. All were from Seikgyi Town. The SAC did not allow the parents to meet with those arrested young people and bring them back. [As of June 2023, the villagers remain disappeared].

The current situation [freedom to travel] is gradually getting more restricted. It is not as easy for villagers from local villages to go to Seikgyi Town for shopping as it was before, especially for villagers aged 16 to 50, [due to stricter checking by SAC soldiers posted at checkpoints and] the SAC’s enacting rule that no one can leave the house after 6:00 pm. Furthermore, when travelling, people are not permitted to carry any tools that would have the potential to damage or harm others. [For instance, even] if a person carries [only] a lighter or a slingshot, he or she will be arrested. [Villagers are not allowed to transport medicine either.] This type of restricted situation has occurred since SAC imposed martial law and continued as of June 2023, but the situation has not improved [as villagers had hoped], and is becoming more restricted gradually instead.

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

- [“Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: Forcible collection of logs in Hpa-an Township”](#), July 2022
- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager was fatally shot by SAC soldiers while hunting in the forest”](#), February 2023
- [“Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: Healthcare, education and livelihood challenges, armed conflict and displacement”](#), April to May 2022

## 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.khrg.org](http://www.khrg.org).

# Dooplaya (Southeastern Karen State) District

