

**Article I.****Short Update**January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 / KHRG # 24-417-D1**Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC's Aung Zeya Column shelling injured a 25-year-old man in Kaw T'Ree Township, October 2024**

*This Short Update describes events occurring in Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Township, Dooplaya District. On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2024, State Administration Council (SAC)'s Aung Zeya Column shelled a mortar round into E-- village, Noh Poe village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District, injuring a 25-year-old villager on the leg and damaging a villager's house. The shell also killed a cow and injured another cow. The SAC and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) armed groups had been fighting for eight months near the Asian Highway, but no soldiers were inside E--- village nor was there fighting on that particular day between the SAC's Aung Zeya Column and KNLA soldiers on the Asian Highway. Villagers noted that this is a human rights violation.<sup>1</sup>*

[Prior to October 2024,] fighting had happened between Aung Zeya Column<sup>2</sup> [from the State Administration Council (SAC)<sup>3</sup>] and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)<sup>4</sup>'s Cobra Column<sup>5</sup> near the Asian Highway<sup>6</sup>, between Ra Ma Tee [Myawaddy] Town and Kaw T'Ree Town, in

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in October 2024. 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.

<sup>2</sup> The Aung Zeya Column of the Burma Army is a State Administration Council (SAC) counteroffensive formed in April 2024 under the name 'Operation Aung Zeya'. Its aim is to retake control of the Asian Highway between Kaw T'Ree (Kawkareik) Town (located in Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District) and Myawaddy Town, located on the border with Thailand, from Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) forces. This national-level operation is being overseen by deputy junta chief Soe Win and is comprised of over 1,000 troops, including battalions from Light Infantry Division (LID) #55, equipped with tanks, missiles, and air support/forces. Since the operation started, there have been daily attacks along the Asian Highway, particularly in the Taw Naw (Dawna) mountain area.

<sup>3</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 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.

<sup>4</sup> The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

<sup>5</sup> The Cobra Column is one of eight armed resistance forces that have emerged since March 2022 under the joint command of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the People's Defence Force (PDF). The Cobra Column operates largely under KNLA Company #1, Battalion #27 of KNLA's Brigade #6.

<sup>6</sup> The Asian Highway Network is a United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific-supported project that aims to link 32 countries in Asia across 141,000 kilometres of roadway. In Burma/Myanmar the project has involved land confiscation and forced labour. For more information about the Asian Highway Network, see "[Beautiful Words, Ugly Actions: The Asian Highway in Karen State, Burma](#)", KHRG, August 2016; "[The Asia](#)

Dooplaya District, for approximately eight months and villagers [who live near the Asian Highway] could hear the sound of military activities [gun firing, mortar shelling, and air strikes] every week.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2024, fighting did not occur between the two armed groups. However, at around 10 am in the morning, a mortar shell was fired into E--- village, Noh Poe village tract<sup>7</sup>, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District, injuring a 25-year-old villager named Saw<sup>8</sup> B--- on his left leg, damaging his parent's house, killing one of their cows, and injuring another cow. [Villagers believe that] the shell was fired by [SAC's] Aung Zeya Column because there was no other military column active in that area. The shell exploded while villagers were unaware [there was no warning].

A villager named Saw A--- explained that, at around 10 am, he and his family members had finished their breakfast and he went outside, not too far from the house, to fix his waterpipe that had broken the previous day. Saw A---'s wife was sweeping in front of their house and [their] son, Saw B--- (25 years old), was laying under the [stilted] house helping his two-year-old daughter, Naw<sup>9</sup> C---, to fall asleep [when the shelling occurred]. She was uninjured by the shelling, however, her father, Saw B---, sustained a serious injury on his left leg.

Firstly, KNLA medics [in the area] provided first aid services to Saw B---, and later he was referred to D--- Clinic, in F--- Town (Tak Province, Thailand), to receive medical treatment. Other villagers helped to transport him. [It is unknown who paid for his treatment fee]. The doctor explained to Saw A--- that Saw B---'s leg was seriously injured, however, his bones and veins were fine [meaning that his injury was not as severe as it could have been].

[A local villager from E--- village explained that] only a few groups of villagers live in E--- village and there are no soldiers living in E--- village. This [the shelling of villages without warning] is a violation of human rights.



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[Highway: Planned Eindu to Kawkareik Town road construction threatens villagers' livelihoods,](#) KHRG, March 2015.

<sup>7</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>8</sup> 'Saw' is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

<sup>9</sup> 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.



A KHRG researcher received these photos from a local villager on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2024. The photos were taken at E--- village, Noh Poe village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District. On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2024, SAC's Aung Zeya Column shelled into E--- village, Noh Poe village tract. The photo on the top left shows damages to the roof of a villager's house, from the shelling. A villager named Saw B--- was also injured, as he was under the stilted house at the time of the attack. The photo on the top right displays Saw B---'s injury, sustained on his left leg, while being treated by KNLA medics who provided first aid. Saw B--- was referred to D--- Clinic in F--- Town (Tak province, Thailand). Due to the shelling, one cow was injured and another one died. The photo on the bottom left shows a cow of Saw B---'s parents, killed due to the shelling. *[Photos: Local villager]*

The information was verified because Saw A---, the victim [the owner of the damaged house and family member of the injured villager], reported the incident to a KHRG researcher, and the researcher conducted an interview with him. The victim allowed us to use this information.

Further background reading on the situation on SAC 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.
- ["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.
- ["Mu Traw District Incident Report: SAC shelling killed a villager and destroyed plantations \(September 2023\)"](#), December 2024.
- ["Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: Indiscriminate shelling causing 11 casualties, destruction, and mass displacement in Tha Htoo Township, May 2024"](#), November 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.khrg.org](http://www.khrg.org).

