



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

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Taw Oo District Short Update: SAC activities, March to April 2022

This Short Update describes events that occurred in Htaw Ta'Htoo (Htantabin) Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District, during the period between March and April 2022. In March 2022, State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers and police came into A--- village, Mo Kaung village tract, Htaw Ta'Htoo Township several times and threatened villagers by firing guns. In April 2022, SAC soldiers also entered A--- village twice, rummaged around villagers' huts outside of the village, and conducted an investigation in the village following the shooting of a da lan [SAC informant] in a nearby village.¹

SAC activities

On March 26th 2022, State Administration Council (SAC)² police and soldiers who are believed to be from Z'Yat Gyi New Town entered A--- village, Mo Kaung village tract³, Htaw Ta'Htoo (Htantabin) Township, Taw Oo (Toungoo) District between 10:00 and 11:00 pm through the road at the western side of the village. Neither unit of soldiers and police who came was known [identifiable] because it was dark and they could not be seen clearly [by the villagers]. According to a villager, the police who came were wearing their uniform but the soldiers were not. As the soldiers did not wear their military uniform when they came, villagers didn't know which unit they were from. However, they were assumed to be from somewhere nearby because [over the next few days] they were able to come and leave frequently. They came with four motorcycles, and there were two people on each motorcycle. They used the main road in the village when they left, and they fired around seven to eight rounds of gunfire when they reached the bridge at the entrance of the village [before leaving the village]. At 10:00 pm on March 27th 2022, they entered the village again and fired guns in the village. On March 28th 2022, they came into the village at around 8:00 or 9:00 pm and questioned villagers. The firing of both big and small weapons could be heard at the entrance of the village, as they were leaving. Since the SAC have repeatedly fired guns in the village, villagers are now very afraid and they feel that there is

¹ The present document is based on information received in March and April 2022. 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 A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

a lack of security for them as they always have to live in fear. Also, no one knew the purpose and reason behind these actions.

On April 15th 2022, more than 10 SAC soldiers from an unidentified unit came into A--- village again. They carried weapons with them when they came. These soldiers were in the village for a while and then left at around 8:00 or 9:00 am. However, when they left, they did not return to the place that they came from. They were patrolling outside the village, entered villagers' huts [located outside of the village] and rummaged around the huts. After they finished searching the villagers' huts, they came back to the village again at around 11:00 am [on April 15th, the same day]. The morning that they came back to the village [the second time that day], there was a communion in an Anglican church, and people attending the church were afraid because of the presence of SAC soldiers outside the church.

On April 14th 2022, a *da lan* [an informant or spy] who lived in a Burmese [Bamar] village near A--- village was shot. As a result, on April 16th 2022, SAC soldiers returned to A--- village again because they heard that there were members of the People's Defence Force (PDF)⁴ in the village. Upon arriving, they entered a villager's house, and one of the soldiers pointed his gun at a man who was in a hammock. However, the soldiers finally left the house because that man didn't do anything [was not found to have any connection with the PDF]. Since the SAC soldiers came and conducted investigations in the village, school teachers from the village who participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM)⁵ are afraid and worried. Villagers also no longer dare to stay in their huts [outside the village].

Further background reading on the situation of SAC activities in Taw Oo District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Taw Oo District Short Update: Killing, shelling, displacement, and the destruction of a COVID-19 screening checkpoint and villagers' belongings by SAC soldiers, March 2022"](#), March 2022.
- ["Taw Oo District Incident Report: A villager's house was damaged by indiscriminate gunfire from a drunk SAC military officer in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, August 2021"](#), December 2021.
- ["Taw Oo District Incident Report: Killing case in Daw Hpa Hkoh Township, July 2021"](#), December 2021.

⁴ 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.

⁵ On February 2nd 2021, healthcare workers at state-run hospitals and medical facilities across Burma/Myanmar spearheaded what is being referred to as a Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) consisting of labour strikes in protest against the February 1st 2021 military coup. The movement quickly spread to include civil servants from all sectors of the government who are walking off their jobs as a way of non-recognition and non-participation in the military regime. Because of the popularity of the movement, and its seminal role in wider protests across the country, some people have begun using it as a catch-all phrase to include other protest forms like boycotts and pot-banging.

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.khrg.org.

Taw Oo (Toungoo) District

