



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

April 28th 2022 / KHRG # 22-96-D1

Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: Deliberate SAC shelling at religious event results in civilian deaths, injuries and property damage in Tha Htoo Township, September 2021

This Short Update describes events that occurred in W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract, Tha Htoo (Thaton) Township, Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District on March 19th 2022, in which the SAC military deliberately shelled the village while villagers were gathering for a religious event. As a result of the shelling, three villagers, including a 7-year-old boy, were killed; 11 villagers, including two children, were injured, and villagers' possessions, such as three cars and two motorcycles, were damaged.¹

Deliberate Shelling

On March 19th 2022 at 9:00 pm, State Administration Council (SAC)² Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)³ #9, based with Artillery Unit # 402 in Way Raw (Win Pa) village, fired two mortars into W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract⁴, Tha Htoo (Thaton) Township, Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District where a religious (Buddhist) event was taking place.

¹ The present document is based on information received on March 22nd 2022. It was provided by a community member in Doo Tha Htoo 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.

²The 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 Burma, the executive branch of the government. Min Aung Hlaing assumed the role of SAC chairperson following the coup.

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⁴ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.



This photo was taken on March 19th 2022 in W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract, Tha Htoo Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The photo shows a tail fin from a mortar fired by SAC LIB #9. [Photo: Local villager]

Deaths

As a result of the shelling by SAC troops, three villagers, including a 7-year-old boy, were killed. The three villagers killed by shrapnel from the SAC attack were Daw⁵ Day Tho (aged 50) and Saw⁶ Eh Hpoh Hser (aged 7), both from W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract, Tha Htoo Township, and Daw Ngway Kyi (aged 54) from H--- village, Maw Lay village tract, Tha Htoo Township. One of the victims, Daw Ngway Kyi was selling balloons at the religious event during the incident. Daw Ngway Kyi regularly sold balloons at festival events in the community to provide for her family's livelihood, so it is a great lost for her family.



These photos were taken on March 19th 2022 in W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract, Tha Htoo Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. These photos show two villagers who were killed by the SAC mortar shelling. [Photos: Local villager]

Injuries

Moreover, the SAC attack resulted in 11 villagers being injured, including two children living in G--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract. Two villagers were seriously injured [in critical situation], including a 12-year-old boy Saw S---.

The 11 injured villagers are from G--- village, K--- village, M--- village and W--- village in T'Maw Daw village tract and L--- village in T'Ree Hkee village tract, Tha Htoo Township and also Lay Taing [Section], Thaton Town. They are: Naw⁷ I--- (age 6), Saw S--- (age 12), Naw Z--- (age 19), Saw N--- (age 20), Saw E--- (age 26), Saw Y--- (age 27), Naw O--- (age 27), Saw A--- (age 44),

⁵ Daw is Burmese honorific title for female adults, a married woman or a woman of a higher social position.

⁶ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

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

Naw B-- (age 28), T--- (age 27) and H--- (age 32). The villagers suffered a range of injuries to their legs, feet, back, stomach, upper chest, head, eyes (blurred vision), and face.



These photos were taken on March 19th 2022 in W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract, Tha Htoo Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. These photos show two of the villagers injured by SAC mortar shelling. [Photos: Local villager]

The injured villagers covered their medical expenses through donations that were collected in the village. No external organisations have helped cover medical expenses.

Based on an update from a KHRG researcher on March 22nd 2022, 12-year-old Saw S--- is now recovering at the local hospital in U--- village, Ta T'Reh village tract, Hpa-an Township. Two other injured villagers are now recovering at the local hospital in T'Maw Daw village tract, and the remaining eight villagers are receiving treatment at home. There were no villagers displaced by the shelling. However, villagers fear more SAC shelling and therefore sleep every night in the makeshift bunkers under their houses.

There are about 229 households and an estimated 1,473 villagers living in W--- village. On the day the religious event took place, there were about 50 to 60 villagers who had joined the event. Regarding the shelling by SAC troops into the religious event, one villager from W--- village stated, *"It is not an event held by the enemy. It is not Karen Revolution Day. It is not Karen Martyrs' Day. It is not appropriate that they were firing mortars into the event."*

Property Damage

In addition, as a result of the SAC shelling, three cars and two motorcycles owned by local villagers were damaged [while the villagers were attending the event in W--- village]. Specifically, one car and one motorcycle owned by Daw B--- from C--- village, one car owned by U⁸ D--- from F--- village, one car owned by Saw Q--- from J--- village, and one motorcycle owned by Saw X--- from W--- village, were damaged.

⁸ U is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.



KHRG received these photos on March 23rd 2022. These photos were taken in W--- village, T'Maw Daw village tract, Tha Htoo Township, Doo Tha Htoo District and show a damaged car and motorcycle belonging to local villagers. [Photos: Local villager]

Further background reading on the security situation in Doo Tha Htoo District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- *“Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: Ongoing fighting in Bilin Township leads to more than 2,000 IDPs, as well as injury and property damage, December 21st 2021 to January 11th 2022”, March 2022.*
- *“Doo Tha Htoo District Situation Update: Forced portering and the use of civilians as human shields, and updates on livelihood, health and education, August to September 2021”, February 2022.*
- *“Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: Forced labour, looting and skirmishes been the SAC and the KNLA, August 2021”, December 2021.*

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.khr.org.

Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District

