



Incident Report

December 5th, 2024 / KHRG #24-5-11

Mu Traw District Incident Report: SAC soldiers fatally shot a villager on his farmland in Dwe Lo Township (June 2023)

This Incident Report describes events occurring in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District, in June 2023. On June 11th 2023, Saw H---, a 22-year-old villager from Y--- village, Ma Lay Ler village tract, Dwe Lo Township, was fatally shot by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers next to his farmland. The incident occurred shortly after the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) attacked SAC Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #409 with a tripwire-detonated landmine, while the SAC soldiers were traveling from Meh Way army camp (in Meh Way village tract, Dwe Lo Township) to LIB #409's army camp, located in Hkoo Thoo Hta village tract. Saw H--- helped his family to secure their livelihood, and so the family now faces difficulties.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	[Killing.] A villager was fatally shot by SAC soldiers
Date of Incident(s)	June 11 th 2023
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	[Farmland near] Y--- village, Ma Lay Ler village tract ² , Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information	
Name	Saw ³ H---
Age	22 years old
Gender	Man
Ethnicity	Karen
Marital Status	Single
Occupation	Farming
Religion	Buddhist

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

² A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

³ 'Saw' is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

Position	Villager
Village	Y--- village, Ma Lay Ler village tract, Dwe Lo Township.

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Unknown	Unknown	Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) ⁴ #409, under the State Administration Council (SAC) ⁵	Hkoo Thoo Hta army camp, located in Hkoo Thoo Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township	Captain Thet Naung Soe, Lieutenant Way Yan Kyaw, Lieutenant Shine Moe Aung, and Major Chan Nyein Htun.

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how this information was collected.

After receiving the information from the [Karen National Union (KNU)⁶] District office in Dwe Lo Township, I [the KHRG researcher] conducted an interview with the village head of Y--- village, named Saw A--, as well as with Naw⁷ Z---, Saw H---'s mother, to retrieve the precise information.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

Saw H---'s mother named Naw Z--- and the village head of Y--- village, Saw A---, provided me [the KHRG field researcher] with the information. They knew about the incident because they were in the village when the incident happened and went to carry the dead body from the incident location.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On June 11th 2023, at 5 pm, a villager named Saw H--- (22 years old), living in Y--- village, Ma Lay Ler village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, was fatally shot by State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #409, next to his farmland, while he was about to leave to his village. The SAC soldiers shot a bullet at him that hit the left side of his chest and killed him instantly.

⁴ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

The incident happened one to two hours after Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁸ soldiers attacked soldiers from LIB #409 with a tripwire-detonated landmine, while they [SAC soldiers] were travelling from Meh Way army camp [located at Meh Way village tract, Dwe Lo Township] to Hkoo Thoo Hta army camp [located at Hkoo Thoo Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township]. [Shortly after villagers saw LIB #409 soldiers leaving Y--- village, where they rested for a while, the killing incident occurred.] [Villagers believe that] when they [SAC LIB #409 soldiers] arrived at Saw H---'s farmland [located near Y--- village], they encountered him and shot at him next to the farmland.

The parents of Saw H---, [other] villagers, and local authorities went to [the incident place when hearing the sound and] carried the dead body home, 20 to 30 minutes after his death. It is unknown which soldier from LIB #409 shot at Saw H---. [SAC] LIB #409 is led by Captain Thet Naung Soe, Lieutenant Way Yan Kyaw, Lieutenant Shine Moe Aung, and Major Chan Nyein Htun. It is also unknown who led [or authorised] them [to shoot at Saw H---].

On June 12th 2023, at 1:30 pm, Saw H--- was buried in the village's cemetery. Although he is not the main breadwinner, he tried to help his parents on the farmland. With the death of Saw H---, his parents were mourning, experiencing heart problems [emotional distress], and they were befuddled and struggled to work. His mother, named Naw Z---, reported: *"I have no one to take care of us with the death of my son. We cannot work [much] as we are getting old. I don't know what we are going to do to secure our livelihood. It has become a great difficulty for our livelihood."*

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The victim's family and the village head allowed KHRG to use [publish] the information with proper censoring.

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

- ["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;
- ["Mergui-Tavoy District Incident Report: Arbitrary arrest and killing of a villager by the SAC in K'Ser Doh Township, October 2023"](#), March 2024;
- ["Doo Tha Htoo District Incident Report: A male villager was arrested, tortured and killed by the SAC in Kyeh Htoh Township, in July 2023"](#), January 2024.

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.

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

