



Incident Report

November 29th, 2024 / KHRG # 24-271-11

Taw Oo District Incident Report: SAC soldiers arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared three villagers in Htaw Ta Htoo Township (April and August 2023)

This Incident Report describes two events that occurred in Htaw Ta Htoo Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District, in April and August of 2023. On April 25th 2023, a married couple, Maung A--- and Ma B---, were arrested at the State Administration Council (SAC) Infantry Battalion (IB) #73 checkpoint which is located in Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract, Htaw Ta Htoo Township, when they were going back to their village, after purchasing some goods in the town. Their family members did not receive notification regarding the reason for their arrest. However, their family believes that the couple were arrested because the SAC soldiers thought they had connections with the People’s Defence Force (PDF). Since their arrest, the couple has disappeared. Similarly, in August 2023, the same SAC IB #73 soldiers arrested Ko C--- at Shway Kyaung Kone Kwet Tit village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract, while Ko C--- and his family members were heading to a displacement camp for shelter. He has been missing since then. No one knows why he was arrested. However, his brother, U D---, is a member of an armed resistance group and believes that the SAC arrested Ko C--- because they could not arrest U D---.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance	
Date of Incident(s)	April 25 th 2023	August 2023 (exact date unknown)
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	State Administration Council (SAC) ² 's Infantry Battalion (IB) ³ #73 checkpoint in Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract ⁴ ,	Shway Kyaung Kone Kwet Tit village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract, Htaw Ta Htoo Township, Taw Oo District.

¹ The present document is based on information received in June 2024. 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.

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, 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.

	Htaw Ta Htoo Township, Taw Oo District.	
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Victim Information			
Name	Maung ⁵ A---	Ma ⁶ B---	Ko ⁷ C---
Age	34 years old	34 years old	Unknown
Gender	Man	Woman	Man
Ethnicity	Bamar ⁸	Bamar	Bamar
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married
Occupation	Shopkeeper	Shopkeeper	Farmer
Religion	Buddhist	Buddhist	Buddhist
Position	Villager	Villager	Villager
Village	E--- village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract	E--- village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract	E--- village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Sayar ⁹ Thet Khaing	Sergeant	Infantry Battalion (IB) #73	Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract	Unknown
Myit Htoo Zaw	Sergeant	Infantry Battalion (IB) #73	Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract	Unknown
Aung Ko Win	Surveillance Officer	Zayetgyi Police Station	Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract	Unknown

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how this information was collected.

A KHRG field researcher reached out to Ko C---'s elder brother, U¹⁰ D---, who is also the village administrator of E--- village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract, Htaw Ta Htoo Township, and Daw¹¹ F---, the mother of Maung A--- and the mother-in-law of Ma B---, about the arbitrary arrest incidents.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

U D---, the older brother of Ko C--- and the village administrator of E--- village, and Daw F---, the mother and mother-in-law of the victims, provided this information.

⁵ 'Maung' is a Burmese male honorific title used before a person's name.

⁶ 'Ma' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

⁷ 'Ko' is a Burmese title meaning older brother. It can be used for relatives as well as non-relatives.

⁸ The majority ethnic group in Myanmar, also known as ethnic Burmese or Burman.

⁹ 'Sayar' (male) is a Burmese term used for any teacher, pastor, or any person to whom one wishes to show respect.

¹⁰ 'U' is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

¹¹ 'Daw' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

Arrest in April 2023 of Maung A--- and Ma B---

On April 25th 2023, two villagers from E--- village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract, Htaw Ta Htoo Township, named Maung A--- (34 years old), and his wife, Ma B--- (34 years old), went to Zayet Gyi Town to purchase some goods to sell. On their way back to E--- village, they were checked and arrested at the State Administration Council's (SAC) Infantry Battalion (IB) #73 checkpoint, in Zayet Gyi Taung Chaung village tract. [As explained by the interviewees, they believe that] the people who arrested the couple are Sergeant Thet Khaing, Sergeant Myin Htu Zaw, from IB #73, and Deputy District Attorney's Surveillance Officer Aung Ko Win, from Zayet Gyi Police Station, [because the three perpetrators have arrested villagers before and IB #73 is the only battalion that is active in the area].

According to villagers, the couple were accused of having connections with the People's Defence Force (PDF)¹² by the SAC, and were arrested by the SAC soldiers. Though they were only purchasing goods for themselves to sell [later], they were [allegedly] accused of supplying rations to the PDF. People who passed by the IB #73 [checkpoint] saw Maung A---'s motorcycle in front of IB #73 [checkpoint]. Therefore, villagers were certain that the couple were arrested [because the couple have been missing since the incident]. There has been no information given about them from the SAC since the two were arrested. When the KHRG researcher asked about the current situation of the couple to U D--- [the village administrator of E--- village], he responded that [he believed] the couple were arrested, tortured, and killed [because he thinks that the SAC believed the couple were selling goods to PDF soldiers since they were merchants. He also added that, for the SAC, this could be a reason to arrest, torture and kill].

Following the incident, the mother of Maung A--- faced livelihood difficulties. She is also worried for her son and her daughter-in-law as she has not been able to contact them [since their arrest].

Arrest of Ko C--- in August 2023:

In August [unknown date] 2023, SAC soldiers arrested Ko C---, a E--- villager, at Zayet Gyi Shway Kyaung Kone Kwet Tit village, Zayet Gyi Taung Chan village tract, Htaw Ta Htoo Township, while he was heading, together with his family members, to a camp for Internally Displaced People (IDPs). [Ko C--- was separated from other family members at the time of his arrest, including his wife, Ma G---.] He is the youngest brother of the village administrator of E-- - village, named U D---, and the husband of Ma G---. Those who arrested him are Sergeant Thet Khaing and Sergeant Myit Htoo Zaw from the SAC IB #73 and Deputy District Attorney's Surveillance Officer Aung Ko Win from Zayet Gyi Police Station [as witnessed by Ma G---, who reported it to U D---]. [Reportedly,] the SAC accused Ko C--- of having contact with the PDF thus, they arrested him and killed him. [U D--- believes that the SAC killed his brother because U D--- is a member of an armed resistance group (name not given) and he is blacklisted by the SAC. Therefore, he believes that his younger brother, Ko C---, was arrested because the SAC were not able to arrest him. In addition, he believes that his brother is dead because the SAC

¹² 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.

has arrested villagers before and they were never seen again after they were arrested].

[At the time of the arrest,] Ma G---, Ko C---'s wife, was eight months pregnant and she encountered difficulties [in her livelihood]. She received support from her relatives as she was struggling to support her five children. From the day Ko C--- was arrested, he was announced dead [by his family].

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

U D---, the village administrator of E--- village [and elder brother of Ko C---,] and the mother of Maung A--- and mother-in-law of Ma B--- gave permission to use this information.

Further background reading on the situation on arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearance in Southeast Burma/Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [*In the Dark - The crime of enforced disappearance and its impacts on the rural communities of Southeast Burma since the 2021 coup*](#), November 2023.
- ["Taw Oo District Short Update: SAC soldiers arbitrarily arrested and detained two villagers, including a 16-year-old, in Daw Hpah Hkoh Township \(July 2024\)"](#), August 2024.
- ["Taw Oo District Short Update: SAC arbitrary arrest, torture, conflict-related sexual violence, house burning and forced labour of villagers in Daw Hpah Hkoh Township \(November 2023\)"](#), October 2024.
- ["Dooطلا District Short Update: Villagers' disappearances and imposition of martial law in Noh T'Kaw Township, from February to March 2023"](#), June 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.

