



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

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Hpa-an District Situation Update: Fighting, displacement, education and healthcare challenges, and traveling restrictions in Ta Kreh Township (April to June 2025)

This Situation Update describes events occurring in Ta Kreh (Paingkyon) Township, Hpa-an District, during the period between April to June 2025, including fighting, displacement, scarcity of clean water, education and healthcare challenges, and travel restrictions. Between April and June 2025, conflict in Ta Kreh Township escalated as the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) captured five State Administration Council (SAC) army camps, prompting fears of SAC air strikes and displacing civilians both internally and into Thailand. In mid-April 2025, fighting further intensified between the SAC and joint KNLA-People's Defence Force (PDF) troops in the area between Kruh Tuh and Kaw T'Ree towns, in nearby Dooplaya District, displacing around 315 households to Ta Kreh Township and yet more to T'Nay Hsah (Nabu), and Doo Yaw (Don Yin) townships. The displaced villagers are facing shortages of shelter, food, and clean water. Some schools in Ta Kreh Township reopened but continued to struggle with a lack of teachers and materials, and barriers to enrol displaced children without proof of their studies. There is also a shortage of clinics, medicine, and health workers in Ta Kreh Township. In May 2025, many villagers suffered from diarrhoea due to unclean water. Furthermore, ongoing travel restrictions and checkpoint fees further disrupted transportation to the main cities in the district, including Hpa-an Town, and raised prices.¹

Fighting caused displacement in Ta Kreh (Paingkyon) Township

Between April and May 2025, five clashes occurred between the State Administration Council (SAC)² and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)³, under the Karen National Union (KNU)⁴, at SAC army camps in Ta Kreh (Paingkyon) Township, Hpa-an District, near the Thai-Burma border. Key incidents included:

¹ The present document is based on information received in May and July 2025. 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. This document combines several received reports with the following KHRG internal log numbers: #25-165-S1, #25-220-D1, #25-251-D1 and #25-220-A1-I1.

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. The military junta changed its name in July 31st 2025 to State Security and Peace Commission (SSPC).

³ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

⁴ 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

- The KNLA capturing Maw Hpa Thu army camp, on April 18th -19th 2025;
- the KNLA capturing T'Hkaw Bee Kwee (Lay P'Nah Dee) army camp, during May 8th – 9th 2025;
- the KNLA capturing Ta Leh army camp, Aa--- village, Thay Maw Kuh village tract⁵, during May 9th – 13th 2025;
- the KNLA capturing Maw Kwee Luh army camp, near Ab--- village, Thay Maw Koo village tract, during May 15th – 16th; and
- the KNLA capturing Maw Poe Kay army camp, during May 18th – 19th 2025.

As the KNLA seized these camps, villagers from villages near the army camps fled across the Thaung Yin (Moei) river into Thailand for temporary safety.

Increasing number of displaced villagers:

In mid-April 2025, fighting intensified between the KNLA forces (supported by the People's Defence Force [PDF]⁶) and the State Administration Council [SAC] in the area between Dooplaya District and Hpa-an District, particularly near Kaw T'Ree and Kruh Tuh towns. As a result, some villagers from nearby areas, [such as] T'Hka Kloh village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, and Kaw Wa Laing village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, fled to safer townships like T'Nay Hsah (Nabu), Ta Kreh (Paingkyon), and Doo Yaw (Don Yin), of Hpa-an District.

By June 2025, there were around 315 new households displaced in Ta Kreh Township, pushing the total number of internally displaced villagers in the township to nearly 5,000. These displaced civilians faced severe challenges, including housing shortages, financial struggles to build temporary shelters, inadequate food and clean water, constant fear due to hearing daily air strikes and mortar fire, and disrupted [access to] education for children.



These two photos were taken in May 2025, in Ac--- village, Pata village tract, Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District. These photos show the challenging living conditions at two temporary shelters for displaced villagers in Ac--- village, including poor roofing made with old materials and a lack of water drainage around houses. [Photos: KHRG]

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.

⁵ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

⁶ 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.

Scarcity of drinking water:

Every April, local villagers and those internally displaced face severe drinking water shortages due to rising temperatures. As the temperatures have increased year by year, the water in wells, ponds, and streams has dried up, reducing access to clean water for local people.

Some of the local people rely on mountain water sources, but the water becomes polluted by early rains in May. As a result, villagers are forced to store and use rainwater for cooking and drinking. The underground water has also increased and polluted the water in wells and ponds, which changes colour and becomes difficult to drink [polluted and dirty].

Healthcare situation and the difficulties in Ta Kreh Township:

There is a shortage of clinics, medicine, doctors, nurses, and health workers in Ta Kreh Township, Hpa-an District. Despite this, health organisations like the KDHW [Karen Department of Health and Welfare]⁷ and Backpack [Backpacker Health Work Team (BPHWT)⁸] continue to provide healthcare in villages and village tracts in Ta Kreh Township.

In May 2025, many civilians suffered from diarrhoea. [Those who fell ill were treated by KDHW and BPHWT, as needed.]

Education access and difficulties in Ta Kreh Township:

In June 2025, despite schools opening [for the start of the new school year], there was a shortage of school buildings, teachers, and notebooks, similar to previous years, due to the high number of students [coming from other areas] and the lack of access to school supplies.

Many students are internally displaced villagers, and some lack school-leaving certificates [records of study to transfer schools], leading to their rejection from Burma government schools [schools run by the SAC since the 2021 coup]. Some schools limit the number of students, so it becomes a challenge for some students to attend school. [Displaced villagers are able to access community schools in the township, supported by the Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD)⁹.]

Ongoing fighting in the areas around Kaw T'Ree and Kruh Tuh towns [along the border of Hpa-an District and Dooplaya District], together with frequent sounds of air strikes and shelling, causes fear and anxiety among students, teachers, and civilians in villages in nearby areas such as Pa Ta village tract, Daw Lan village tract, and La K'Man village tract, located in Ta Kreh Township.

Travel restrictions in Hpa-an District:

As the conflict intensifies in Kaw T'Ree and Kruh Tuh towns, Dooplaya District, villagers increasingly rely on the main road connecting Myawaddy, T'Nay Hsah (Nabu) Township, Htee Loh (Hti Lon) Township, and Hpa-an Town, in Hpa-an District, for travel and transportation.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Backpack Health Worker Team (BPHWT) is an organisation that provides health care and medical assistance to displaced civilians inside Burma.

⁹ The Karen National Union's Education and Culture Department is the education department of the Karen National Union. Its main goals are to provide mother tongue education services to rural Karen populations in Southeast Myanmar, as well as to preserve the Karen language, culture and history. Despite being an important education provider in the region, it is not officially recognised by the Myanmar government.

There are many gates [checkpoints] set up by armed groups [the KNU/KNLA-Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC)¹⁰ and the Border Guard Force (BGF)¹¹] and the SAC along the main road to collect fees.

During April to June 2025, new temporary gates [checkpoints] were set up on the [smaller] roads between villages [by different armed groups], where fees are collected from drivers [depending on the number of travellers]. As a result, commodity prices remain high, and villagers face challenges in traveling. In early June 2025, the SAC repaired a bridge near Ad---village, Kyet Yway village tract, Ta Kreh Township, which caused traffic disruptions and difficulties for transportation and passengers. [The bridge was damaged by flooding earlier in 2025.]

In locally-defined Karen State, many cars and motorcycles do not have [SAC-issued] licenses. Starting on June 1st 2025, the SAC launched a national project to impound unlicensed vehicles, including in Karen State and Hpa-an Town [Hpa-an Township]. As a result, some civilians' cars and motorcycles have been seized, making it difficult for local people to travel to Hpa-an Town for shopping, visiting markets, or receiving medical treatment at hospitals and clinics. Only licensed vehicles are allowed to enter Hpa-an Town, so villagers have to gather and share rides in licensed cars. Local villagers reported that the armed groups [KNU/KNLA-PC and BGF] did not seize the cars.

In the past, unlicensed vehicles could travel freely, and if they were stopped, owners only had to pay fines. Now, once cars and motorcycles are seized, the owners cannot pay to get their vehicles back. In Ta Kreh Township, unlicensed vehicles have not yet been seized, but travel to Hpa-an and Lu Pleh [Hlaingbwe] towns has become difficult. As many unlicensed cars and motorcycles have been impounded [in Hpa-an Town], the price of licensed cars and motorcycles has increased.

¹⁰ The KNU/KNLA-PC is an armed group based in the Hto 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 are still part of it after the 2021 coup). They currently operate in Hpa-an and Dooplaya districts.

¹¹ 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.

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

- [*Undeniable: War crimes, crimes against humanity and 30 years of villagers' testimonies in rural Southeast Burma*](#), December 2022.
- ["Hpa-an District Short Update: SAC shelling injured villagers, drug issues and livelihood challenges in T'Nay Hsah and Luh Pleh Townships \(March to November 2024\)"](#), May 2025.
- ["Hpa-an District Incident Report: a Burma Army drone strike injured two teachers and one child, and damaged a school building in Ta Kreh Township \(September 2025\)"](#), November 2025

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.khrgh.org.

