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Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Incident Report

December 21st 2022 / KHRG # 22-374-I1

Kler Lwee Htoo District Incident Report: Indiscriminate shelling killed a displaced woman in Moo Township, September 2022

This Incident Report describes events that occurred in Moo (Mone) Township, Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District in September 2022, including indiscriminate shelling by the State Administration Council (SAC) that killed a displaced woman when she was retrieving rice from the village. The shrapnel hit her on the back of her neck, her thigh and foot, killing her instantly. She leaves behind five children and her husband. Prior to the incident, the woman and her family were forced to displace along with other villagers from several villages in Shwegyin Inn village tract.¹

Part 1 – Incident Details

Type of Incident	Death due to indiscriminate shelling
Date of Incident(s)	September 17 th 2022
Incident Location (Village, Township and District)	Taung Su village, Shwegyin Inn village tract ² , Moo (Mone) Township, Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District

Victim Information	
Name	Naw ³ Thoo Lei Paw
Age	43
Sex	Female
Nationality	Karen
Family	Married
Occupation	Farmer

¹ The present document is based on information received in September 2022. It was provided by a community member in Kler Lwee 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.

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

Religion	Buddhist
Position	Villager
Village	Taung Su village, Shwegyin Inn village tract, Moo Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District

Perpetrator Information (Armed Actors)				
Name(s)	Rank	Unit	Base	Commander's Name
N/A	N/A	SAC LIB #351	Nant Tha Kwin Bridge, Taung Su village, Shwegyin Inn village tract, Moo Township	Captain Zay Ya Lin

Part 2 - Information Quality

1. Explain in detail how you collected this information.

A KHRG researcher contacted local leaders in the area, in order to get in contact with the victim's family and travelled to meet with the victim's family who were taking refuge in A--- village, Moo special area, Moo Township. He then conducted an interview with Saw⁴ B--- who is the husband of the victim, Naw Thoo Lei Paw.

2. Explain how the source verified this information.

The source is the husband of the victim who visited the scene of the incident and saw the dead body at the place of the incident. Many other villagers also saw it [the scene of the incident] when they went to take the corpse to A--- village to bury it. Information in this incident report is based on these witnessed events.

Part 3 – Complete Description of the Incident

Describe the Incident(s) in complete detail. For each incident, be sure to include 1) when the incident happened, 2) where it happened, 3) what happened, 4) how it happened, 5) who was involved, and 6) why it happened. Also describe any villager response(s) to the incident, the aftermath and the current living situation of the victims. Please use the space prepared below, and create an attachment if needed.

On September 17th 2022 at around 11:00 am, a displaced villager, Naw Thoo Lei Paw, from Taung Su village, Shwegyin Inn village tract, Moo Township was hit by shrapnel from a mortar fired by State Administration Council (SAC)⁵ troops, when she was returning [from Taung Su village] to her site of displacement [another village]. She had gone back to Taung Su village to

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

⁵ 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.

retrieve rice [to bring to the village she had displaced to]. She was hit by mortar shrapnel when she reached a paddy field at the entrance of the village [as she was leaving]. The shrapnel [from the mortar] hit her on her thigh, the back of the neck and foot, killing her instantly. The SAC [troop] responsible for this shelling is Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)⁶ #351, which [since July] has been temporarily based at Nant Thar Kwin Bridge [at the entrance of Taung Su village] and which is under the command of Captain Zay Yar Lin. Captain Zay Yar Lin is based at Ler Doh army camp.

Before this incident happened, on September 9th 2022, the SAC forced displaced villagers from Taung Su, Noh Klaw, T'Ma Hkaw and Noh Ku villages in Shwegyin Inn village tract, Moo Township and Thel Kone, Nga Pyet Inn, Nyaung Kone (Hkler Hkoh), Ain Net villages in Ain Net village tract, Ler Doh Township, Kler Lwee Htoo District. According to a community member, the SAC troops that operate in Ler Doh and Nant Thar Kwin area [and that forced these villagers to displace] are LIB #590, Infantry Battalion (IB)⁷ #60 and LIB #440, along with members of the *pyithusit* ("people's militia")⁸. In Shwegyin Inn village tract alone, there are 2,056 displaced villagers. KHRG was unable to identify the number of displaced persons from Ain Net village tract. According to a villager, [on September 9th] the SAC commanded the villagers to displace, saying: *"You all have to displace by today. No one should stay in the village. If anyone stays, we will fire mortars into the village."* Villagers including women, children and newborn babies had to displace.

As they were forced to suddenly displace, villagers could not carry much food with them. Therefore, some villagers [later] tried [go back to their village] to retrieve some food and check on their [plantations and] livestock. Due to the incident [the death of Naw Thoo Lei Paw], villagers are now afraid to return to the village to retrieve food and check on their plantations and livestock.

A displaced villager, Naw C--- said, *"The SAC forced us to displace. So, we are facing challenges. If the SAC gave us a site to relocate to, we would go and settle there. But now [instead], they just forced us to displace randomly. We didn't know where to stay. So, we fled to the forest. We waited until the situation calmed down a bit, and we just snuck into the village like thieves to grab some of our food. If they had seen us, they would have shot us dead or arrested us. The SAC did not allow us to return to the village, but they entered our village and looted our belongings and our food."*

The situation has made it more challenging for villagers [to survive at the displacement sites, as they fear returning to the village]. They face huge difficulties while being displaced in other people's houses, people's farm huts and in the forest. Villagers who took refuge in their relatives' and friends' houses in nearby villages have to rely on their relatives and friends. Some other villagers are displaced in the forest areas along the road from Ler Doh to Moo Township.

Some villagers displaced to Toungoo Town, Phyu Town and Kyauktaga Town located in

⁶ A Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) comprises 500 soldiers. Most Light Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are understrength 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.

⁷ An Infantry Battalion (IB) comprises 500 soldiers. However, most Infantry Battalions in the Tatmadaw are understrength 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.

⁸ The *pyithusit* refers to militias that were created by the Tatmadaw in the early 1960s under the Ne Win regime and were the forerunners of the Tatmadaw-supported community-based militias. Coordinated by the Tatmadaw, they were created as part of the regime's national defence strategy. One of their primary duties was to assist with village defence and serve as guides and informants.

Hpyoo (Phyu) Township [Bago Region]. Villagers are deeply concerned that they will not be able to harvest [their crops] if the situation continues. They are most concerned about potential food shortages in the coming year. Even though they were able to rely on their relatives and friends this year, they are highly concerned about potential food shortages [as they will not be able to produce crops this year]. A woman said, *"We farm [to earn a living]. The paddy crops are not good because of unexpected rain this year. Moreover, the cattle were released [and are roaming freely] all over the village due to [the] forced displacement [of villagers]. Therefore, we are concerned about food shortages in the coming year."*

Part 4 - Permission for Using the Details

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

The husband of the victim granted KHRG permission to use this information.



These photos were taken on September 22nd 2022 between Taung Su and A--- villages, Shwegyin Inn village tract, Moo Township. The photo on the left shows the corpse of Naw Thoo Lei Paw, who was killed by indiscriminate shelling fired by SAC LIB #351 based at Nant Thar Kwin Bridge [at the entrance to Taung Su village]. She was hit when she was returning from Taung Su village to the location where she was displaced. She had returned home to retrieve rice from her village. The photo on the right shows villagers carrying the body of Naw Thoo Lei Paw back to A--- village (the displacement site) to be buried. [Photos: Karen National Union (KNU)]



This photo was taken on September 23rd 2022 in A--- village, Shwegyin Inn village tract, Moo Township. The photo shows Saw B---, who is the husband of the victim, Naw Thoo Lei Paw. [Photo: KHRG]

Further background reading on human rights issues in Kler Lwee Htoo District in Southeast Burma can be found in the following KHRG reports:

- ["Kler Lwee Htoo District Situation Update: SAC air strikes, shelling and fighting, displacement, insecurity, and livelihood, education and healthcare challenges in Ler Doh Township, February to May 2022"](#), August 2022.
- ["Kler Lwee Htoo District Short Update: SAC airstrikes destroyed two houses and resulted in the displacement of villagers in Ler Doh and Hsaw Htee townships, March to April 2022"](#), June 2022.
- ["Kler Lwee Htoo District Situation Update: Violation of the right to information, travel restrictions, torture, increased SAC activities and displacement in Ler Doh and Moo Townships, August 2021 to February 2022"](#), April 2022.
- ["Kler Lwee Htoo District Short Update: SAC troops fired mortars into a village, injuring three villagers, December 2021"](#), January 2022.

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.khrq.org.

Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District

