



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Short Update

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Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: SAC shelling and drone strikes causing casualties and damage, and livelihood constraints in Kyeh Htoh Township (January to May 2024)

This Short Update describes events that occurred in Kyeh Htoh (Kyaikto) Township, Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District, from January to May 2024. On January 16th 2024, State Administration Council (SAC) Artillery Unit #310, based in Thein Za Yat Town, Kyeh Htoh Township, shelled three 60 mm mortar shells into Hk'Rweh village tract, and injured two teenagers. On February 17th 2024, SAC soldiers from Waw Township, Bago Division, conducted shelling and a drone strike into Ab--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, injuring one teenager, damaging three houses and killing livestock. On May 6th 2024, SAC Artillery Unit #310, fired artillery shells into See Pyaw village tract, killing one villager. SAC shelling caused many villagers to be afraid, so many slept in bunkers. Additionally, due to the SAC's restrictions on traveling and fishing, along with planting landmines beside the riverbank in Hk'Rweh village tract, villagers faced challenges to support their livelihood. In March 2024, two fishermen were arbitrarily arrested by the SAC while travelling on the river.¹

January: SAC shelling injured two teenagers in Hk'Rweh village tract

On January 16th 2024, at 6:30 pm, the State Administration Council (SAC)² Artillery Unit #310 under the Light Infantry Division (LID)³ #44, based at Thein Za Yat Town, Kyeh Htoh Township, fired three 60 mm mortar shells into Aa--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract⁴, and two shells

¹ The present document is based on information received in June 2024. It was provided by a community member in Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) 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: #24-33-D1; #24-196-D1 and #24-231-D1.

² 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.

³ A Light Infantry Division (LID) of the Tatmadaw 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 Tatmadaw 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 squadron and other support units. Each division is directly under the command of the Chief of Staff (Army).

⁴ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

exploded [inside of the village]. [The last shell landed and exploded outside the village]. One of the mortar shells landed in the garden of Ko⁵ A---'s house and injured a grade-10 student, named Maung⁶ B--- (17 years old), on his left thigh, and Maung C--- (19 years old) on his back. They [the two teenagers] were injured when they were returning home and walking with their arms around each other's shoulders. They were sent to a nearby clinic [and received treatment from a Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM)⁷ health worker]. [The next day, they were sent to a public hospital administered by the SAC in Thein Za Yat Town for further treatment.] The victims were unable to afford the cost of medical treatment [from the hospital] due to their livelihood problems [exact details unknown]. [The second shell that landed in the village resulted in no damages.]



These two photos were taken in January 2024, in a clinic in Aa--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, Kye Hto Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. On January 16th 2024, at 6:30 pm, SAC Artillery Unit #310 fired three 60 mm mortar shells into Aa--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, and one of the mortar shells injured two teenage boys. The photo on the left shows Maung C--- (19 years old), who was injured on his back. The photo on the right shows Maung B--- (17 years old), who was injured on his left thigh. [Photos: KHRG]

February: SAC drone strikes caused injury and house damages in Hk'Rweh village tract

On February 17th 2024, at around 12 am, SAC [soldiers] based in Ad--- village, Waw Township, Bago Division, conducted a drone strike onto Ab--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, Kye Hto Township. The drone dropped two bombs that landed on the house of villagers named Daw⁸ D--- [and Ko F---]. The shrapnel from the explosion injured her daughter, Ma⁹ E--- (18 years old), on her head and chin. The roof of the house and furniture were also damaged.

That night, at 12:40 am the first bomb that was dropped by drone landed on Daw D---'s house and injured her daughter [Ma E---]. After a few minutes, SAC soldiers based in Ad--- village fired 120 mm mortar shells. At the same time, the drone dropped another bomb on Daw D---'s house for the second time. [Local villagers do not know why the SAC targeted this villager's house.]

Ma E--- was sent to a nearby clinic [run by local health workers on a voluntary basis]. Ma E--- received treatment for three days and recovered. On the fourth day, she returned to her house.

There is only the Xa--- River between Ad--- village and Ab--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, so shelling and gunfire were often fired into the [Ab---] village. On the same day, February 17th

⁵ 'Ko' is a Burmese title meaning older brother. It can be used for relatives as well as non-relatives.

⁶ 'Maung' is a Burmese male honorific title used before a person's name.

⁷ On February 2nd 2021, healthcare workers at state-run hospitals and medical facilities across Burma (Myanmar) spearheaded a Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) consisting of labour strikes in protest against the February 1st 2021 military coup. The movement quickly spread to include civil servants from all sectors of the government who are walking off their jobs as a way of non-recognition and non-participation in the military regime. Because of the popularity of the movement, and its seminal role in wider protests across the country, some people have begun using it as a catch-all phrase to include other protest forms like boycotts and pot-banging.

⁸ 'Daw' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

⁹ 'Ma' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

2024, at 9 am, the same SAC soldiers from Ad--- village, Waw Township, also conducted shelling and one of the mortar shells landed in the garden of the sister of Ko F--- (named Daw H---) in Ab--- village. The shelling damaged the glass of the window and wall of her house.

One mortar shell (60 mm) landed in the garden of Ko G---'s house, near Ko F---'s house. Three houses were minorly damaged by the shrapnel from the [SAC] shelling and one chicken was killed. Those three houses belong to Daw H---, U¹⁰ I---, and Ko F---.



These two photos were taken in March 2024, in Ab--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, Kyeh Htoh Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. On February 17th 2024, at around 12 am, SAC soldiers based in Ad--- village, Waw Township, Bago Division, conducted a drone strike into Ab--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, and two bombs landed on the house of a villager named Daw D---. The shrapnel from the explosion damaged her house and injured her daughter, Ma E--- (18 years old), on her head and chin. These two photos show the house, which was damaged by the SAC drone strike. [Photos: KHRG]

May: SAC shelling in See Pyaw village tract killed one villager

On May 6th 2024, SAC Artillery Unit #310 fired three Howitzer rounds (122 mm) into Ac--- village, See Pyaw village tract, [at 4:20 am, 4:52 am, and 5:00 am]. At 4:52 am, one shell landed in a rubber plantation in Ac--- village and exploded. The explosion killed Saw¹¹ J--- (45 years old) from Af--- village, Pyin K'Done village tract, Kyeh Htoh Township, while he was extracting rubber latex. Saw J--- is from Af--- village, but he came to Ac--- village to work on a rubber plantation to support his family.

Normally, rubber plantation workers wake up early in the morning to extract the rubber [as the tree] produces more rubber latex [then]. One of the Howitzer shells landed next to Saw J---, about 20 feet [6.09 metres] away from him, and injured his left foot, calf and ankle. His stomach was also seriously injured by shrapnel from the shell. His lower calf was almost cut apart [split open], and he was in an emergency condition, so he was sent immediately to a nearby clinic [supported by the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW)¹²] in See Pyaw village tract by village tract leaders. He was bleeding heavily but [they were] unable to replace his blood [give him a transfusion] at that clinic. Since the SAC do not allow people to travel before 6 am, villagers could not send the victim to the nearby clinic in Thein Zat Yat Town. [The villager was transferred to another local clinic in Kyaw Pya village tract, in Kyeh Htoh Township, run by volunteer medics.] After, he was sent to a[nother] KDHW clinic in Ae--- village, Ha T'Reh village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. He arrived at the Ae--- clinic at 2 pm and received treatment. The injury on his stomach was serious. His large intestine was hit and almost cut apart [split open]. Due to the serious injuries and severe bleeding, he passed away at the clinic.

¹⁰ 'U' is a Burmese title used for elder men, used before their name.

¹¹ 'Saw' is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

¹² The Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) is the health department of the Karen National Union. It was established in 1956 to address the lack of public healthcare resources in rural Southeast Myanmar. It currently operates a network of community-based clinics in the region, but its capabilities remain limited due to funding constraints.

Saw J---'s body was brought back to his house and was cremated in Af--- village, Pyin K'Don Kone village tract. Saw J--- had four family members who relied on him [financially]. Saw J---'s family faced many problems after he passed away. [After this incident,] it was not safe to extract rubber latex [due to SAC shelling], so they [rubber extractors] stopped doing it [in Ac--- village]. Due to prices rising, Saw J---'s family encountered many problems because they no longer have a regular income. Saw J--- was injured on May 6th 2024, at 4:52 am, and passed away on May 7th 2024, at 8:05 am.



These two photos were taken in May 2024, in a local clinic in Kyaw Pya village tract, Kyeh Htoh Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. On May 6th 2024, starting at 4:20 am, SAC Artillery Unit #310, based in Thein Za Yat Town, Kyeh Htoh Township, fired three Howitzer shells and one shell landed into a rubber plantation in Ac--- village, See Pyaw village tract, and exploded, injuring a villager named Saw J--- (45 years old), from Af--- village, Pyin K'Done village tract. The photo on the left shows the injury to Saw J---'s calf, and the photo on the right shows the injury on his hand. The villager died in the clinic where he was receiving treatment due to the severity of his wounds. [Photos: Local villager]

The SAC often conducted shelling [in 2024], so villagers were afraid to sleep in their houses, and they had to sleep in their bunkers. The SAC fired both mortar shells and guns [villagers reported hearing shelling and gunshots], so villagers had to hide [in a safe place outside of the village] to sleep in the evening.

SAC restrictions on travel and fishing causing livelihood challenges

Most of the villagers in Ab--- village, Hk'Rweh village tract, depended on fishing on the Xa--- River for their livelihood. Normally, villagers were fishing during the night time. Due to restrictions from SAC and Pyu Saw Htee¹³ soldiers [in the area], it became a barrier for the villagers' livelihood activities: SAC and Pyu Saw Htee soldiers did not allow any boat to travel at night. If they saw any boat, they would shoot or arrest the villagers on it. In March 2024, two fishermen were arbitrarily arrested by SAC and Pyu Saw Htee soldiers.

Furthermore, the SAC planted landmines on the riverbank [of Xa--- River], so villagers faced challenges for their livelihood activities. There were many problems to secure their living, and

¹³ The first Pyu Saw Htee groups were officially formed in mid-May 2021 in response to the National Unity Government's call for the formalisation of a People's Defence Force to resist the military regime following the 2021 military coup. The Pyu Saw Htee is made up of military veterans and Buddhist ultranationalist pro-military supporters whose aim is to counter and control opposition to the military regime.

[humanitarian] organisations were unable to reach the place and provide support [due to security concerns].

Since it was the hot season, it was okay for villagers [in Hk'Rweh village tract] to sleep in a bunker. However, if it were the rainy season [from June to October], it would be a problem for villagers to sleep in a bunker [due to rain water getting into the bunker].

Further background reading on the situation on indiscriminate shelling in Southeast Burma/Myanmar can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Taw Oo District Incident Report: SAC indiscriminate shelling damaged villagers' houses and property and caused displacement in Daw Hpah Hkoh Township \(November 2024\)".](#) March 2025.
- ["Dooطلا District Situation Update: fighting, SAC air strikes and shelling causing destruction, displacement, and livelihood, healthcare and education challenges in Kaw T'Ree Township \(April to July 2024\)".](#) March 2025.
- ["Kler Lwee Htoo District Short Update: SAC drone strikes and indiscriminate shelling caused casualties, destruction, and livelihood and education challenges in Ler Doh Township \(November to December 2024\)".](#) March 2025.
- [*Striking Fear: Impacts of State Administration Council \(SAC\) shelling on villagers' lives in Southeast Burma \(January to October 2023\).*](#) December 2023.

About KHRG

Founded in 1992, the 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.

