



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

January 29th, 2025 / KHRG # 24-72-S1

Doooplaya District Situation Update: fighting, SAC indiscriminate shelling causing casualties, SAC soldiers killing a villager, and livelihood challenges, in Waw Ray Township (January to February 2024)

This Situation Update describes events that occurred in Waw Ray (Win Yay) Township, Doooplaya District, from January to February 2024. Villagers living in several villages in Ler Htoo village tract, in Waw Ray Township, have been facing livelihood challenges due to price increases and low wages. In January 2024, State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers demanded villagers who lived next to a road near A--- village, Waw Ray Township, to relocate to a nearby monastery due to fighting in the area. On February 9th 2024, SAC soldiers indiscriminately conducted shelling into A--- village, injuring seven villagers and damaging several houses. On February 20th 2024, before 6 am, SAC soldiers stationed in D--- village, Low Sha village tract, Waw Ray Township, shot and killed a villager who was in a nearby forest collecting vegetables during the SAC-imposed curfew.¹

Livelihood challenges in Ler Htoo village tract

Villagers from B---, C---, E---, and F--- villages, in Ler Htoo village tract², Waw Ray Township, encountered livelihood challenges as some villagers do [work on] betel nut³ plantation fields but betel nuts do not have the same [market] value as in the past. [In some areas,] some villagers work on rubber plantations because they have no other choice of work. Villagers have different occupations depending on where they live. [Villagers from] some areas cannot do farming, as they do not have farm fields or hill farm fields, so they cultivate and grow vegetables [instead]. Some villagers, those who do not have plantation fields nor do farm work as daily labour, cut grass [clear trees, bushes, and plants on the land of others]. People who cut grass with machines are not even paid 16,000 kyat [7.62 USD⁴] per day.

¹ The present document is based on information received in February 2024. It was provided by a community member in Doooplaya 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 In Burmese, 'betel nut' and 'betel leaf' are referred to as *konywet* and *konthih*, respectively, as if they are from the same plant. The Burmese names are also commonly used by Karen language speakers. Betel nut is the seed from an areca palm tree, *Areca catechu*; "betel leaf" is the leaf of the piper betel vine, belonging to the *Piperaceae* family.

⁴ All conversion estimates for Kyat in this report are based on the official market rate as of December 10th 2024 at 1 USD = 2,098.46 MMK, conversion rate available at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter>.

Villagers purchase oil, chili and rice with the money they earn. Food prices have constantly increased [since the coup in February 2021]. In the past, one small bottle of oil cost 800 kyat [0.38 USD] but now it costs 3,500 kyat [1.67 USD]. Bamar⁵ and Mon villagers have also gone through difficulties. During this difficult situation [of livelihood challenges], [some] villagers dried leaves [to make grass brooms to sell]. People pay 3,500 kyat [1.67 USD] per kilogramme for broom leaves [to make grass brooms]. Most of the villagers dried leaves [for work].

Military activities in Waw Ray Township

Compared to the past months [in 2023], human rights violations [in Waw Ray Township have] increased constantly due to the numerous [military] activities [in the area]. In January 2024, fighting happened between the State Administration Council (SAC)⁶ and [unknown] combined armed resistance groups at Kyoe Ta Ta Place, [a suspension bridge] located near A--- village, Waw Ray Township. SAC soldiers asked villagers, including Mon and Bamar [ethnic] communities, whose houses are situated along the [main] road [on the outskirts of A--- village, close to the bridge] to move and live in a monastery [because fighting often happened on the main road]. The monastery is not far away from the main road; around 30 minutes travelling on foot. There were also other [displaced] villagers living in the monastery. A week after villagers displaced themselves, the fighting happened on the main road. [The SAC soldiers did not stay in the displaced villagers' houses, near the main road. Villagers escaped to sleep elsewhere during the intense fighting period and returned when the situation got better.]

On February 9th 2024, SAC soldiers indiscriminately fired shells into A--- village, Waw Ray Township. Due to the indiscriminate shelling, seven villagers were injured and some houses were damaged. It is unclear how badly the villagers were hurt and how many houses were damaged. [Due to travel difficulties and ongoing conflict, the KHRG field researcher was unable to travel to the incident area to collect further detailed information. However, the researcher was able to confirm the incident occurred with the village authorities from Waw Ray Township, who knew about the incident, through a phone call.]

SAC soldiers killing of a villager in Low Sha village tract

On February 20th 2024, SAC soldiers stationed in D--- village, Low Sha village tract, Waw Ray Township, shot and killed a villager [unknown name] from D--- village. In the early morning, before 6 am, on February 20th 2024, two villagers [unknown ages] from D--- village went to the forest to search for vegetables. When SAC soldiers saw them, they fired their guns at the villagers for not obeying the curfew. No one is allowed [by the SAC] to leave their house from 6 pm until 6 am. One villager was fatally shot on the spot while the other villager escaped. Later, the soldiers themselves entered D--- village and told the villagers that they shot and killed a villager because the villager was not obeying the curfew.

⁵ The majority ethnic group in Myanmar, also known as ethnic Burmese or Burman.

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.

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

- ["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"](#), August 2024.
- ["Dooplaya District Incident Report: SAC soldiers killed five villagers, torturing two and raping a pregnant woman, in Kaw T'Ree Township, in May 2024"](#), November 2024.
- ["Dooplaya District Short Update: SAC shelling killed a villager and damaged houses in Kruh Tuh Township \(May and September 2023\)"](#), September 2024.
- ["Dooplaya District Incident Report: A KNU/KNLA-PC soldier raped a child and attempted to rape another child in Kruh Tuh Township \(April and September 2023\)"](#), October 2024.

About KHRG

Founded in 1992, 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.khr.org.

