



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Situation Update

June 13th, 2025 / KHRG # 25-1-LL1

Mergui-Tavoy District Situation Update: SAC air strikes caused death, injuries, displacement, and destruction (February to September 2024)

This Situation Update describes events occurring within three townships, T'Naw Th'Ree (Tanintharyi), Ler Doh Soe, and K'Ser Doh Townships, in Mergui-Tavoy District, from February to September 2024, including State Administration Council (SAC)'s soldiers conducting drone and air strikes onto these three townships, including by bombardment. Within this reporting period, there were SAC air strikes at least in 13 places in Mergui-Tavoy District, in the months of February, March, May, June, August and September. SAC air strikes occurred on civilian areas, including villages and plantations, sometimes after skirmishes between the SAC and local armed resistance groups in nearby areas, and sometimes without fighting happening. Such SAC air strikes killed seven villagers, including two children, three women and one elder woman. The air strikes also injured eight villagers, including one elder. Family members of victims reported feeling devastated by the loss of their loved ones and hopeless, and wishing no other family has to go through the same pain and loss. They demanded justice. Family members are also experiencing livelihood difficulties with the death of a breadwinner. Seven houses, community buildings (such as schools, hospitals, religious places), and villagers' plantations were damaged by the air strikes as well. Two bombs dropped remained unexploded. Due to the air strikes, local villagers fled to places far from the incident location to avoid potential life-threatening harm.¹

February 2024: SAC air strikes on T'Keh village tract and Kyay Chaung area

On February 1st 2024, State Administration Council (SAC)² soldiers came across armed resistance combined forces [Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)³ and People Defence Force (PDF)⁴] during their patrolling near Hg--- village, T'Keh (Tha Kyet) village tract⁵, T'Naw

¹ The present document is based on information received in February and November 2024. It was provided by four community members in Mergui-Tavoy District who have 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: #24-60-D1; #24-89-D, #24-105-D1, #24-136-P1, #24-188-D, #24-292-D1, #24-304-I1, #24-309-D1, #24-311-P3, #24-311-P4, #24-327-D1, #24-358-D1, #24-378-D1, #24-446-I1, #24-82-P1, #24-311-P6, and #24-343-P1.

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

⁴ 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

Th'Ree (Tanintharyi) Township. So, fighting happened between these two armed groups. On February 2nd 2024, after the fighting between these two armed groups, an SAC fighter jet (type Mi2), from Bleik (Myeik) Town, conducted air strikes on Hg--- village, while they [SAC soldiers] retrieved the corps of their [SAC soldiers'] captain [who was killed during the fighting near the village]. The air strikes took place for two hours [including by dropping multiple bombs and firing with machine guns from the aircraft]. [Local Karen National Union (KNU)⁶ authorities informed the KHRG researcher that the SAC fighter jet was from Myeik Town].

On February 5th 2024, an SAC Mi2 fighter jet conducted an air strike again into the vicinity of Hg--- village.

On February 25th and 26th 2024, due to fighting happening between combined forces of PDF and KNLA Battalions #27 and #12 against SAC troops in the vicinity of Hd--- village, Way Tah Eh area (located at the boundary between K'Ser Doh and Ler Doh Soe Townships), air strikes were conducted [by the SAC] on Hd--- village. As a result, one villager was killed, one house was burned, and villagers' plantations were also damaged by the air strikes.



These photos were taken by a KHRG researcher in March 2024, in Hd--- village, located at the boundary of K'Ser Doh and Ler Doh Soe Townships. The photos show damages from the air strikes conducted by the SAC on February 25th and 26th 2024, after fighting happened between combined forces of People Defence Force (PDF) and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Battalion #27 and #12 against SAC soldiers near Hd--- village. The photo from the left shows a house burned by the SAC air strike and the photo on the right shows villagers' plantations damaged due to the SAC air strike. [Photos: KHRG]

March 2024: SAC air strikes on Way Tah Eh area

On March 4th 2024, between 10 am to 11 am, SAC fighter jets (types K-8W and MI-2) dropped more than 20 bombs on Tah Eh Town and Hm--- village, in Way Tah Eh area, between K'Ser

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.

⁵ A village tract is an administrative unit of between five and 20 villages in a local area, often centred on a large village.

⁶ 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.

Doh and Ler Doh Soe Townships. In addition, on March 6th 2024, an [SAC] Mi2 aircraft conducted air reconnaissance in that area as well. Due to the [abovementioned] fighting and the air strikes, villagers from Ho---, Hb---, Hu---, Hj---, Hi---, Hy---, Hr---, Hl---, Hw---, Hm---, Th---, He--- villages and Tah Eh Town fled to Dawei Town and to the [Thailand] border area.

On March 12th 2024, between 10 am to 11 am, two SAC fighter jets conducted an air strike on Hp--- village, K'Moh Thway area, Ler Doh Soe Township. Due to the air strike, villagers' plantations were damaged.

On the same day [March 12th 2024,] between 3 pm and 4 pm, the SAC fighter jets conducted another air strike on Hs--- village, K'Moh Thway area. Shrapnel hit a villager's buttock. Three villagers' houses were destroyed by the air strike as well. A 45-year-old villager, named Ma⁷ J---, from Hs--- village, explained: *"Since the SAC conducted indiscriminate air strikes without fighting happening [in the area], we, villagers from K'Moh Thway area, need to be afraid [of air strikes] and [experience] anxiety. That's why we have to flee to our plantations, which are a bit far from the village. We dare not return to stay in our village completely. Because we are afraid that air strikes might happen again."*

May 2024: SAC air strikes on K'Ser Doh Township

On May 5th 2024, KNLA Battalion #12 and #27, from Brigade #4, combined with forces of People Defence Force (PDF), attacked Burma Army soldiers from Infantry Battalion (IB)⁸ #403 and #280 temporarily stationed at a monastery in Gh--- village, Kleh Muh Htee area, K'Ser Doh Township. They [KNLA and PDF combined forces] also attacked Burma Army IB #403, based in Thayet Chaung army camp (located at the entrance of Kh--- village, Kleh Muh Htee area), and a [SAC-affiliated] local militia army camp in Kh--- village, as well. Fighting in these two locations took place for three days.

On the same day [May 5th 2024], between 7 am to 8 am, two Burma Army aircraft, a helicopter and a fighter jet, indiscriminately dropped bombs into the fighting area, and also fired machine guns. The aircraft fired machine guns from 10 am to 5 pm, then they stopped. Air strikes were conducted on the [Gh--- and Kh---] villages [located in fighting area], and at the vicinity of the villages, for four days [May 5th to 8th 2024].

Due to the air strike, the house of a 36-year-old villager from Kh--- village, named Ma⁹ K---, was destroyed. Ma K--- explained to KHRG: *"In my opinion, they [SAC] conducted air strikes not only to attack the PDF and their combined forces. They [SAC] also conducted air strikes on the places where villagers' houses are and on the villagers' plantations. When the air strike happened, my mother, my baby and I were running into our makeshift bunker [location censored for security]. My baby is only two years old. When I heard the sound of the first air strike, I sneaked outside [of the bunker] and I saw my house's back door was broken and, inside my house, things were messy [damaged]. After the air strike, I went out from the bunker into my house to get some clothes. Other villagers watched my house from a distance, and they only saw smoke so they really worried about us [the family]. After this, as soon as the air strike stopped, we met two or three [a few] households, then we fled from our village to the river source. I feel really bad due to the destruction of my house by the aircraft dropping bombs near to my house. Currently [as of September 2024], other villagers already returned to the village and stay in their house. But for me, I can no longer stay in my house. Because I lost my house*

⁷ 'Ma' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

⁸ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw 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.

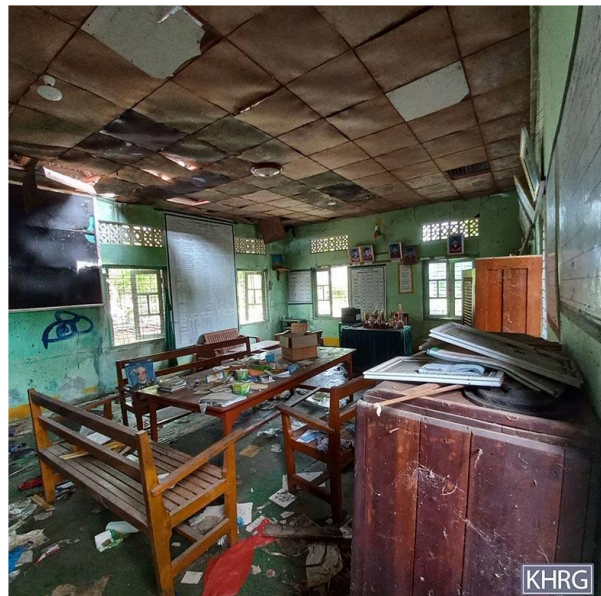
⁹ 'Ma' is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person's name.

already. The actions of Burma Army soldiers is so hateful. When the aircraft dropped the bombs, my daughter was scared and she cried very hard then asked me, 'Mom! Are we going to be killed [by the air strike]?'. I was very upset [when she asked this]. But I cannot do anything. Due to the incident, we do not get to live our lives in freedom. We prefer to live in our village and we hope the situation will get better and there will be peace."

Also on May 5th 2024, at around 5 pm or 6 pm, Burma Army aircraft (types K8W and Mi-2) conducted air strikes on Jh--- village, Kleh Muh Htee area, K'Ser Doh Township.

Furthermore, on May 8th 2024, SAC aircraft conducted air strikes on Jh--- village again and bombs landed into the village beside a football ground. The incident happened while children were playing football, and so, two children named Maung¹⁰ H--- (16 years old) and Maung G--- (16 years old) were killed by the air strike. Some other children [unidentified] were also injured by the shrapnel from the explosion.

On the same day [May 8th 2024], SAC aircraft dropped bombs into Dh--- village, Kleh Muh Htee area, and destroyed a hospital and schools. On that day, at around 5 pm and 6 pm, two SAC aircraft (K8W and Mi-2) conducted air strikes on Jh--- village again [and the hospital and schools were destroyed]. In addition, on May 10th 2024, [an SAC] air strike happened on Jh--- village again. Due to Burma Army conducting air strikes [in Jh--- village], villagers' houses, religion buildings, schools, hospital and plantations were destroyed.



¹⁰ 'Maung' is a Burmese male honorific title used before a person's name.



These photos were taken by a KHRG researcher in July 2024, in Jh--- village, Kleh Muh Htee area, K'Ser Doh Township, Mergui-Tavoy District. These photos show buildings (a school, in the top row; another school, bottom-right; and the hospital, in the bottom left) destroyed by the SAC air strikes (conducted by K8W and Mi-2 aircraft) on Jh--- village, in May 8th 2024. [Photos: KHRG]

June 2024: SAC air strikes on T'Naw Th'Ree Township

On June 27th 2024, at 10 am, two Burma Army aircraft (type K8W), from Myeik Town, dropped bombs onto Hn--- village, T'Keh village tract, T'Naw Th'Ree Township. A villager's house was destroyed by the air strike. The house owner was picking up their children from school when the bombs landed on the house, so none of them were injured [by the air strike].

However, two workers from Hsi Aon [a company in the area that owns plantations and produces coconut oil], named Maung Y--- (20 years old) and U¹¹ N--- (43 years old), were injured on their back by the shrapnel when the second aircraft conducted an air strike near the Miga Wave company. One bomb from the air strike remained unexploded.

August 2024: SAC air strikes on T'Naw Th'Ree Township

On August 8th 2024, at 1:45 pm, a [SAC] fighter jet from Myeik Town dropped six bombs into Ht--- village, T'Keh (Tha Kyet) village tract, T'Naw Th'Ree Township, at a place where the KNU's Township office is located. Due to this air strike, one villager's house was destroyed and two villagers named Saw¹² Z--- (24 years old) and Saw S--- (72 years old) were injured. Then at 2:09 pm, bombs [from the air strike] landed on the school and on the football ground located in Wh--- village, in T'Keh (Tha Kyet) village tract, so the school was destroyed and the football ground was damaged.

In addition, on August 15th 2024, at 1:33 pm, SAC aircraft dropped bombs onto two places: Ht--- and Hh--- villages, T'Keh village tract. Aircraft dropped four bombs: three bombs exploded and a 500-pound bomb remained unexploded. Villagers from Ph---, Sh---, and Ch--- villages, in T'Keh village tract, had to displace themselves due to the air strikes.

¹¹ 'U' is a Burmese male honorific title used before a person's name.

¹² 'Saw' is a S'gaw Karen male honorific title used before a person's name.

Table 1. Registration of villagers who were displaced from T’Keh village tract, T’Naw Th’Ree Township, on August 15th 2024, due to SAC air strikes

| Households | Village | Children: 1-year-olds to 15-year-olds | | > 16-year-olds and [adults] | | Total | |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|-----|-------------|----------|
| | | Girls | Boys | Women | Men | Women/Girls | Men/Boys |
| 158 | Ph--- village | 132 | 145 | 229 | 256 | 367 | 401 |
| 222 | Sh--- village | 181 | 181 | 325 | 375 | 506 | 556 |
| 120 | Ch--- village | 72 | 72 | 220 | 208 | 292 | 280 |

September 2024: SAC air strikes on T’Naw Th’Ree Township

On September 11th 2024, at 10:40 am, SAC IB #561 conducted drone strikes in villages near Hn--- village, T’Keh village tract. Four villagers named Daw¹³ A--- (57 years old), Daw M--- (70 years old), Ma T--- (18 years old), Maung O--- (21 years old) were hit by the drone strike. One of the four people [Daw M---] was killed immediately, on the spot. A local KDHW [Karen Department of Health and Welfare¹⁴] worker reported that one of the other villagers died at 11 am, and the other two died at 2 pm. The drone strikes caused injuries to three other unknown villagers as well.

Maung O---’s father, named U L--- (45 years old), explained: *“Our family was working in our plantation, then he [the son] told us that he would go out [of the farm] for a haircut [in the village] so he went out. Then at around 10:30 am, we heard the sound of an explosion. After 20 minutes of the explosion, one of our friends came to us and informed us, ‘your son is injured by bombs’. My tears fell down my cheeks as soon as I heard that. Then I called his mom and we went to see him [at the incident place]. But he was already transported to Zh--- clinic when we reached there. Then, we heard [from other villager] that he was severely injured on his leg so he was retransferred to a hospital in Nh--- village ran by KDHW. He died on the way, while he was being transferred to the hospital. I am really feeling sad, as he was my oldest son. Because he helped us with our work in our plantation so our work went smoothly while he was alive. But now he is no longer with us so it [farming] causes so much exhaustion to us. My innocent son had to die because of the SAC’s actions. So, it is very upsetting for us. For his mom, she feels really heartbroken until she almost died and she cannot even eat rice. We also lost our goals [future]... and now we have [little] money, 200,000 kyats [USD 95.10¹⁵], which is what our relatives from Oh--- village donated to us.”*

Ma T---’s father, named U P--- (42 years old), also said: *“During the drone strikes, my daughter ran up into the [stilted] house. So, the shrapnel hit her ears and neck when she was on the ladder to run into the house, she then fell down [from the ladder]. We were having a conversation [under the house] while the drone strike happened and none of us had noticed when my daughter stood up and ran up into the house. We also thought that nothing would happen to us. But when I saw my daughter fall down, I called her: ‘Poe Mu [daughter] ...! Poe Mu...!’ She did not respond me. So, we carried her and transported her to Bh--- hospital. She then died after she reached the hospital.”* Ma T---’s dad also added: *“When someone asks us about how we feel [related to this incident], we feel really upset as my daughter was a student. A thought also came into my mind that if I had sent my daughter [to a school] far from [the village], she would not have been killed like that: It was my big mistake [for letting her study in*

¹³ ‘Daw’ is a Burmese female honorific title used before a person’s name.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ All conversion estimates for the kyat are based on the April 8th 2025 mid-market exchange rate of 1,000 kyats to USD 0.48 (taken from <https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/mmk-to-usd-rate>).

the village]. I should have sent my daughter away. As I had not sent her to a faraway place, she died pointlessly. Therefore, I would like to request support from stakeholders from other countries to punish the SAC IB #561 which conducted the drone strikes [into the village] with the punishment they deserve”.

Lastly, a villager named U B---, who is Daw M---’s husband, expressed his feelings due to the loss of his wife from the drone strike: *“My wife was sitting at a shop and she was about to come out from the shop when the bombs landed and exploded. She then was hit by the shrapnel and immediately died on the spot. Due to the death of my wife, I feel really upset until my heart is almost broken [into pieces]. I have only her to discuss things with. Currently, all my hopes for the future are gone. I wish this kind of situation will end as soon as possible. I don’t want to see other families experiencing the loss of their family members as I did. I want them to get to stay in love with their family peacefully. I also don’t want them to lose their economy [face financial problems], and I don’t want them to lose their rights to live as well. Presently, I need to take care of my children who remained with me [are alive]. I worry they will ask me about their mom, and I have no idea how to answer them.”*

Regarding they [the SAC] conducting drone strikes, it occurred after soldiers of PDF, KTLA [Kawthoolei Army]¹⁶, and KNU [KNLA] approached [where SAC soldiers were temporarily stationed] in an area [outside of Hn--- village,] at the western part of the village. [As stated by the KHRG field researcher,] they [SAC troops] should only conduct drone strikes on their enemies [armed forces], but now they [SAC troops] conducted drone strikes on villages [and villagers’ areas], and caused impacts to the villagers.

Conclusions:

In conclusion, due to SAC soldiers conducting drone and air strikes [on T’Naw Th’Ree (Taninytharyi), Ler Doh Soe, and K’Ser Doh Townships, in Mergui-Tavoy District], villagers who live in the incident places and near the incident places, have to be afraid that Burma Army soldiers might conduct air strikes again so for their safety, some of them dug makeshift bunkers to hide, some fled to villages located far from their places, and some fled to towns. Some villagers could not carry anything with them while they fled, including food or clothes.

¹⁶ The Kaw Thoo Lei Army (KTLA) was founded on July 17th 2022 by Brigadier-General Nerdah Bo Mya. Nerdah Bo Mya, former Commander-In-Chief of the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO), was dismissed by the KNU in 2022. KTLA operates in two districts in Southeast Burma, in KNU-controlled areas, namely Mergui-Tavoy and Dooplaya districts. In Dooplaya District, they operate in alliance with resistance armed groups. KTLA battalions in Mergui-Tavoy District are in conflict with both SAC and KNLA troops.

Further background reading on the situation of air strikes in Mergui-Tavoy District (Southeast Burma/Myanmar) can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- [“Mergui-Tavoy District Incident Report: SAC air strike injured two villagers and caused destruction to villagers’ houses and community buildings, January 2025”](#), April 2025.
- [ကဘီယုဟဲလ် Aircraft coming! : Impacts of air strikes on local communities and villagers’ protection strategies in Southeast Burma since the 2021 coup.](#), November 2024.
- [Schools Under Attack : Challenges to the right to education in Southeast Burma \(June 2023-February 2024\)](#), July 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.khrg.org.

