



Incident Report

February 24th 2022 / KHRG # 22-14-I1

Mu Traw District Incident Report: A villager died due to a landmine explosion in Bu Tho Township, January 2022

This Incident Report describes an event that occurred in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District in January 2022. At about 2:55 pm on January 9th 2022, a villager from Meh Klaw village tract stepped on a landmine outside his village, sustaining serious injuries in the explosion. Local villagers were warned about the possibility of landmine contamination in the village vicinity, however, the landmine victim needed to forage in the nearby forest to secure a livelihood for his family. Following the incident, the villager was taken to the Military Operations Command (Byu Ha) Hospital in Hpapun Town for treatment but passed away after he arrived.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Landmine incident
Date of Incident(s)	January 9 th 2022
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	M--- village, Meh Klaw village tract, ² Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District

Victim Information	
Name	Saw ³ H---
Age	55
Sex	Male
Ethnicity	Karen
Family	Married
Occupation	Day labourer
Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager
Village	M--- village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District

¹ The present document is based on information received in January 2022. 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.

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

³ Saw is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A KHRG researcher contacted a villager living in M--- village via phone call and documented the landmine incident.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The source is a villager in M--- village who helped carry the victim back to the village following the incident, and also accompanied the victim to the hospital in Hpapun Town.

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.

On January 9th 2022, a 55-year-old villager named Saw H---, living in M--- village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District went [to the nearby forest] to pick fruit from Daw Ka Tha trees (*Oroxylum indicum* [commonly known as the Indian Trumpet tree]) to sell. [The fruit from the tree is often eaten as a vegetable with fish paste and rice.] He would use the money he earned [selling Daw Ka Tha] to buy rice for his family. He had been to forage in the forest three times that day. The third time, at about 2:55 pm, he stepped on a landmine.

As soon as the landmine exploded, he shouted out loud, calling for help. Hearing the sound of a man shouting, the villagers from M--- village went to find him at the location of the incident. Both his legs were badly injured due to the landmine explosion. At first, the villagers took him to his home. The villagers then sent him by car to the Military Operations Command (MOC)⁴ (Byu Ha) Hospital (100-bed tactical hospital) located in Hpapun Town. He passed away immediately after arriving at the hospital, without receiving treatment.

Prior to the incident, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)⁵ had informed villagers from M--- village in advance that the area was contaminated with landmines. The State Administration Council (SAC)⁶ Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)⁷ #434 also warned the villagers not

⁴ 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.

⁵ The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

⁶ 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.

⁷ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are under-strength with less than 200 soldiers. Yet up to date information regarding the size of battalions

to leave the village [because of landmine contamination in the area]. However, there were no marks or signs showing precisely where the landmines had been planted. The villagers living in M--- village believe that the exploded landmine was planted by the KNLA.

The villagers living in M--- village have never attended Mine Risk Awareness training as it has not been provided in the village. Therefore, the villagers have less knowledge of the risk of landmines. [Many also depend on foraging in the nearby forest to earn their livelihood, and thus are more vulnerable to the dangers of landmine contamination.]

The landmine victim leaves behind two family members: his wife and 15-year-old daughter. As it is hard to travel and find jobs, the family is facing difficulty earning a livelihood. Currently, no organisation is providing support to the family of the landmine victim.

M--- villagers have also reported their livestock being killed in landmine explosions. This, along with increased fighting and shelling along the road between Hpapun and K'Ma Moh (Kamarmaung) towns, has heightened villagers' fear of travel in the area.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The source allowed KHRG to use the information provided.



These two photos were taken on January 9th 2022. The photo on the left was taken in M---village, Meh Klaw village tract, Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District, and shows Saw H--- right after he was seriously injured by a landmine explosion while he was harvesting Daw Ka Tha (*Oroxylum indicum*) to secure a livelihood for his family. The photo on the right was taken in Hpapun Town and shows him arriving at the Military Operations Command (Byu Ha) Hospital, where he died immediately after. [Photos: Local villager]

Further background reading on the security situation in Mu Traw District in Southeast Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

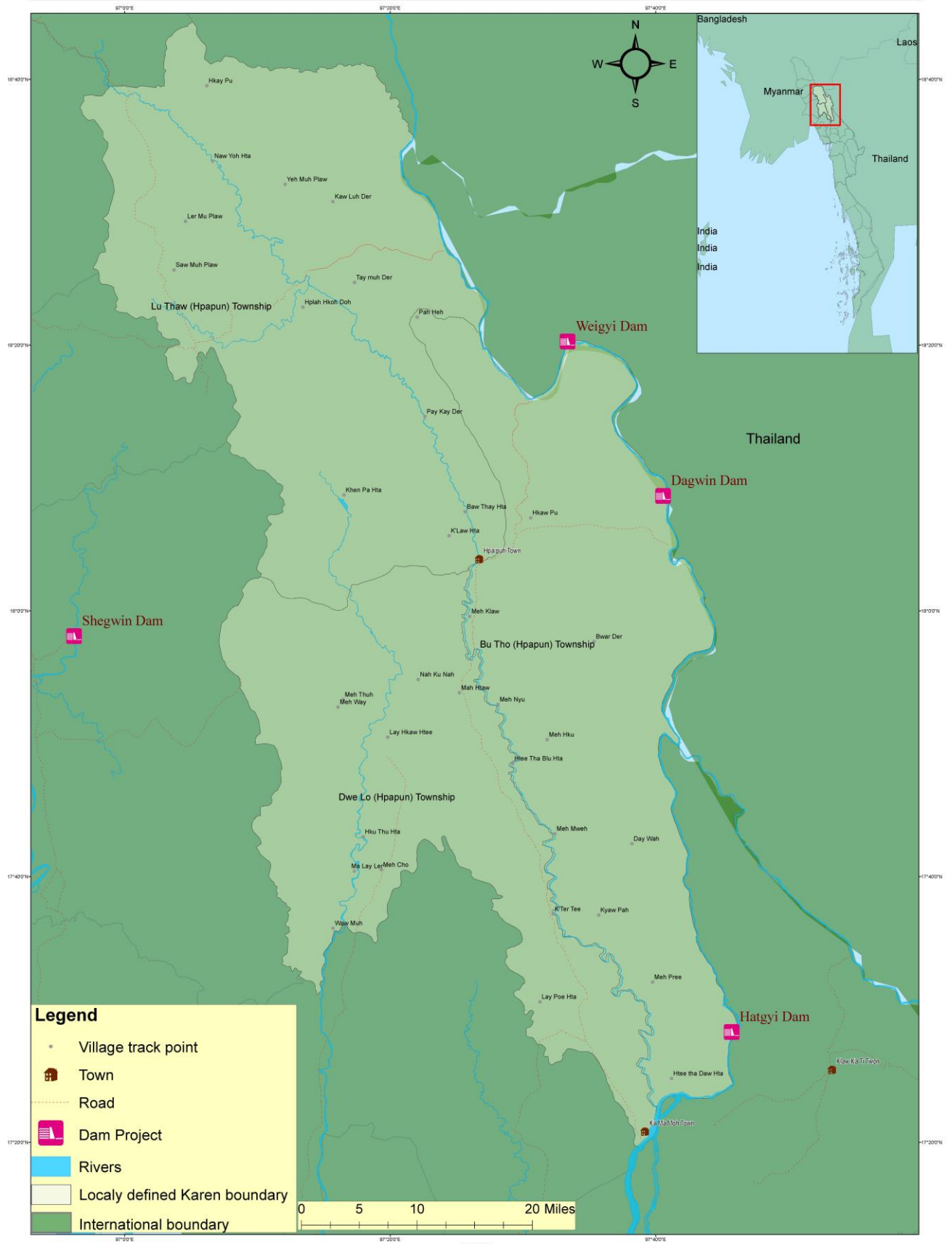
is hard to come by. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

- [“Mu Traw District Incident Report: Torture of three villagers in Dwe Lo Township by an SAC officer, August 2021,”](#) January 2022.
- [“Mu Traw District Short Update: Torture, fighting, indiscriminate shelling, and threats by SAC soldiers have resulted in fear and displacement of villagers in Dwe Lo Township, August 2021,”](#) December 2021.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: Airstrikes, fighting, indiscriminate shelling and landmine contamination resulted in the displacement of villagers, one injury and one death in Bu Tho Township, Mu Traw District, March to May 2021,”](#) December 2021.
- [“Mu Traw District Situation Update: Landmine contamination, indiscriminate shelling, arbitrary taxation, movement of troops, and livelihood, education and healthcare situation, May to June 2021,”](#) September 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 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.

Mutraw (Hpapun) District



KHRG