



Incident Report

November 28th 2024 / KHRG # 24-264-11

Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC soldiers killed five villagers, torturing two and raping a pregnant woman, in Kaw T'Ree Township, in May 2024.

This Incident Report describes events occurring in Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District, in May 2024. On May 19th 2024, State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers from Light Infantry Battalions (LIB) #557, #339, and #311, based in Hpoh Chee Muh army camp (in Hpoh Chee Muh village, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township), were heading towards the Thai-Burma border. When the soldiers reached Ler Klaw village, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, they encountered three male villagers, and the soldiers shot dead one of them when he tried to run away. The two others were forced to follow along with the soldiers to the border. The SAC soldiers also killed and tortured two more villagers on their way to the Thai borderland. When they reached Lay Hpoh Hta area, Kaw T'Ree Township, they encountered another two villagers, a seven-month pregnant woman and a male motorbike driver, who were heading to L--- hospital, Hter Wa Law village tract, and arrested them. The soldiers raped the pregnant woman. Not long after Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and People's Defence Force (PDF) attacked the LIBs soldiers and fighting ensued. Two of the villagers arrested managed to escape during the fighting. However, the pregnant woman and the other arrested villager were shot dead by the SAC soldiers. On May 20th, KNLA soldiers arrested 52 SAC soldiers from Hpoh Chee Muh army camp near Hpoh Chee Muh area, and questioned them. The SAC soldiers confessed what they had done along with that they also killed two more villagers, while they were heading to the Thai-Burma border.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	[Killing, rape and torture] SAC soldiers killed five villagers and raped a pregnant woman
Date of Incident(s)	May 19 th 2024
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [near] Ler Klaw village, Hter Wa Law village tract; • Kyaw Hpya hill farming area, Hter Wa Law village tract²; • between K--- village and C---, village hill farming area; • Lay Hpoh Hta area, Hter Wa Law village tract.

Victim Information

¹ The present document is based on information received in May 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 A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

Name	Naw ³ G---	Saw ⁴ Htoo Ler	H---	Nah Cho	Hpa Hkler Poe
Age	36 years old	20 years old	50 years old	52 years old	60 years old
Gender	Woman	Man	Man	Man	Man
Ethnicity	Karen	Karen	Karen	Karen	Karen
Marital Status	Married	[Unknown]	Married	Married	Married
Occupation	Farmer	Hill farmer	Hill farmer	Hill farmer	Hill farmer
Religion	Christian	Buddhist	Buddhist	Buddhist	Buddhist
Position	Villager	Villager	Villager	Villager	Villager
Village	F--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract	K--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract	C--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract	F--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract	F--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
[Unknown]	[Unknown]	Light Infantry Battalion (LIBs) ⁵ #557, #339, and #311 [under the State Administration Council (SAC) ⁶]	Hpoh Chee Muh army camp, in Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township	Myo Min Thu Operation Commander (G3 ⁷)

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how this information was collected.

A displaced villager from Hter Wa Law village tract informed a KHRG field researcher [about the incidents], and the researcher contacted a local leader [from F--- village]. [The researcher] interviewed (1) Naw G---'s husband, named Saw A---; (2) Naw B---, a village head of C--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract; and (3, 4) two other villagers [from C--- village and F--- village] who knew about the incident. [The researcher also talked to (5) a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁸ officer who was responsible for checking the corpses of H--- and Naw G--- and (6) a village head from J--- village, J--- village tract, Noh T'Kaw (Kya In) Township, Dooplaya District, who was the interpreter for the SAC arrested soldiers.]

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

³ 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

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

⁵ 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.

⁶ The terms Burma Army and SAC are used interchangeably throughout this report to describe Burma's armed forces. Villagers themselves commonly use Burma Army, Burmese soldiers, or alternatively the name adopted by the Burma military regime at the time - since the coup, the State Administration Council (SAC).

⁷ Operations Commander (G3) is an operations, plans and training officer. Also known as strategic/Tactical Commander.

⁸ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

This information is verified because the researcher interviewed (1) Saw A---, Naw G---'s husband who also participated in his wife's funeral. Moreover, the researcher also interviewed: (2) Naw B---, the village head [of C--- village]; (3) E---, a villager [from C--- village]; who knew about the incident [because they both talked to one of the arrested villagers who escaped, H---'s son]; and (4) another villager from F--- village [who saw the body of Naw G---]. [The researcher also] informally talked to a (5) KNLA officer who was responsible to check the corpses [of H--- and Naw G---. He also spoke to (6) the village head from J--- village.]

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On May 19th 2024, soldiers from State Administration Council (SAC) Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs) #557, #339 and #311, based in Hpoh Chee Muh army camp (in Hpoh Chee Muh village, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District), took two villagers hostage and killed five civilians, including a seven-months pregnant woman, while they [the SAC soldiers] were heading towards the Thai-Burma border.⁹ [It is believed that the soldiers fled Hpoh Chee Muh army camp after it was attacked by armed resistance groups].

[On May 20th 2024,] KNLA soldiers arrested 52 SAC soldiers from Hpoh Chee Muh army camp near Hpoh Chee Muh [village], and questioned them on what the SAC soldiers had done on May 19th. The KNLA soldiers and the arrested SAC soldiers passed F--- village, Hter Wa Law, KawT'Ree Township, through the village road, and F--- villagers witnessed 52 SAC soldiers were being arrested by the KNLA soldiers. Karen National Union (KNU)¹⁰ leaders asked the village head of J--- village, J--- village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, to be their Burmese interpreter when they were questioning the SAC soldiers, as he is fluent in Burmese language. [The questioning of SAC soldiers took place in an old temple in K--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract.] Later, KHRG field researcher received the information from the village head.

Incidents near Ler Klaw village, Hter Wa Law village tract:

i. Saw Htoo Ler's killing

According to the account given by Naw B---, a village head from C--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, the SAC soldiers left Hpoh Chee Muh army camp [in order to reach the Thai-Burma border.] When the soldiers reached Ler Klaw village, Hter Wa Law village tract, [on the way to the border,] they encountered three male villagers who were resting in a [farm] hut. The civilians were 50-year-old H---, his son [unknown name and age], and 20-year-old Saw Htoo Ler. Saw Htoo Ler is a villager from K--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract, and H--- and his son are villagers from C--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract. The three villagers were resting in a [farm] hut and eating bananas after they finished their hill farming work. When Saw Htoo Ler saw Burma Army soldiers [approaching], he jumped from the hut and ran away to [try to] escape. The SAC soldiers fired at him with guns and threw two grenades [in his direction] when they saw he was trying to flee. He got shot on his chest and on one of his legs, and was killed on the spot. Villagers from C--- village found one unexploded grenade when they went to see the incident location [and retrieve Saw Htoo Ler's body. It is unknown

⁹ Read more: KHRG, [ထိုင်းပိုင်နက်ထဲ ထွက်ပြေးသည့် ဖူချိမှစခန်း စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်ဖွဲ့ဝင် ၃၁ ဦး မဲဆောက်သို့ ပြန်ပို့ဆောင်](#), May 24th 2024, visited on September 9th 2024.

¹⁰ 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 (NCA) in 2015, following the 2021 coup staged by Burma Army leaders, the KNU officially stated that the NCA has become void.

whether villagers disposed of the unexploded grenade].



These photos were taken in K--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District in May 2024. The left photo shows villagers preparing Saw Htoo Ler's body for burial on May 20th 2024. The right picture shows Saw Htoo Ler's body on a road near a pile of casava trunks. Saw Htoo Ler was shot dead in a hut near Ler Klaw village, Hter Wa Law village tract, by SAC soldiers, when he was trying to ran away from them. [Photos: Local villager]

H--- and his son did not dare to escape [and remained in the farm hut], so the SAC soldiers arrested them and forced H--- and his son to follow along with them [to the Thai-Burma border]. On their way, the SAC soldiers told H---'s son that they would kill him because he does not understand Burmese and had language barriers [could not communicate] with them [likely to follow their orders]. However, one soldier among the [SAC soldiers] did not agree to kill him so he remained alive [his life was spared].

Incidents in Kyaw Hpya hill farming area and between K--- village and C--- village hill farming area, Hter Wa Law village tract:

i. Nah Cho and Hpa Hkler Poe's killing

According to Naw B--- [a village head from C--- village] and E---, a villager also from C--- village who knew about the incident [because they talked to H---'s son], the [SAC] soldiers also shot and killed [and tortured] two more villagers on their way to the Thai borderland [on May 19th 2024]. [H--- and his son were still being forced to follow along with the soldiers.] The villagers' names are Nah Cho and Hpa Hkler Poe, from F--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township.

Nah Cho was shot dead while he was transporting foods on a road passing through Kyaw Hpya hill farming area, Hter Wa Law village tract. Local villagers [from F--- village] who found his body also noticed that his legs and neck were broken in addition to being shot. [These local villagers believe that he was killed by the SAC soldiers who were passing through the area].

Hpa Hkler Poe was beaten to death on a road between K--- village and C--- village hill farming area, Hter Wa Law village tract. Local villagers [from F--- village] found Hpa Hkler Poe's body [on the road in Baw N'Hta area, Hter Wa Wa village tract, near an IDP camp on the Thai-Burma border] a few days later on May 21st 2024, when they were going to [work at] C--- village hill farming area. The villagers who found his body [on the road had heard that there were SAC soldiers passing through the area, and] believe he tried to run away from the SAC soldiers and then was beaten to death by them [, which was confirmed by the detained SAC soldiers upon arrest and questioning]. The villagers who found Hpa Hkler Poe decided to burn his body on the spot [, because it was already in an advanced state of decomposition due to the high temperatures in May 2024.]



This photo was taken in May 2024 in a road between K--- village and C--- village hill farming area, Hter Wa Law village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township. This photo shows the remains of the fire where Hpa Hkler Poe's remains were burned by local F--- villagers, in Baw N'Hta, near a displacement site area, in Hter Wa Law village tract, on May 21st 2024. [Photo: KHRG]

Incidents in Lay Hpoh Hta area, Hter Wa Law village tract:

i. H---'s killing

Naw B--- [the village head from C--- village] further recounted that when the [SAC] soldiers reached Lay Hpoh Hta area [together with the arrested H--- and his son], fighting broke out [between the SAC soldiers and combined forces from the KNLA and People's Defence Force (PDF)¹¹ on a road] near a water canal. [When the KNLA and PDF forces started shooting at them,] the SAC soldiers dispersed and ran for cover. H---'s son laid low on the ground and managed to hide near the water canal [, but his father did not manage to hide and stayed with the SAC soldiers]. The SAC soldiers did not see H---'s son [lost track of him] after he hid [, but since H--- did not hide, they] shot and killed him and retreated [from the canal area].

H---'s son was still lying flat on the ground after the [SAC soldiers left and the] fighting stopped, when the attacking soldiers [from KNLA and PDF spotted him and] asked him [to come] over [to their position] to identify whether he was a soldier or a civilian. He confirmed that he was just a villager so he was not killed [by the KNLA and PDF troops].

ii. Naw G---'s killing

Saw A---'s and his wife, Naw G---, are originally from Hpa-an District. However, they moved to F village, Hter Wa Law village tract, three years ago [in 2021] and acquired a plantation there. They have been farmers since then. According to Saw A---'s account, he was planting cassavas in their plantation; however, he got sick before he could finish planting all of them. On the third day of his illness [on or around May 16th], he told his wife, Naw G--- [, who was seven months pregnant at the time]: *"I can't stand it anymore. I must go to the L--- hospital [located in Hter Wa Law village tract], otherwise I will die."* He and his wife agreed that he would leave first and she could pick him up later. He was too sick to drive a motorbike by himself so his elder brother drove him to the hospital. When he reached the hospital, he asked his brother to accompany his wife. So, his brother went back [to F--- village to do so].

When his brother arrived at Saw A---'s house, one of Saw A---'s children told him that his mother [had already left to] follow his father [to L--- hospital], accompanied by her friend [a motorcycle driver]. Thus, Saw A---'s brother drove back to the hospital and informed him that he

¹¹ 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.

did not meet with his sister-in-law, since she had [already] left the house when he arrived. However, Naw G--- never arrived at the hospital. Saw A---'s blood pressure dropped to 80/40 when he heard [from his brother] that his wife was missing. He was not able to answer all questions being asked by a nurse. He expressed: *"I was intensely ill and laying on a hospital bed. My wife was missing and I was worried for my children and my two nephews who were left behind all by themselves, because there was no one to take care of them [while he and his brother were away]"*. After Saw A--- received one and a half [IV bags], he told a nurse that he had to go find his wife [and left the hospital]. He heard from L--- villagers that the road had been closed by KNU leaders. He went to a pastor's house in L--- village, whom he regularly meets at church, and explained his situation. The pastor warmly hosted him at his house [overnight so he could continue searching for Naw G--- the next day]. [At that time, his brother already had returned to his family, before the road was closed]. He could not sleep at night due to his worriedness, anxiety and stress.

The next day, Saw A--- went back to the hospital, where a nurse told him that [she learned about] a pregnant woman who was shot dead by Burma Army soldiers. Saw A--- hoped it was not his wife. [When the road was opened,] he went home [to F--- village] with the help of another L--- villager. When he arrived, he found a neighbour [unknown name and age] and asked her: *"Where is my wife?"*. She replied: *"I've been waiting for you for so long to tell you about this"*, and she explained to him what had happened [to his wife].

According to Saw A---'s neighbour, [on May 19th] when Naw G--- planned to follow her husband [to the hospital], she met with another [male] friend who was heading [by motorbike] to I--- village, on the Thailand side of the border, to deliver durians. [Since] I--- village is located close to L--- hospital, he offered a ride to Naw G--- and she rode with him. On their way, they were stopped by the Burma Army soldiers, [who still had] H--- and his son [with them]. [As explained by Naw B---'s account of the incidents,] the SAC soldiers killed H--- during the fighting but his son managed to hide and survived. Saw A---'s neighbour said that they also shot and killed Naw G--- during the fighting, but the motorbike driver managed to escape.

According to the account of another female villager [unknown name and age, from F--- village], the Burma Army soldiers shot her [Naw G---] thrice in her abdomen, causing her death. She was seven months pregnant. [The female villager clarified:] *"She was found in the dense wetland [near the canal where the fighting happened] and she had many bullet holes"*.

A KNLA officer who inspected H---'s and Naw G---'s bodies [at the incident place, explained that] before the fighting happened, one of the SAC soldiers [allegedly] raped Naw G---. [Later, a confession was given by one of the arrested SAC soldiers who witnessed the rape, as explained by the interpreter, the village head of J--- village, to KHRG.] Then, [while the fighting was going on,] they shot her thrice in the abdomen, killing her. The SAC soldiers [then] threw two grenades near her body before they fled [from the area, however they did not damage her body because one fell far enough away and the other did not explode]. [As explained by Naw B--- and Saw A---'s neighbour, H--- was also shot dead during the fighting but his son hid himself and survived, and Naw G---'s friend managed to flee].

[Naw G--- is survived by her husband, Saw A---, and their four children.] He faces difficulties after he lost his wife. He was overwhelmed by the incident and, in addition, he is still in the process of recovery [from his illness]. [As of October 2024,] he is [still] intensely suffering. He could not continue the interview [with the KHRG researcher] because he recently went through a tough time and was severely overwhelmed.



Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The three interviewees: (1) Saw A---, Naw G---'s husband; (2) Naw B---, a village head of C--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract; and (3) E---, a villager from L--- village, Hter Wa Law village tract, who knew about the incident, allowed KHRG to use this information.

Further background reading on the situation on killings and rape in Southeast Burma/Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC air strike killed a villager, injured three, and destroyed houses and two schools, in Kaw T'Ree Township, March 2024”](#), August 2024;
- [“Taw Oo District Short Update: SAC shot dead a minor and arbitrarily arrested, detained and tortured a villager in Htaw Ta Htoo Township \(May 2024\)”](#), July 2024;
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelled into villages causing 19 casualties and destruction, and killed a civilian providing humanitarian support, in Kruh Tuh Township \(January and March 2023\)”](#), July 2024;
- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: Man attempts to rape a 19-year-old villager in her home, Kaw T'Ree Township, April 2023”](#), December 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.



Legend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Village Village tract point Army Base Army Camp Major Road Sub-Road Tatmadaw Road Water Kawthoolei Township boundary Kawthoolei District boundary 		Elevation (meter) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -35 - 15 15 - 96 96 - 261 261 - 493 493 - 841 841 - 1,337 1,337 - 2,016 2,016 - 5,711 	Map ID: KHRG_District_Map_Dooplaya Date: 25-Aug-2022 Size: 33.11 X 46.8 inches	KHRG Karen Human Rights Group <small>Documenting the reality of violence in East Burma</small>
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