



# Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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## Situation Update

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 / KHRG #23-422-S1

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## **Doplaya 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 Doplaya District (October to December 2023)**

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*This Situation Update describes some events occurring in all four townships in Doplaya District, including Noh T’Kaw (Kyainseikgyi), Kaw T’Ree (Kawkareik), Kruh Tuh (Kyonedoe), and Waw Ray (Win Yay) Townships, from October to December 2023. Air strikes and bombing conducted by the State Administration Council (SAC) in Doplaya District during this period killed a monk, damaged a temple, and burned 22 houses and two school buildings in Kruh Tuh Township; injured one child and damaged two houses in Kaw T’Ree Township; injured two villagers and damaged four houses in Waw Ray Township; and damaged 20 houses and a church in Noh T’Kaw Township. Similarly, SAC shelling killed three villagers and injured six villagers in Noh T’Kaw Township; killed one child, injured ten villagers, including three children, and damaged 23 houses in Kaw T’Ree Township; and damaged three houses in Waw Ray Township. In addition, 300 houses were also burned by the SAC soldiers in Waw Ray Township. Moreover, SAC soldiers arrested 12 villagers in Kaw T’Ree Township and used them as human shields. Such attacks caused mass displacement of villagers and protracted fears of return. During this period, a villager also stepped on a landmine in Kaw T’Ree Township that was planted by the SAC.<sup>1</sup>*

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### **Noh T’Kaw Township (October and November): air strikes, shelling, fighting**

On October 4<sup>th</sup> 2023, two SAC [State Administration Council<sup>2</sup>] helicopters and one fighter jet conducted air strikes into A--- village, Maw village tract<sup>3</sup>, Noh T’Kaw Township, Doplaya

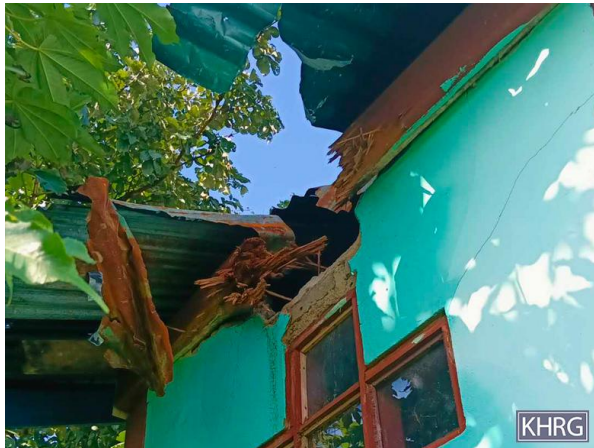
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<sup>1</sup> The present document is based on information received in October 2023 to February 2024. It was provided by community members in Doplaya District who has been trained by KHRG to monitor human rights conditions on the ground. The names of the victims, their photos and the exact locations are censored for security reasons. The parts in square brackets are explanations added by KHRG. This document combines several received reports with the following KHRG internal log numbers: #23-322-D1, #23-331-D1, #23-332-D1, #23-340-S1, #23-344-D1, #23-346-D1, #23-347-D1, #23-379-D1, #23-395-D1, #23-405-I1 and #24-53-I1.

<sup>2</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>3</sup> A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

District. The SAC aircraft dropped two 500-pound [226.8 kilogramme] bombs from a fighter jet. One bomb landed on the church from A--- village however, the bomb did not explode. The other bomb landed a bit far away from the church and it damaged the church a bit. The SAC conducted the air strike after they [SAC Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs)<sup>4</sup> #339, #432, #557 soldiers] were attacked by KNLA [Karen National Liberation Army<sup>5</sup>] Battalion #17 at Htee Ter Day Hta place, near Meh Traw Hta village, Maw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township. The SAC LIB #339 Company Commander is Say Nay Aung, the SAC LIB #432 Company Commander is Hka Naw and the SAC LIB #557 Company Commander is Say Pro Htoe. The distance between the attacked area, Htee Ter Day Hta [place] and A--- village [where bombs were dropped by the SAC] is 5 miles [8.04 kilometres] away. Following the air strike, villagers who live in the village worked and lived in fear. Then, on November 2<sup>nd</sup> at around 10 am, the SAC dropped [two 500-pound] bombs [from a fighter jet] on the same village, damaging the church a bit worse. The incident was reported by the priest from the church.



These photos were taken in November 2023 in A--- village, Maw village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township. On October 4<sup>th</sup> 2023, the SAC conducted air strikes into A--- village, damaging a church slightly. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023, the SAC conducted another air strike into the same village, further damaging the same church. These photos show the damage to church from A--- village, and the remains of a 500-pound bomb from the SAC. [Photo: KHRG]

At 12 am, on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2023, an SAC aircraft conducted an air strike into Htoh Doh Neh village area, Meh Ku Hkee village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township. No one was injured as the two bombs landed near [outside] the village.

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023, the SAC shelled artillery weapons into Seik Gyi Town, Noh T’Kaw Township. Many shells landed on Seik Gyi Section #6, killing three villagers and injuring six villagers severely, with some becoming permanently disabled. One of the villagers killed was a child. The injured villagers were sent to Mu Done hospital, in Mon State. This information was provided by a villager from Seik Gyi village tract.

On November 10<sup>th</sup> 2023, an SAC air strike was conducted on B--- village, Da Li village tract, Noh T’Kaw Township, and C--- village, K’Ser Hpoh village tract, Waw Ray Township, following an attack by KNLA soldiers on SAC soldiers.

<sup>4</sup> A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. Most Light Infantry Battalions 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. LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

<sup>5</sup> The Karen National Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Karen National Union.

On November 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 2023, the KNLA and PDF [People's Defence Force (PDF)<sup>6</sup>] attacked a police station and the SAC's security checkpoint of a bridge, located next to B--- village. After the attack, [on November 12<sup>th</sup> 2023,] the SAC conducted an air strike [again] into B--- village and after the air strike SAC ground soldiers burned around 300 houses in B--- village. Villagers fled and sheltered in D--- village, K'Maw village tract, Waw Ray Township.

On November 14<sup>th</sup> 2023, villagers from B--- village, Da Li village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, and C--- village, K'Ser Hpoh village tract, Waw Ray Township, reported that they could not return to their hometown due to ongoing fighting [and air strikes].

On November 24<sup>th</sup> 2023, the SAC dropped six 120mm bombs from a jet fighter into B--- village, Da Li village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, damaging around 20 houses. However, there were no injuries because villagers had previously fled to a [safer] area.

On November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, the SAC dropped bombs into a forest in Yaw K'Daw village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township. The incident resulted in no injuries and no damages as the forest was far from where people lived.

### **Kaw T'Ree Township (October to December): shelling, arbitrary detention, and air strikes**

On October 13<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC LIBs #12, #231, #97 and #230 shelled artillery weapons into E--- village, T'Da Oo village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, killing a six-year-old child named Naw<sup>7</sup> R---, and injuring her 12-year-old brother named Saw<sup>8</sup> F---. The mortar shells also landed near a school in E--- village, T'Da Oo village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, injuring two other children: Naw G--- (16 years old) and Naw H--- (six years old). On October 14<sup>th</sup> 2023, another mortar shell landed inside E--- village and injured U<sup>9</sup> I--- (53 years old). He was sent by family members to J--- hospital (in Hkaw Hkee village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township).

On October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023, SAC Light Infantry Division (LID)<sup>10</sup> #22 and LIB #205 arrested [and arbitrarily detained] 12 villagers from K--- village, J--- village, and L--- village, at Kyaw Hta village tract. By October 25<sup>th</sup> 2023, the villagers had still not been released. On October 26<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC LID #22 invaded [were camped in] Maw Hka hill, near Maw Kwee Nee village, causing nearby villagers to flee to the Thai borderlands. The LID #22 arrested several villagers who remained in the village and used them as human shields to prevent attacks from the KNLA Battalion #18 [for an unknown period of time].

On October 24<sup>th</sup> 2023, an SAC aircraft dropped two bombs onto the surrounding area of Kaw Moo T'Nay Moo village, T'Da Oo village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township. Due to the air strike, two villagers' houses were damaged, as reported by local leaders.

[As reported before by KHRG,] On November 4<sup>th</sup> 2023 fighting broke out between SAC and resistance combined forces from PDF and KNLA in Kawkareik Town, Kaw T'Ree Township. At

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<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

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

<sup>9</sup> 'U' is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

<sup>10</sup> A Light Infantry Division (LID) of the Burma military is commanded by a brigadier general, and consists of ten light infantry battalions specially trained in counter-insurgency, jungle warfare, search and destroy operations against ethnic insurgents. They were first incorporated into the Burma military in 1966. LIDs are organised under three Tactical Operations Commands, commanded by a colonel, three battalions each and one reserve, one field artillery battalion, one armoured squad.

around 10 am, the SAC conducted air strikes and a bomb landed inside M---section, Kawkareik Town, injuring an 11-year-old boy named Saw N--- while he was urinating outside of his house. The boy's right calf was injured by the shrapnel and he was sent to Hpa-an hospital to receive treatment.<sup>11</sup>

On November 10<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC LIB #231 shelled artillery weapons into Aww Hpa Poe village, Aww Hpa Gyi village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, injuring a 58-year-old villager, Saw O---, on the right side of his chest. Mortar shells also landed on Aww Hpa Gyi village, Aww Hpa Gyi village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, injuring three villagers [unknown names].

On November 24<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC soldiers from Infantry Battalion (IB)<sup>12</sup> #557 and #558, in Kaw T'Ree army camp, indiscriminately shelled artillery weapons into villages near Kaw T'Ree Town. The shells landed in Kaw Nweh village tract and Aung Hpa Gyi village tract. One of the shells injured two male villagers: one was injured on his ear and the other injured on his leg. They were sent to a KNU<sup>13</sup>-administered clinic located in J--- village, Hkaw Hkee village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, by local village leaders from Aung Hpa Gyi village tract. The shelling also damaged three villagers' houses in Kaw Moo village (also known as Noh Ee The village), in Aung Hpa Gyi village tract. The shelling caused villagers to flee far from Kaw T'Ree army camp. Around 20 houses were damaged by the shelling in P--- village, Kaw Nweh village tract, however, no villagers were injured as villagers had previously fled elsewhere. A villager from Kaw Nweh village tract provided this information to a KHRG field researcher.

On November 27<sup>th</sup> 2023, an SAC air strike was conducted in L--- village, Kyaw Hta village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, causing villagers from L--- village to flee to the Thai border, to other villages, the forest, and Noh Poe refugee camp [in Thailand].

On November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, the SAC conducted an air strike [a fighter jet dropped two bombs] into Q--- village, Aw Hpa Gyi village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township. The incident caused no damages or injuries, as reported by a villager from Q--- village. The air strike caused villagers to live in fear and some felt traumatised. Many villagers want to flee to safety, however due to financial difficulties, or not having relatives in other villages or being unable to carry their belongings, many villagers have been unable to do so.

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023, the SAC indiscriminately dropped bombs [from a fighter jet] into Kaw T'Ree Town area. The air strike resulted in no injuries and no damages, as reported by a local villager [from Kaw T'Ree Town]. Fighting had previously occurred at the Asian Highway<sup>14</sup>, 10-15 miles [16-24 kilometres] from the village.

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<sup>11</sup> See published report: KHRG, "[Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC air strikes injured an 11-year-old boy and a pregnant woman, in Kaw T'Ree Township \(November and December 2023\)](#)", May 2024.

<sup>12</sup> An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Burma military 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.

<sup>13</sup> The Karen National Union (KNU) is the main Karen political organisation. It was established in 1947 and has been in conflict with the government since 1949. The KNU wields power across large areas of Southeast Myanmar and has been calling for the creation of a democratic federal system since 1976. Although it signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in 2015, relations with the government remain tense.

<sup>14</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 Highway: Planned Eindu to Kawkareik Town road construction threatens villagers' livelihoods](#)," KHRG, March 2015.



[As reported before by KHRG,] on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, Maung<sup>15</sup> S--- (21 years old) stepped on a landmine near a villager's house, in T--- Town, Poe Yay village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, injuring both of his legs. He was sent to U--- clinic by local KNU authorities and the clinic referred him to V--- hospital (in Tak province, Thailand) in order to amputate his right leg.<sup>16</sup> [Villagers believe SAC soldiers from IB #558 planted the landmine.]



This photo was taken on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 by a local villager. This photo shows Maung S---, a 21-year-old injured villager, who stepped on a landmine near a villager's house in T--- Town, Poe Yay village tract, Kaw T'Ree Township, Dooplaya District, on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2023. The injury resulted in the amputation of his right leg. *[Photo: local villager]*

### **Waw Ray Township (November and December): air strikes and shelling**

On November 18<sup>th</sup> 2023, the SAC dropped two 500-pound bombs into W--- village, Hpa Bra village tract, Waw Ray Township, damaging one house and injuring one male student who was 18 years old. He was sent to X--- Hospital [administered by the KNU], Lay Wah Ploe village tract, Noh T'Kaw Township, by W--- village leaders. As of January 2024, he had recovered and returned to his home. A KHRG researcher received this information from a local leader, a village secretary of W--- village.

On November 27<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC soldiers at an army camp near C--- village, K'Ser Hpoh village tract, Waw Ray Township, on the eastern side of Taw Naw Mountain, shelled mortar rounds into C--- village, K'Ser Hpoh village tract, damaging three villagers' houses, as reported by a local leader.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023, SAC soldiers dropped four bombs from a fighter jet into C--- village, K'Ser Hpoh village tract, Waw Ray Township, damaging three villagers' houses, as reported by a villager from C--- village. One woman was injured on her ear, and she was sent to Mu Done Town hospital, a [Burma] government[-administered] [General] hospital, located in Mon State, by local leaders from C--- village as there was no hospital in C--- village. The treatment fee was paid for by the 'village emergency fund', which was previously collected by C--- authorities from villagers [to help villagers who need financial assistance].

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<sup>15</sup> 'Maung' is a Burmese male honorific title used before a person's name.

<sup>16</sup> Read more: KHRG, "[Dooplaya District Incident Report: A 21-year-old villager stepped on a landmine in Kaw T'Ree Township, December 2023](#)," April 2024.



These photos were taken in November 2023 in C--- village, K'Ser Hpoh village tract, Waw Ray Township. On November 27<sup>th</sup> 2023, SAC soldiers stationed in K'Neh army camp, Kaw T'Ree Township, shelled mortar rounds into C--- village, damaging three houses. These photos show the damage to houses. [Photos: KHRG]

### **Kruh Tuh Township (December 2023): air strikes**

On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, the SAC conducted an air strike on Y--- village, Meh Theh village tract, Kruh Tuh (Kyonedoe) Township. Two bombs were dropped and exploded.

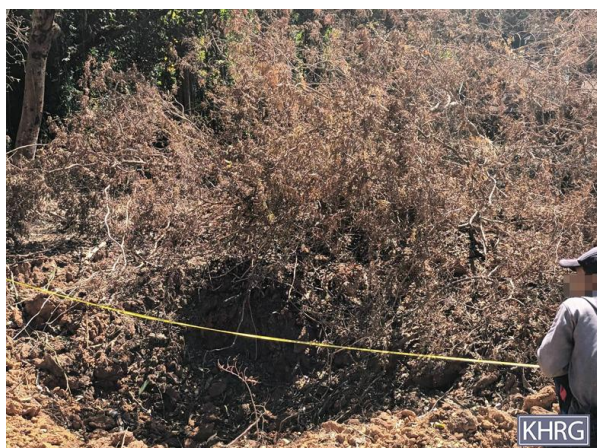
On the same day, at 2 am, an SAC jet dropped two 500-pound bombs on a monastery in Aa--- village, Meh Theh village tract, killing a monk named U Z--- (32 years old), who was not from Aa--- village but he was visiting Aa--- village for a Buddhist Festival, 'Kahtin Pwe'<sup>17</sup>. The bomb landed nearby the monastery. When the bomb exploded, the monk was sitting on a wooden foldable chair inside the monastery, the chair collapsed and he was injured on his abdomen and his head and died on the spot. On the next morning villagers found the monk in the monastery and prepared to bury him. The bomb explosion also damaged the temple.

There had not been military activities in the area prior to the attack, as explained by Ab--- (61 years old), the village head from Aa--- village, and Saw Ac---, the village administrator from Aa-- village.



<sup>17</sup> The 'Kahtin Pwe' (ကတ္တင်ပွဲ) is a Buddhist ceremony where villagers celebrate the children that will become novice monks by marching around the village, carrying donations, and for merit-making. There are also dances and music by villagers.





These photos were taken in December 2023. On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, at 2 am, SAC aircraft dropped two bombs on Aa--- village, Meh Theh village tract, Kruh Tuh (Kyonedoe) Township, Dooplaya District, injuring a monk named U Z--- on his abdomen and head, killing him instantly. The photo on the top-left displays the foldable wooden chair that collapsed on top of the monk, when hit by the bomb. The photo on the top-right shows the injuries sustained by U Z--- on the head and back. The photo on the bottom-left shows villagers measuring the bombed area: the width was 17 feet (5.18 meters) and the depth was nine feet (2.7 m). The photo on the bottom-right shows the monastery that was damaged due to the SAC air strike. *[Photo: local villager/KHRG]*

[As reported before by KHRG,] on December 28<sup>th</sup> 2023, the combined forces from the PDF and KNLA attacked the SAC police station in Ad--- village, Taung Kyain village tract, Kruh Tuh Township, Dooplaya District. During the fighting, the SAC conducted air strikes on Ad--- village. The air strikes burned 22 houses and one school building, and another school building was destroyed.<sup>18</sup>

Further background reading on the situation in Dooplaya District, Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Schools Under Attack: Challenges to the right to education in Southeast Burma \(June 2023-February 2024\)”](#), 10 July 2024.
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling and air strikes resulted in civilian casualties, property destruction and displacement, in Kruh Tuh Township, December 2023”](#), 30 August 2024.
- [“Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC air strike killed a villager, injured three, and destroyed houses and two schools, in Kaw T’Ree Township, March 2024”](#), 30 August 2024.
- [“Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelled into villages causing 19 casualties and destruction, and killed a civilian providing humanitarian support, in Kruh Tuh Township \(January and March 2023\)”](#), 31 July 2024.

## About KHRG

<sup>18</sup> See published report: KHRG, [“Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling and air strikes resulted in civilian casualties, property destruction and displacement, in Kruh Tuh Township, December 2023”](#) August 2024.





