



## Incident Report

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 / KHRG # 24-5-12

## Mu Traw District Incident Report: SAC shelling killed a villager and destroyed plantations (September 2023)

*This Incident Report describes events occurring in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District, in September 2023. On September 21<sup>st</sup> 2023, at 9 am, combined soldiers from the State Administration Council (SAC)'s Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs) #401, #402, #404, #407, #408, and #410, stationed at Ma Htaw village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, fired seven mortar rounds towards O--- village, Ma Hta village tract, Dwe Lo Township, after they conducted air reconnaissance with drones. At the time, many villagers were gathered in O--- village for a funeral procession. As a result of the shelling, a 72-year-old villager, who was in her hut near the village, was killed on the spot. The other mortar rounds fell into villagers' farmlands and destroyed some of the rice paddies. Villagers were displaced due to the fear of SAC constant attacks.<sup>1</sup>*

### Part 1 – Incident Details

<b>Type of Incident</b>	A villager was killed by [SAC] shelling
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	September 21 <sup>st</sup> 2023
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	O--- village, Ma Htaw village tract <sup>2</sup> , Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

### Victim Information

<b>Name</b>	Naw <sup>3</sup> U---
<b>Age</b>	72 years old
<b>Gender</b>	Woman
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Karen
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married
<b>Occupation</b>	Farmer
<b>Religion</b>	Buddhist

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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

<b>Position</b>	Villager
<b>Village</b>	L--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District.

<b>Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)</b>				
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Commander's Name</b>
Unknown	Unknown	State Administration Council (SAC)'s <sup>4</sup> Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs) <sup>5</sup> #401, 402, 404, 407, 408, 410	Ma Htaw village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township	LIB #407's Commander is Htun Min Lett, and LIB #408's Commander is Yin Moo. [The other Commanders' names are unknown.]

## **Part 2 - Information Quality**

### **1. Explain in detail how this information was collected.**

Upon receiving this information from Ma Htaw village tract authorities [under Karen National Union (KNU)<sup>6</sup> administration], [the KHRG researcher] proceeded to interview Naw U---'s son, named Saw<sup>7</sup> T---, and the village head of O--- village, named Hpah<sup>8</sup> E---, in order to gather precise details related to this incident.

### **2. Explain how the source verified this information.**

Naw U---'s son, Saw T---, and the village head, Hpah E---, provided crucial information regarding the incident. Saw T--- [witnessed the incident because he] was staying in his farmland while the incident took place. The village head went to the incident place to see Naw U--- after the incident.

## **Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident**

### **Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.**

On September 21<sup>st</sup> 2023, at 9 am, combined soldiers from the State Administration Council (SAC)'s Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs) #401, #402, #404, #407, #408, and #410, stationed at Ma Htaw village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, conducted

<sup>4</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 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 'Saw' is a male honorific title in S'gaw Karen language used before a person's name.

<sup>8</sup> 'Hpah' is an informal S'gaw Karen title used for men, which appears before the person's name.

reconnaissance with a drone on the area of O--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, and identified a large gathering of people who were attending the funeral of a villager from O--- village who had passed away from an illness the day before. Then, the SAC fired seven mortar rounds at the village where the funeral was taking place.

Two 81mm mortar rounds landed in a farmland [located in W--- place, next to O--- village,] which belonged to a 72-year-old villager named Naw U--- [while she was staying inside of her farmland's hut]. The shrapnel hit the right side of her head and killed her instantly. In addition, shrapnel [from the two 81mm shells] also destroyed a solar panel, a wall of [Naw U---'s farm] hut and a [structural] post [underneath the hut]. A 120mm mortar round also fell in the farmland of a villager named Hpah E---, and another fell near his house [in O--- village]. Some other mortar rounds fell onto Saw H--- and Saw A---'s farmlands [in O--- village] and destroyed some of their [rice] paddies. According to Hpah E---, the village head from O--- village, there would be more casualties if mortar rounds had fallen on the group of people [attending the funeral] on that day.

Naw U--- lived in L--- village, Ma Htaw village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District [located approximately 1.6 km from O--- village]. However, Naw U--- became afraid of remaining at L--- village [due to the SAC's shelling], so she went to stay [in her farm hut] in W--- place [where she believed she would be safer]. After the death of Naw U---, the village head of O--- village [Hpah E---], a village administrator, and villagers went to collect her corpse from the incident location. On September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023, at 1 pm, Naw U--- was buried at W--- place in the forest next to her [farm's] hut.

The SAC's relentless shelling has claimed lives and caused injuries among villagers, compelling some to seek refuge in the forest, or stay at their huts located in the hill fields, and farmlands. This situation has led students to study in huts meant for cows and buffaloes, sometimes in other people's houses, and some students have to study in the forest. Currently, villagers are vigilant of SAC [troops] entering the village, shelling, [conducting] air strikes and drone attacks, and they are constantly in fear of SAC attacks.

#### **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 village head allowed KHRG to use the provided information.

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

- [Striking Fear: Impacts of State Administration Council \(SAC\) shelling on villagers' lives in Southeast Burma \(January to October 2023\)](#), December 2023.
- ["Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: Indiscriminate shelling causing 11 casualties, destruction, and mass displacement in Tha Htoo Township, May 2024"](#), November 2024.
- ["Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling and air strikes resulted in civilian casualties, property destruction and displacement, in Kruh Tuh Township, December 2023"](#), August 2024.
- ["Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling killed a villager and damaged houses in Kruh Tuh Township \(May and September 2023\)"](#), September 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.khr.org](http://www.khr.org).

