



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

October 21st, 2025 / KHRG #24-99-I1

Doo Tha Htoo District Incident Report: SAC mortar shelling injured two children and damaged property in Hpa-an Township (January 2024)

This Incident Report describes events occurring in Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo (Thaton) District in January 2024. On January 30th 2024, State Administration Council (SAC) soldiers from K'Ma Moh (Ka Ma Maung) army camp, Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District, fired two mortar shells into Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The first mortar shells landed in front of a villager's house, injuring a 14-year-old student named Saw L--- and a 16-year-old student named Saw Y---, who were driving a motorbike nearby. The injured were taken to the hospital in Aa--- village. Saw L--- later received treatment in Thailand's Sk--- refugee camp and stayed there temporarily with his relatives. The second mortar shell damaged the house of the headmistress and also damaged a motorbike of a villager. After the mortar shelling happened, villagers from Aa--- village were afraid. Consequently, many villagers fled, although some remained in the village.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	[Shelling into a village.] Two underage students were injured by mortar shelling conducted by SAC [State Administration Council ²] soldiers
Date of Incident(s)	January 30 th 2024
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract ³ , Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District

Victim(s) Information

¹ The present document is based on information received in March 2024. It was provided by a community member in Doo Tha Htoo 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: #24-99-A1-I1 and #24-99-A2-I1.

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. The military junta changed its name in July 31st 2025 to State Security and Peace Commission (SSPC).

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

Name	Saw ⁴ L---	Saw Y---
Age	14 years old	16 years old
Gender	Boy	Boy
Ethnicity	Karen	Karen
Marital Status	-	-
Occupation	Student	Student
Religion	Buddhist	Buddhist
Position	- [Villager]	- [Villager]
Village	Aa--- village	Aa--- village

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
Unknown	Unknown	Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) ⁵ #208	K'Ma Moh (Ka Ma Maung) Town [in Lu Thaw Township, Mu Traw (Hpapun) District]	[Unknown]

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how this information was collected.

A KHRG researcher went to take pictures of the incident place as he had heard the explosion. [The KHRG researcher interviewed one of the victims, Saw L---, and a teacher named Naw⁶ N-- from Aa--- village].

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

[When] he [the KHRG researcher] heard the explosions, he went to the incident place and then took photos of the incident place, verifying the information in this report. One of the victims and the schoolteachers who witnessed the incident, Naw N---, provided the information to the researcher.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail.

On January 30th 2024, SAC [State Administration Council] soldiers fired two mortar shells into Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The first mortar shell [landed near a villager's house and] injured two underage students who are from Aa--- village. The two children who were injured by the mortar shrapnel are students from Aa--- middle

⁴ 'Saw' is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

⁵ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Light 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 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). LIBs are primarily used for offensive operations, but they are sometimes used for garrison duties.

⁶ 'Naw' is a S'gaw Karen female honorific title used before a person's name.

school (administered by the Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD)⁷), named Saw L---, who is 14 years old, and Saw Y---, who is 16 years old.

A teacher named Naw N---, from Aa--- village, explained: *“On the day the incident happened [January 30th 2024], the headmistress contacted me over the phone and told me, ‘N---, our students were injured. Please, find a car for me [to take them to the hospital for treatment].’ We did not have any cars nearby. But the teachers contacted each other [to find a car]. They [the teachers] found a car by themselves. [It] seems like this mortar shell was from K’Ma Moh [Town’s SAC army camp]. On that day [January 30th 2024], two mortar shells were fired [by the SAC soldiers]. Our students were injured by the first mortar shell.”*



These two photos were taken in January 2024. The photo on the right shows where the first of two mortar shells fired by SAC LIB #208 soldiers (from K’Ma Moh Town army camp) landed in Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The photo on the left shows the sandals and blood stains left behind by Saw L--- and Saw Y--- after they were knocked off their motorbike by the mortar shell shrapnel and injured. [Photos: KHRG]

- **Injury of 14-year-old Saw L---**

Saw L--- was severely injured on his stomach, back, and left arm. Since he had been hit by mortar shrapnel [on his stomach], his intestines were exposed, and he had to receive surgery. Then, they had to use flesh from his thigh and transfer it to his [left] arm [they carried out a skin graft]. As a result, this student’s body was [mildly] deformed [by his injuries]. 14-year-old Saw L--- explained how he was injured: *“After school, I [went home, and then] was going to play football. So, I drove on a motorbike with my friend to get my gloves and socks. My friend was driving the motorbike and I rode on the back. The mortar shells landed as soon as I arrived at the place I was going to [near the headmistress’ house]. Then, I was hit by shrapnel on my stomach, hands, leg, and back. My friend was also injured on his hands and stomach. When my friend and I were hit by the shrapnel, we were knocked off of the motorbike. I cannot remember the exact time we were injured, but it was in the evening. The motorbike was also damaged.”* Two villagers who live close to the incident place ran to help the boys. He continued: *“Then I was taken to Aa--- hospital for treatment. After I was injured, my teachers also visited me. After the shelling,*

⁷ The Karen National Union's Education and Culture Department is the education department of the Karen National Union. Its main goals are to provide mother tongue education services to rural Karen populations in Southeast Myanmar, as well as to preserve the Karen language, culture and history. Despite being an important education provider in the region, it is not officially recognised by the Myanmar government.

villagers were afraid, so they fled to another village. I feel upset about my injury. I wish that these kinds of incidents will not happen in my village again.”

[Aa--- hospital is run by the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW)⁸.] Currently [as of March 2024], the student [Saw L---] was still receiving treatment, and staying temporarily in Thailand, in Sk--- [refugee] camp where his relatives are.



The two photos on the top row were taken in February 2024 in Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. They show the scars of Saw L---, who was one of two students injured by SAC mortar shelling conducted into Aa--- village on January 30th 2024. The photo on the top left shows the scars on the stomach of Saw L-- after surgery and the photo on the top right shows the scars on his back from the mortar shrapnel. The photo on the bottom left was taken in January 2024, and shows the blood of Saw L-- on the floor of a villager's house near the incident place, after he was taken into the house before being brought to the hospital. [Photos: KHRG]

- **Injury of 16-year-old Saw Y---**

The other student, who was driving the motorbike, Saw Y---, was injured on his left arm, and could not breathe easily when he arrived at the hospital. Because of this, he had to be given an oxygen tank to breathe [at the hospital]. For that reason, the surgeon thought that there might

⁸ 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.

be shrapnel stuck in the student's body, so he operated on the student's body [hand] to find the shrapnel. But he did not find anything. This student was only mildly injured, so he was released from the hospital before Saw L--- was released, as Saw L--- was severely injured.

The teacher, Naw N---, added: *"I was upset and fainted because my students were injured. [The day] after the shelling, we shut down the school for several days because we were afraid [mortar shelling would happen again]. Near our school, we had made makeshift bunkers to keep our students safe whenever mortar shelling or air strikes were conducted. Our school starts from KG [Kindergarten] and goes up to Grade 8. [...] If they conduct air strikes and mortar shelling like this, it is not safe for both villagers and children. We need to stay alert regarding the situation"*. As explained by Naw N---, after the mortar shelling, some villagers from Aa--- village fled from the village, and some villagers remained [in the village]. Villagers dug makeshift bunkers to protect themselves.

- **Destruction of property by the shelling**

Shortly after these two students were injured by the shrapnel, the [second] mortar shell landed in front of the house of a teacher named K---, who was assigned as the headmistress of the KECD middle school in Aa--- village. The windows, door, sofa, front roof, house shrine [Buddhist spiritual house], food wash basin, and most of the rooms in her two-floor house were hit by the mortar shell shrapnel [and damaged]. Naw K--- is the mother of two children, and her husband is working in Thailand for the family's livelihood.





These photos were taken by a KHRG researcher in January 2024, in Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The photos show the house of the school headmistress that was damaged by SAC mortar shelling into the village on January 30th 2024. The photo on the top left shows the damage caused by the shelling to the window bay, which holds the Buddhist house shrine. The photo on the top right shows the damage caused by the shelling to the steps of the headmistress's house. The photo on the bottom left shows the door and walls of the house, which were hit by the shrapnel. The photo on the bottom right shows the washing basin, destroyed by the SAC mortar shelling. [Photos: KHRG]

A [Honda] 'Dream 125' motorbike, owned by a healthcare worker in Aa--- village named Naw M---, was also hit by the mortar shrapnel and damaged. Naw M--- ran back to the village as soon as she heard the sound of mortar shelling coming from K'Ma Moe [Town's army camp]. Then the [second] mortar shell landed at the place in Aa--- village where she parked her motorbike. Her motorbike, along with its engine, were badly damaged.





These photos were taken in January 2024, in Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The photos on the top row show the motorbike of a villager named Naw M---, damaged by the SAC mortar shelling in the village on January 30th 2024. The photo on the bottom left shows bamboo in the garden of Naw M--- that was damaged by the SAC mortar shell explosion. *[Photos: KHRG]*



These photos were taken by a KHRG researcher in January 2024, in Aa--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Hpa-an Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. The photo on the top right and the photo on the bottom left show trees damaged by the second mortar shell that was fired into Aa--- village on January 30th 2024. The photo on the top left shows the place where the second mortar shell landed, near the house of the village's middle school headmistress. *[Photos: KHRG]*

Later, on February 1st 2024, [the SAC] conducted an air strike, shelled, and fired guns into nearby Ab--- village, Pgwa Ghaw village tract, Tha Htoo (Thaton) Township, Doo Tha Htoo District. Due to both the SAC's indiscriminate shelling into Aa--- village [on January 30th 2024], which injured villagers and damaged their properties, as well as their attacks in February [in Ab--- village], almost every villager who was living in Pgwa Ghaw village tract fled to nearby villages where their relatives were staying.

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

This information is allowed to be used [by the victims and a teacher from the village who was interviewed to verify the information].

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

- [Striking Fear: Impacts of State Administration Council \(SAC\) shelling on villagers' lives in Southeast Burma \(January to October 2023\)](#), December 2023
- ["Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: SAC shelling caused villagers' displacement and house destruction in Kyeh Htoh Township \(June 2024\)"](#), May 2025
- ["Doo Tha Htoo District Short Update: SAC air strikes and shelling, causing casualties, damages and displacement; and forced labour, in Bilin Township \(September 2024 to February 2025\)."](#) , June 2025

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.khrq.org.

