



**Incident Report**

July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 / KHRG # 21-200-I1

**Mu Traw District Incident Report: Two villagers were seriously injured as a result of landmine explosions in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, June 2021**

*This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in June 2021. On June 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 and June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021, two villagers living in A---village, Hpapun Town, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District were independently injured after stepping on landmines outside of their village. They both sustained serious injuries. The male victim was treated at Hpa-an Public Hospital and the female victim at Mawlamyine Public Hospital.<sup>1</sup>*

**Part 1 – Incident Details**

<b>Type of Incident</b>	Landmine explosion	
<b>Date of Incident(s)</b>	June 20 <sup>th</sup> 2021	June 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2021
<b>Incident Location (Village, Township and District)</b>	A--- village, Hpapun Town, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District	A---village, Hpapun Town, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information		
<b>Name</b>	Y---	G---
<b>Age</b>	32	55
<b>Sex</b>	Male	Female
<b>Nationality</b>	Karen	Shan
<b>Family</b>	Married	Married
<b>Occupation</b>	Casual labourer	Farmer
<b>Religion</b>	Buddhist	Buddhist
<b>Position</b>	Villager	Villager

<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in June 2021. It was provided by a community member in Mu Traw 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.

<b>Village</b>	A--- village, Aur'Naung Pat Kan Ywar village tract <sup>2</sup> , Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District	A---village, Aur'Naung Pat Kan Ywar village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District
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## Part 2 - Information Quality

### **1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.**

The information has been provided by the victims' relatives. In the case of Y---, the sources of information were the victim's wife and the victim's sister. In the case of G---, the source of information was the victim's sister.

### **2. Explain how the source verified this information.**

All of the information came from the victims' families.

## Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

**Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please use the space prepared below, and create an attachment if needed.**

### **First Incident**

On June 20<sup>th</sup> 2021, at 7:15 am, a 32-year-old villager from A---village, Aur'Naung Pat Kan Ywar village tract, Hpapun Town, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, stepped on a landmine while he was returning home from his hill fields. [Along with his wife, he went to go check on his crops and harvest bamboo shoots in the forest]. They had to walk 30 minutes to go from the village to the forest. They have two daughters [but the daughters had stayed at home]. Y---'s wife was not with him [at the same location in the forest] at the time of the incident, but heard the explosion and came running. She then returned to the village to get help.

After the incident, he was sent to the Hpapun Military Hospital. He arrived at Hpapun Military Hospital at 8:00 am. When he arrived at Hpapun Military Hospital, the generator that runs [provides power for] the hospital was cut off [not functioning], so the doctors were not able to operate. As a result, the doctors at Hpapun Military Hospital transferred him to Hpa-an Public Hospital. However, he waited two hours before he was sent to Hpa-an Public Hospital for further treatment.

The local authorities had previously informed villagers about the contamination of landmines and told villagers not to go to prohibited areas. Y---'s sister explained that they cannot avoid going to the forest, because he [her brother] is a day labourer and has to take care of his family [foraging in the forests serves as a primary means of income, particularly in difficult economic times]. He stepped on a landmine on one of the paths in the forest. But there are no signs showing landmine danger in the forest. They [the victim and his family] are not sure who planted

<sup>2</sup> A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

the landmines in the area, however [they believe that] the landmines were planted sometime during 2021. The landmine he stepped on was manmade.

The sister of the victim of the landmine incident stated that her brother never attended proper Mine Risk Awareness training. The villagers were only provided pamphlets with Mine Risk Awareness information, which is why he was not aware of how dangerous it was to be walking in the nearby forest. Furthermore, even though villagers had been made aware of landmine contamination in the surrounding areas, the landmines were planted randomly, making it difficult to know which areas to avoid.

Due to the injuries he sustained from the landmine explosion, doctors at Hpa-an Hospital had to amputate his right leg. His left leg was also broken [by the explosion], and the landmine shrapnel injured him in his scrotum. [At the time of the initial interview] he was still recovering in the hospital since the accident on June 20<sup>th</sup> [he has now been discharged]. He was in Hpa-an Public Hospital for a total of 16 days. He was discharged from the hospital on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2021.

For his medical [hospital] expenses, they [he and his family] had to pay just over 100,000 kyats [USD 60.75]<sup>3</sup>. They received 500,000 kyats [USD 303.77] from DanChurchAid (DCA) with the support of KHRG to help cover these medical expenses. They also received help from the Red Cross. Naw T---, his wife, is very worried about his current health condition. She is worried that the amputation will affect the family's livelihood as he has now lost one of his legs. As there is a lack of job opportunities in the areas around Hpapun Town, and the COVID-19 situation is now getting worse, the mother of the victim is supporting the victim and his family.

According to Y---'s sister, local villagers have been injured by other landmine explosions in the area. A landmine incident happened back in 2015. Initially, after the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA),<sup>4</sup> the Tatmadaw began clearing some of the landmines, but then stopped. The victim's sister is concerned about the persistence of landmine contamination. She said: *"My brother was injured from a landmine explosion. I don't want other people to face this kind of condition. I want them to be careful. I do not want them to go to prohibited areas. I feel sad. I never thought this would happen to him."* She continued: *"If the two of them [her brother and his wife] had been killed in the landmine explosion, I cannot even imagine the future of their two children. That is why I want the armed groups to consider the future of everyone's children before they start fighting each other."*

## **Second Incident**

On June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021, at 1:30 pm, a villager named G---, 55 years old, also from A--- village, Aur'Naut Pat Kan Ywar village tract, Hpapun Town, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District, stepped on a landmine while she was harvesting mushrooms outside of her village. Right after the incident, villagers immediately sent her to Hpapun Hospital, where she stayed for two days. Later, Hpapun Hospital transferred her to Mawlamyine Public Hospital [upon her request because she has relatives in the area] on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 for further treatment. At Mawlamyine Public Hospital, the doctors had to amputate her right leg at the knee.

<sup>3</sup> Conversion estimates for the Myanmar kyat are based on the July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 mid-market exchange rate of 1 kyat to 0.00061 USD, posted on <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate>.

<sup>4</sup> On October 15th 2015, after a negotiation process marred with controversy over the notable non-inclusion of several ethnic armed groups, a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed between the Burma/Myanmar government and eight of the fifteen ethnic armed groups originally invited to the negotiation table, including the Karen National Union. It was followed by the adoption of a Code of Conduct by the signatories in November 2015. In February 2018, two additional ethnic armed groups signed the NCA under pressure from the Burma/Myanmar government.

The medical expenses, including food and travel, cost her over 100,000 kyats. She has received financial support from her siblings and relatives. She also received 500,000 kyats from DCA, with a contribution from KHRG, to help cover her medical expenses. The victim has four children and is a widow. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021, the victim was discharged from Mawlamyine Public Hospital, however, the doctor told her that she will need to return to the hospital for a medical checkup once a month.

According to G---'s sister, prior to this incident, villagers were informed by the local Ethnic Armed Organisations not to venture out of the village perimeter due to landmine contamination. In the areas surrounding their village, there are no signs demarcating where landmine contamination exists. As a result, G--- went out from the village to harvest mushrooms thinking there were no landmines in the vicinity. The villagers have no idea which armed groups planted the landmines. As for the victim, she never attended the Mine Risk Awareness training provided to her village.

There had been landmine explosions in surrounding areas before [however, the interviewee could not specify the incident dates]. Villagers living in A--- village do not want landmines planted in the areas where they harvest food for their livelihood. But landmine contamination in and near villagers' plantation areas in Southeast Myanmar continues to threaten the livelihood and lives of villagers.



These photos show the two villagers from A--- village, Aur Naung Pat Kan village tract, Dwe Lo Township, Mu Traw District who were injured after stepping on landmines near their village. The photos on the top were taken of G--- on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 in Mawlamyine Public Hospital. The photos on the bottom were taken of Y--- on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 in Hpa-an Public Hospital. In the case of both victims, their right legs had to be amputated. [Photos: local villager]

## **Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details**

**Did the victim(s) provide permission to use this information? Explain how that permission was provided.**

Both of the victims' families allow this information to be published.

Further background reading on the consequences of landmine contamination in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

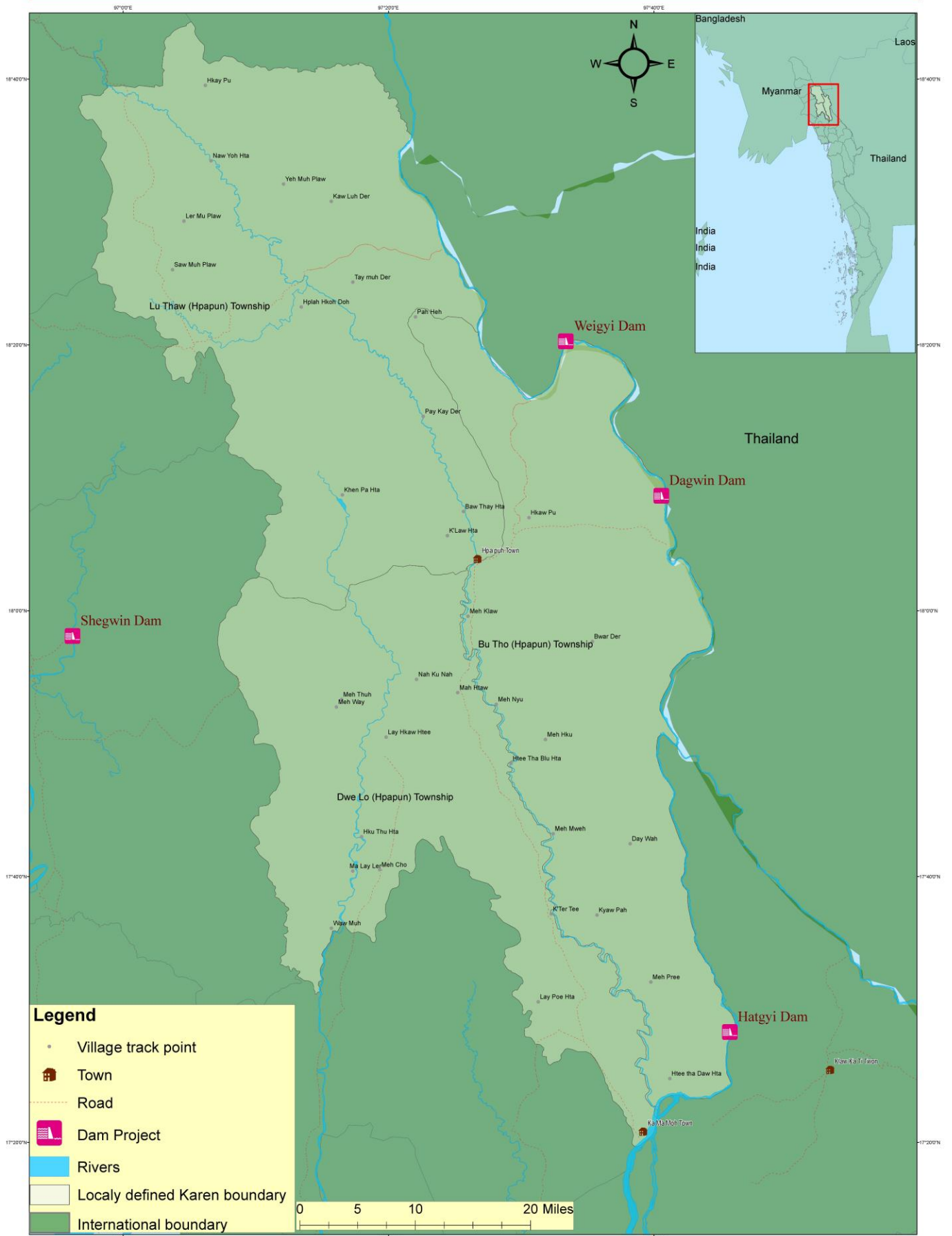
- ["Kler Lwe Htoo District Incident Report: Two villagers killed, one injured in a landmine explosion in Ler Doh Township, March 2021"](#), April 2021.
- ["Doo Tha Htoo District Incident Report: Child seriously injured in a landmine explosion in Thaton Township, January 2021"](#), March 2021.
- ["Mu Traw District Situation Update: Militarisation, indiscriminate shelling, displacement and landmine contamination in Bu Tho Township, May to July 2020"](#), December 2020.
- ["Southeast Myanmar Field Report: COVID-19, armed conflict, landmines and sexual violence, January to June 2020"](#), September 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.khrq.org](http://www.khrq.org).



# Mutraw (Hpapun) District



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