



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

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Doolaya District Situation Update: SAC shelling and fighting causing casualties, destruction, and displacement; healthcare and livelihood challenges; land confiscation; and drug issues in Noh T’Kaw and Kruh Tuh Townships (November 2023 to February 2024).

This Situation Update describes events that occurred in Noh T’Kaw and Kruh Tuh Townships, Doolaya District, from November 2023 to February 2024, including fighting, healthcare challenges, commodity price increases, and State Administration Council (SAC) shelling that resulted in death, injuries, destruction, and displacement. In November, SAC soldiers were occupying Seik Gyi hospital, in Seik Gyi Town, Noh T’Kaw Township, resulting in challenges for villagers to obtain healthcare. Fighting also broke out between the People’s Defence Force (PDF) and SAC soldiers near Chaung Nhit Khwa Bridge in Chaung Nhit Khwa village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, resulting in the destruction of the bridge, which increased commodity prices. SAC soldiers also occupied houses in Chaung Nhit Khwa village tract. Fighting in this area between PDF and SAC soldiers also resulted in 42 houses being burned. On December 18th and 19th 2023, SAC soldiers from Infantry Battalion (IB) #230, based at Thee Ho Tar camp in Kaw T’Ree Township, shelled rounds of mortar into Ae--- village, Taung Kyain village tract, Kruh Tuh Township, killing one villager and injuring two villagers. Since November 2023, the ongoing conflict in Noh T’Kaw and Kruh Tuh Townships forced villagers to flee and struggle to sustain their livelihoods. Furthermore, in January 2024, SAC soldiers forcibly expanded their camp near Ad--- village, T’Hka Kloh village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, taking over 65 acres of land which included villagers’ houses and plantations. In Noh T’Kaw Township, youth are increasingly struggling with drug and gambling addiction, leading to theft. During the reporting period, SAC soldiers increased their activities, including aircraft reconnaissance, in Kruh Tuh and Noh T’Kaw Townships.¹

Issues affecting Noh T’Kaw Township in November and December 2023

SAC fighting in Seik Gyi Town:

On November 17th 2023, fighting broke out between the Kawthoolei Army (KTLA)² and the State Administration Council (SAC)³ in Seik Gyi Town, Noh T’Kaw Township, Doolaya District. As a

¹ The present document is based on information received in January and February 2024. It was provided by a community member in Doolaya 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 Kaw Thoo Lei Army (KTLA) was founded on July 17th 2022 by Brigadier-General Nerdah Bo Mya. Nerdah Bo Mya, former Commander-In-Chief of the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO), was dismissed by the KNU in 2022. KTLA operates in two districts in Southeast Burma, in KNU-controlled areas, namely Mergui-Tavoy

result of fighting, [SAC] soldiers from Infantry Battalions (IBs)⁴ #32, #283 and #284 continuously conducted mortar shelling into the town, and many civilians were injured and killed [exact number unknown]. [Fighting and shelling happened regularly in the month of November.⁵]

At that time [during the fighting period], SAC soldiers stayed in Seik Gyi public hospital [administered by the SAC] at night in order to use the hospital as cover. Therefore, villagers were not allowed to go to the hospital at night but they were allowed to go to the hospital only during the daytime. Starting from that period [during SAC soldiers' stay in the hospital], pregnant women were not allowed at Seik Gyi hospital [because pregnant women would need to sleep overnight at the hospital].

Healthcare challenges:

In December 2023 [exact date unknown], a woman from a nearby village faced problems delivering her baby in her village, so she was sent to Seik Gyi hospital. On her way to the hospital, the baby was halfway delivered, so the doctor [at the hospital] helped her deliver the baby when she arrived at the hospital. As soon as she delivered her baby, the doctor asked her to go back [to her village] immediately. A villager from Aa--- village, Noh T'Kaw village tract⁶, Noh T'Kaw Township, explained the situation: *"Now, patients can only go to the hospital during the day, and have to return at 4 pm. In the past two weeks, I heard from people that a pregnant woman could not deliver her baby in the village, so she came by car [to the hospital]. Actually, as we had known, pregnant women were not allowed to come [to the hospital] for a long time, because pregnant women [usually] needed to sleep at the hospital [after giving birth]. The [SAC] soldiers did not allow people to sleep [in the hospital] because they [SAC] stayed inside the hospital. The nurses also dared not stay in the hospital. When that pregnant woman arrived at the hospital, she was helped in delivering her baby. A few hours after she delivered the baby, she had to go back. As I am a woman, it will be a serious problem for me."*

and Dooplaya districts. In Dooplaya District, they operate in alliance with resistance armed groups. KTLA battalions in Mergui-Tavoy District are in conflict with both SAC and KNLA troops.

³ 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.

⁴ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most 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. They are primarily used for garrison duty but are sometimes used in offensive operations.

⁵ KHRG, ["Dooplaya District Situation Update: SAC shelling and air strikes causing 24 civilian casualties and damaging civilian property; extensive house burning and use of human shields; and a landmine explosion, in Dooplaya District \(October to December 2023\)"](#), February 2025.

⁶ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

These two photos were taken in December 2023, in Seik Gyi Town, Noh T’Kaw Township, Dooplaya District. Starting in November 2023, SAC soldiers from Infantry Battalions (IBs) #32, #283, and #284 occupied the hospital in Seik Gyi Town. These two photos show the public hospital where SAC soldiers stayed and barred villagers from coming inside at night. [Photos: KHRG]

Displacement challenges and commodity price increase:

In November 2023, fighting broke out between People’s Defence Force (PDF)⁷ combined forces and SAC soldiers for one month in Chaung Nhit Khwa village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township. The villagers in Ab--- village fled to nearby villages and some fled to Ac--- village, Kyauck Kay Hkoh village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township. Villagers were displaced for three months. Villagers received support once [exact details unknown], but they faced livelihood challenges because they were not in their own village [as they were displaced]. Therefore, the villagers just did the work that was available as daily labour. When the PDF gained control of the village [Ab--- village], villagers were able to return to their village and take some of their clothes [or even stay, for those who were not afraid]. After the SAC occupied the village, villagers dared not return to their village. The SAC did not allow villagers to harvest their crops, even though the crops needed to be harvested, so the crops were ruined. During the period of fighting, 42 houses of villagers were burned. Villagers were afraid to return to their village due to the SAC soldiers who were living in the village. [During this period, KHRG also received an incident report of an SAC air strike on November 24th 2023, in Ab--- village.⁸]

SAC and Border Guard Force (BGF)⁹ soldiers based at Chaung Nhit Khwa Bridge, which is on the road that connects Noh T’Kaw Township and Waw Ray (Win Yin) Township, collected a fee [from people crossing the bridge]. As there is a current conflict, fighting was happening [between the SAC and combined armed resistance groups] while SAC soldiers were based at the bridge. As a result, the bridge was destroyed on November 17th 2023 [due to the fighting]. After the bridge was destroyed, commodity prices increased dramatically. One litre of petrol

⁷ 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.

⁸ KHRG, “[Dooplaya District Situation Update: SAC shelling and air strikes causing 24 civilian casualties and damaging civilian property; extensive house burning and use of human shields; and a landmine explosion, in Dooplaya District \(October to December 2023\)](#)”, February 2025.

⁹ 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.

used to cost 5,000 kyat [2.38 USD¹⁰] but has now raised to 6,000 kyat [2.86 USD]. Phone connection and internet connection were also cut off [by the SAC]. The connection was only available in the town where SAC soldiers were based, and they controlled the internet, so it [the SAC's cutting of essential telecommunications] was a human rights violation.

SAC shelling in Kruh Tuh Township in December 2023

On December 18th 2023, at about 10 am, the SAC fired rounds of mortar (120mm) into Ae--- village, Taung Kyain village tract, Kruh Tuh Township, Dooplaya District. SAC soldiers from IB #230, under Military Operations Command (MOC)¹¹ #12, based at Thee Ho Tar camp in Kaw T'Ree Township, shelled rounds of mortar into Ae--- village, and injured a 46-year-old woman, named Nan¹² A---, on her head and she was killed immediately.

On December 19th 2023, at 5 pm, mortar shells from the SAC landed in Ae--- village again and injured a 71-year-old woman, named Daw¹³ B---, on her knee and a 68-year-old woman, named Daw C---, was injured on her left thigh. They were sent to Hpa-An public hospital [administered by the SAC] for treatment.

Recently [in December 2023], the fighting between SAC and PDF soldiers has escalated and some villagers' houses in Af--- village, Myaw Kyain village tract, Kruh Tuh Township, were also burned. [The KHRG researcher could not document the exact number of houses burned because of security risks of travelling to the village.] Recently [from November 2023 to February 2024], SAC soldiers have increased their activities and aircraft reconnaissance in Kruh Tuh and Noh T'Kaw Townships.

Issues affecting Noh T'Kaw Township in January and February 2024

Displacement challenges:

On January 27th 2024, PDF combined forces attacked an SAC military camp in Kyon Don Town, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District. The fighting continued until February 7th 2024. As a result, civilians in Kyon Don Town fled to nearby Noh T'Kaw Township. The exact number of displaced villagers could not be confirmed [by the KHRG researcher himself]. The KHRG researcher contacted the Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP), who confirmed that more than 1,700 people have been displaced. The current situation [as of February 2024] of displaced villagers is that they are mainly in need of food. Some people relied on food from a monastery in Ag--- village, Noh Tar Ghaw village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township. Some people took shelter in houses whose [original] owners did not live there [because they had fled earlier]. Some people did not have relatives in neighbouring villages, so they were not welcomed in the villagers' houses. Some people used their own old tarpaulins [as a mat] and stayed on the ground [without shelter].

SAC land confiscation:

In January 2024, SAC IB #284 fenced their territory with barbed wire in the area of Ad--- village, T'Hka Kloh village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District. The fenced territory includes

¹⁰ All conversion estimates for Kyat are based on the official market rate as of December 18th 2024 at 1 USD = 2,098.88 MMK, conversion rate available at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter>

¹¹ Military Operations Command (MOC) is comprised of ten battalions for offensive operations. Most MOCs have three Tactical Operations Commands (TOCs) made up of three battalions each.

¹² 'Nan' is a Pwo Karen title used for women, before their name.

¹³ 'Daw' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

16 villagers' rubber plantations, houses, and farms. In total, there were 65 acres [26.03 hectares] of land, 2 houses, and 11,400 rubber trees included in the SAC's fenced territory. These areas are all located near the SAC's military camp.

These two photos were taken in January 2024, in Ad--- village, T'Hka Kloh village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District. These two photos show an area fenced by SAC soldiers from IB #284, who forcibly expanded their camp into villagers' plantations. [Photos: KHRG]

Drug abuse and gambling:

In January and February 2024, drug [abuse] and gambling increased in the SAC-controlled area in the Three Pagodas Pass (P'Yar Tho Hsu) Town, Noh T'Kaw Township, Dooplaya District. The increase in drug consumption and gambling negatively impacted young people the most.

There was also an increase in theft in the Three Pagodas Pass Town, nearby villages and religious places [churches' or monasteries' compounds]. In one incident [unknown date], while a taxi driver was traveling on the road, he was killed and his corpse was thrown beside the road and the motorcycle was robbed [further details unknown]. Another incident [unknown date] happened when a robber attempted to take a motorcycle from a monk who was traveling. When the robber failed to take his [the monk's] motorcycle, the robber cut the monk's leg with a knife. Due to these incidents, civilians were afraid to travel.

In some parts of the Three Pagodas Pass Town, kratom leaf water¹⁴ was being sold prevalently in shops. More young people have been consuming this drug which has led to drug addiction and has had a negative impact on young people and their families.

¹⁴ *Beh htee* is the Karen language name for *Mitragyna Speciosa*. The plant, known in English as kratom, produces a mildly narcotic sensation in users when its leaves are chewed. Kratom is outlawed in Burma/Myanmar and Thailand.

Further background reading on the human rights situation in Dooplaya District in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Dooplaya District Situation Update: SAC shelling, militarisation and air strikes causing casualties, displacement, and education, healthcare and livelihood challenges in Kaw T’Ree Township \(January to August 2024\)”](#), December 2024.
- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC soldiers killed five villagers, torturing two and raping a pregnant woman, in Kaw T’Ree Township, in May 2024.”](#), November 2024.
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling killed a villager and damaged houses in Kruh Tuh Township \(May and September 2023\).”](#), September 2024.
- [ကဘီယုဟဲလ် Aircraft coming! : Impacts of air strikes on local communities and villagers’ protection strategies in Southeast Burma since the 2021 coup.](#), November 2024.

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.khrq.org

