



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

May 30th 2025 / KHRG # 24-267+459-D1

Hpa-an District Short Update: SAC shelling injured villagers, drug issues and livelihood challenges in T'Nay Hsah and Luh Pleh Townships (March to November 2024)

This Short Update describes events that occurred in T'Nay Hsah Township and Luh Pleh Township, Hpa-an District, from March to November 2024, including shelling by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers, as well as drug-related issues and livelihood challenges faced by villagers. On March 17th 2024, at 4:30 am, SAC soldiers, from Infantry Battalion (IB) #275 army camp, fired mortar shells into Aa--- village, Way Shah village tract, T'Nay Hsah Township, and damaged a villager's house, shop, and car. On October 27th 2024, at around 3 pm, the Burma Army shelled a mortar round in Ab--- village, Yaw Kuh village tract, T'Nay Hsah Township, and injured a 63-year-old woman. On November 28th 2024, in the afternoon, the Burma Army indiscriminately shelled into Ab--- village again, injuring a 12-year-old girl. Moreover, there is a prevalent use of drugs in T'Nay Hsah Township, which is harmful to not only drug users but also their families and neighbours. Additionally, the majority of villagers in Luh Pleh Township, who made their living from farming, faced challenges to secure their livelihoods as, in July 2024, many plantation farms were damaged by flooding. The fighting and an increase in commodity prices are also affecting villagers' livelihood.¹

March to November 2024: SAC shelling in T'Nay Hsah Township

- **March 17th 2024: Shelling into Way Shah village tract**

On March 17th 2024, at 4:30 am, SAC [State Administration Council]² soldiers from Infantry Battalion [IB]³ #275 army camp [based near Myawaddy Town (in Kaw T'Ree Township,

¹ The present document is based on information received from June to December 2024. It was provided by a community member in Hpa-an 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. This document combines several received reports with the following KHRG internal log numbers: # 24-366-D1; #24-366-D2; #24-456-D1 and # 24-459-D1.

² 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.

³ 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,

Doplaya District)], fired mortar shells (120 mm) into Aa--- village, Way Shah village tract⁴, T’Nay Hsah Township, Hpa-an District. Due to the shelling, the house, [car], and shop of a villager named Saw⁵ C--- were burned down. The properties and belongings that were burned down cost around 100,000 THB [USD 3,055]⁶. Saw C--- is 49 years old and he is a Thai national [but his village, Aa--- village, is in Karen State]. He has already repaired the house and shop damaged by the SAC shelling.



These two photos were taken on May 2024, in Aa--- village, Way Shah village tract, T’Nay Hsah Township, Hpa-an District. On March 17th 2024, SAC soldiers from IB #275 army camp, conducted shelling (120 mm) into Aa--- village and two mortar shells landed on and burned a house, a shop, and a car owned by Saw C---. These two photos show the house, shop, and car that were burned by the SAC shelling. [Photos: KHRG]

- **October 27th 2024: Shelling into Yaw Kuh village tract**

On October 27th 2024, at around 3 pm, the Burma Army⁷ [under the command of the SAC; unknown military base] shelled a mortar round into Ab--- village, Yaw Kuh village tract, T’Nay Hsah Township. The shelling injured a 63-year-old woman named Daw⁸ A--- on her lower back. She has one son, one daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren. She had been displaced to Ab--- monastery for her safety when the accident [shelling] happened. Daw A--- was sitting on the fifth step of the ladder at the back of the monastery building, close to a toilet, when the mortar shell landed on the first step of the ladder and the shrapnel struck her lower back.

After this, Daw A--- was sent to Ac--- clinic [administered by the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW)⁹] in Noh Kay village tract, T’Nay Hsah Township, and she arrived [at the clinic] at 4:30 pm. [However, she could not receive proper treatment at this first clinic.] Later, she was transferred to Ad--- clinic, in Noh Hkwee village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an

particularly following the signing of the NCA. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

⁴ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

⁵ ‘Saw’ is male honorific title in S’gaw Karen language.

⁶ All conversion estimates for the Thai bath are based on the May 28th 2024 mid-market exchange rate of 1.00 THB to USD 0.03 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/thb-to-usd-rate?amount=1000>)

⁷ The terms Burma military, Burma Army, junta, 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 2021 coup, the State Administration Council (SAC).

⁸ ‘Daw’ is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person’s name.

⁹ The Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) is the health department of the Karen National Union. It was established in 1956 to address the lack of public healthcare resources in rural Southeast Myanmar. It currently operates a network of community-based clinics in the region, but its capabilities remain limited due to funding constraints.

District. On November 10th 2024, [the doctor at Ad--- clinic] scanned [carried an X-ray] her injury and saw [that some of] the shrapnel remained near her lung. The health workers provided her with some medicine.

After two weeks, on November 23rd [2024], a health worker [at Ad--- clinic] scanned her injury again and informed her that two pieces of shrapnel remained [near her lung] and that it was difficult to operate to remove the shrapnel, so they did not perform surgery on her. The health worker told her that there was no risk [to her life from the injury]. She was discharged [from the clinic] and allowed to return to her house. However, she could not return to her village due to the ongoing fighting, so she went to Ae--- village, Htoh Kaw Ko village tract, to live with her daughter-in-law. She did not receive any support when she was in the [Ad---] clinic. The clinic is a Karen clinic [under KDHW], so the cost was not high. The first injury scan cost about 70,000 Kyat [USD 33.31]¹⁰, and the second time it cost about 30,000 Kyat [USD 14.28].



These photos were taken by local villager on November 26th 2024, in Ad--- clinic, Noh Hkwee village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District. On October 27th 2024, at around 3 pm, Burma Army soldiers shelled a mortar round into Ab--- village, Yaw Kuh village tract, T'Nay Hsah Township, and injured a 63-year-old woman named Daw A--- on her lower back. These photos show Daw A--- receiving treatment in Ad--- clinic. [Photos: Local villager].

- **November 28th 2024: Shelling into Yaw Kuh village tract**

On November 28th 2024, in the afternoon, the Burma Army's Infantry Battalion #97 [under the command of the SAC], based in [Hlaing Wa army camp, near] Kaw T'Ree Town (Kaw T'Ree Township, Doooplaya District), conducted indiscriminate shelling into Ab--- village [again]. [Starting] at 2 pm, after fighting happened between KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army]¹¹

¹⁰ All conversion estimates for the kyat are based on the May 28th 2025 mid-market exchange rate of 1,000 kyat to USD 0.48 (taken from wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate).

¹¹ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

combined forces [with different armed resistance groups] against the Burma military junta [SAC], the Burma Army soldiers conducted indiscriminate shelling.

At around 5 pm, when Naw¹² B--- was changing the water in the flowers' vases and lighting the candles in the shrine, an 81 mm mortar shell landed in front of her house -2 cubits [around 1 meter] away from the house. The shrapnel from the explosion hit the house and Naw B---. She was injured on her left thigh, right calf, and arm. She is 12-year-old and a grade-5¹³ student.

As soon as she was injured, she was sent to the Ac--- clinic, in Noh Kay village tract, and she arrived at the clinic at 6 pm. The healthcare workers checked and cleaned her injury. They said that the shrapnel was stuck deep inside [her thigh] and worried that it could not be removed, so she [the victim] was transferred to the Ad--- clinic the next morning for treatment. [There,] the health worker checked her injury and took out the shrapnel. [Ad--- clinic is administered by KDHW, so the cost of treatment is not high.]

After she [Naw B---] got injured, her mother, named Daw D---, explained to [the KHRG researcher that she told] her daughter that even though the daughter was discharged from the clinic, they dared not go back to stay in their house. She said that they would not go back to their village, even if her daughter had to change schools to study. However, Naw B--- replied that she wanted to return and continue her studies to finish this year and, in the next year, if she had to change schools, she would move and study in another village.

Naw B---'s father passed away when she was young and so she stayed with [was taken care by] her mother.



This photo was taken in November 2024, in Ad--- clinic, Noh Hkwee village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District. On November 28th 2024, SAC Infantry Battalion #97 conducted shelling (81 mm rounds) into Ab--- village, Yaw Kuh village tract, T'Nay Hsah Township, Hpa-an District. The shelling injured a 12-year-old girl, named Naw B---, on her left thigh, right calf, and arm. This photo shows Naw B--- receiving treatment in Ad--- clinic. [Photos: KHRG]

¹² 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

¹³ The KECD uses a nomenclature for school levels where primary school runs from Grade 1 to Grade 6, Grade 7 to Grade 9 is middle school, and high school runs from Grade 10 to Grade 12. The Burma government uses a different grading system, where levels are called 'Standards'.

Drug abuse in T’Nay Hsah Township

In T’Nay Hsah Township, the widespread use of drugs has been negatively affecting users’ health. Additionally, parents have to pay for the treatment and community members also have to deal with the users’ behavioral problems [caused by drug consumption].

Usually, people who distribute drugs are related to armed organisations. On June 6th 2024, KNU [Karen National Union¹⁴] local authorities arrested a drug seller named Saw E---, along with drug buyers and [confiscated] nine motorcycles. Saw E--- is a former PC [KNU/KNLA Peace Council¹⁵] soldier. The arrested people were sent to a [KNLA] military camp (undisclosed location).

Many young people [in T’Nay Hsah Township] are affected by drug usage. Those who distribute drugs are related to armed groups, but people who suffer from it are civilians.

Flooding and other livelihood challenges in Luh Pleh Township

In Luh Pleh Township, Hpa-an District, most people work in farming. In July 2024, many villagers’ plantations, including corn and cassava plantations, were damaged by flooding caused by heavy rains, creating challenges for their livelihoods.

Furthermore, the [currency] exchange rate and commodity prices have increased, negatively impacting villagers. It caused problems for both buyers and sellers. A fish seller [in Htee Kyar Rah village tract, Luh Pleh Township] [informally] explained [to the KHRG researcher] that one of her buyers told her that because sellers had increased the prices, the price [of products] was now higher. However, people [might] not know the sellers’ problems [related to the difficulty to obtain, transport and sell products]. In order to secure their livelihood, they [sellers] have to work even if it is raining or hot, but they receive less profits.

Some people work as truck drivers to support their livelihoods. When they transport things, [what used to be] a one-day journey has turned into a one-month journey or [at least] more than 10 days [as they cannot use the main paved roads due to fighting. The alternative routes lack paved roads]. They have to sleep in their trucks along the way. Moreover, they have to pay many fees at checkpoints [run by the PC, the SAC, or the Border Guard Force (BGF)¹⁶], so they [drivers] receive less profit [overall for the delivery]. To support their families, they have to work, despite the many challenges they face.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ The KNU/KNLA-PC is an armed group based in the Htoh Kaw Koh village tract area, Hpa-an District. It split from the Karen National Union (KNU) and signed a ceasefire agreement with the Myanmar government in 2007 but refused to transform into a Border Guard Force (BGF) in 2010. It signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015 (and is still part of it after the 2021 coup). The group currently operates in Hpa-an and Dooplaya districts.

¹⁶ Border Guard Force (BGF) battalions of the Tatmadaw were established in 2010, and they are composed mostly of soldiers from former non-state armed groups, such as older constellations of the DKBA, which have formalised ceasefire agreements with the Burma/Myanmar government and agreed to transform into battalions within the Tatmadaw (Burma Army).

Further background reading on the situation in Hpa-an District in Southeast Burma/Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [*Forced to Harm: Impacts of the State Administration Council \(SAC\)'s forced recruitment and enactment of the conscription law in Southeast Burma \(January 2024 – February 2025\)*](#), March 2025.
- [*"Photo Set: SAC indiscriminate shelling in Southeast Burma, and its impacts on villagers, January 2023 to February 2024"*](#), June 2024.
- [*"Hpa-an District Situation Update: Extortion of villagers by the BGF, increased gambling, and teenage drug abuse in Ta Kreh Township \(August to October 2023\)"*](#), April 2024.
- [*"Hpa-an District Short Update: Landmine explosions in T'Nay Hsah Township, January to June 2023"*](#), August 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.khrq.org.

