



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

April 9th, 2021 / KHRG # 21-120-D1

Kler Lwee Htoo District Short Update: Tatmadaw soldiers confiscate two motorbikes and threaten local villagers in Hsaw Htee Township, April 2021

This Short Update describes events that occurred in Hsaw Htee [Shwegyin] Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District on April 6th 2021. Tatmadaw¹ soldiers from an unidentified battalion confiscated two motorbikes belonging to two local villagers they suspected of attacking one of their trucks. They also fired several warning shots at one of them when he was trying to retrieve the ID card he had left in his motorbike's under seat storage.²

On April 6th 2021, a roadside bomb exploded at the passage of a Tatmadaw truck travelling between W--- and M--- villages, Hsaw Htee Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District [the truck did not sustain any damage]. An unidentified number of Tatmadaw soldiers later arrived at the scene and saw two villagers from W--- village sitting on their motorbikes nearby. They suspected these two villagers of detonating the bomb and confiscated their motorbikes at about 4:45 pm. [The fact that the two villagers were not arrested despite being suspected of involvement in the attack suggests that the soldiers were only interested in stealing their motorbikes. This is a clear violation of section 9(d) of the NCA, which prevents signatories from engaging in “looting, theft, or the taking of property without permission”.]

The two villagers then walked away, but one of them realised he had left his ID card in his motorbike's under seat storage. He worried that the Tatmadaw might later try to search for him if they find his ID card, so he walked towards the soldiers in an attempt to retrieve it. However, the soldiers fired 10 warning shots at him, prompting the villager to flee the scene. The soldiers ultimately left, taking the two motorbikes with them. The two villagers do not know which Battalion they belong to. Based on the road they took, they assume they were going to Infantry Battalion³ #2's camp in Nyaunglebin town.

¹ Tatmadaw refers to the Myanmar military.

² The present document is based on information received in April 2021. It was provided by a community member in Kler Lwee 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.

³ An Infantry Battalion (Tatmadaw) 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.

Further background reading on human rights violations committed by the Tatmadaw in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Southeast Myanmar Field Report: COVID-19, armed conflict, killings and sexual violence, July to December 2020”](#), February 2021.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: 2020 general election, livelihood difficulties, Tatmadaw activities, education and COVID-19 situation \(August to October 2020\)”](#), January 2021.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: The Tatmadaw repeatedly fired large numbers of mortars into civilian areas and burned forests in Lu Thaw Township, January 2020 to April 2020”](#), December 2020.

About KHRG

Founded in 1992, the Karen Human Rights Group is an independent local organisation committed to improving the human rights situation in Southeast Myanmar. 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.

Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District



Legend

- Village track point
- 🏠 Town
- ⋯ Road
- 🏗️ Dam Project
- 🌊 Rivers
- ▭ Locally defined Karen boundary
- ▭ International boundary