



SHAN
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Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation

August 8, 2023

Five villagers killed, nine injured by SAC shelling, airstrike, extrajudicial execution, beating and gang rape in Kutkhai and Muse townships, northern Shan State

Indiscriminate bombardment and grievous crimes – including extrajudicial killing and gang rape -- by SAC troops during military operations against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in Kutkhai and Muse townships from the last week of July to early August 2023 have caused the death of five villagers and injury of nine. The SAC troops have tried to cover up evidence of their crimes by putting resistance uniforms on dead civilians, and by threatening to shell villagers if they leaked news about the military rapes.

Coordinated cover-up of killing of civilians

On July 23, 2023, SAC troops started fighting with TNLA troops near Selan village, Muse township

On July 24, even though there was no fighting in the area at the time, SAC troops from IB 123 based at Namphakka, Kutkhai township, indiscriminately shelled into Koong Mai Soong village, Namphakka village tract, hitting one house and causing it to burn down.

In the morning of July 25, SAC launched an airstrike on Hsai Khao village, Hsai Khao village tract, Muse township. An aerial missile hit one house in Hsai Khao village and killed U Ai Lao, aged 40, and injured his wife in her legs. That evening, about ten SAC troops from Kutkhai-based IB 241 went to U Ai Lao's house and found his father with the corpse. They beat the father and took away the corpse. The family then went to ask for the corpse at the IB 241 base, but in vain.

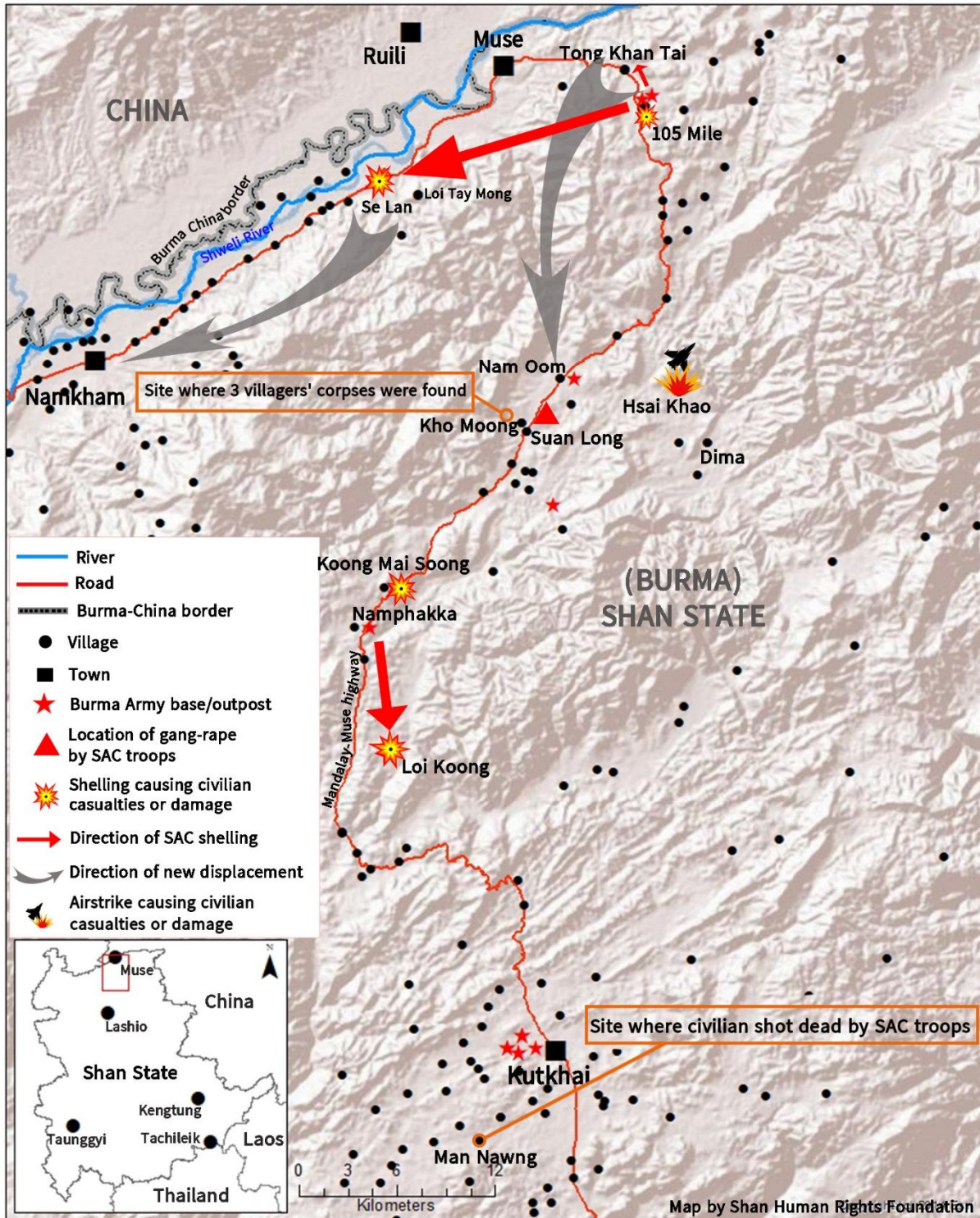
In the evening of July 25, Duja (aged 25) and Brang Aung (aged 27) from the Kachin Baptist Church in Dima village, Mann Hai village tract, Muse township were travelling by car to their village when they were arrested by SAC troops from LIB 569 (under Military Operations Command 17 in Southern Shan State) and taken to a SAC hilltop base near Nam Oom village. There a local militia group witnessed the SAC troops beating the two young men and shooting them dead.



U Ai Lao, Du Ja and Brang Aung's corpses posted on social media by SAC troops

On July 26, photos were posted on social media by SAC soldiers of the corpses of Duja, Brang Aung and U Ai Lao (who had been killed by the airstrike) in military uniforms, with the claim that they had killed three TNLA soldiers.

Location of human rights violations by SAC troops in Muse and Kutkhai, Jul 25-Aug 2, 2023





On July 31, Dima villagers searching for Duja and Brang Aung found their charred remains in the forest southwest of Nam Oom village, with their original clothes strewn nearby. They also found the corpse of U Ai Lao buried not far away, still in a military uniform.

On July 29, SAC's Namphakka-based IB 123 indiscriminately fired shells into Loi Koong village from afternoon to evening. At 9:45 pm, a shell hit one house in Loi Koong, killing a 60-year-old woman, Daw Aye Ai, and injuring a 40-year-old woman, Daw Aye Wan, and a 15-year-old girl, Lway Pa Pa Win.

On July 29 evening, SAC troops from Kutkhai-based IB 242 entered Mann Nawng village, Urng Mong Ho Gan village tract in Kutkhai township, bringing with them two male villagers. The troops went to Mann Nawng temple, and were seen shooting dead one of the two villagers in the temple compound. They then took away the corpse with them that night into the forest west of the village, returning the way they had come.



Original shirt of one of the dead youth



Two incidents of gang rape by SAC troops in the same night

On July 30 morning, a column of SAC troops from LIB 569 arrived in Suan Long village, Ooyapoon Kawnglin village tract, Kutkhai township, and stationed themselves in a nearby sugar farm and in the village temple. Suan Long village lies directly on the main Muse-Mandalay highway.

That night at around 10 pm, four of the SAC soldiers came into Suan Long village, and separated into two groups of two soldiers. One pair of soldiers entered one of the houses in the village, belonging to Ai Sai (not his real name) and his wife Nang Lao (not her real name). They pointed a gun at Ai Sai, handcuffed his hands behind his back and took him to Nang Lao. The troops then groped Nang Lao's chest and both raped her while her husband was crying and begging them to stop. Due to Ai Sai's loud cries, people in neighboring houses woke up. The SAC troops then beat Ai Sai, removed his handcuffs and left the house. Nang Lao is 20 years old and three months pregnant.

Meanwhile, the other two SAC troops went to the house of Sai Maung (not his real name) and his wife Nang Tuay (not her real name) in the outskirts of Suan Long village. They pointed their guns at Sai Maung and two of their children and told Sai Maung, "If you do not want your children to die, take them and leave the house. If you tell other villagers, we will burn down your house." Sai Maung took his two children and left the house. Then the two soldiers pointed a gun at Nang Tuay and raped her one by one, after which they left the village.

The next morning, fellow villagers reported the incidents to the local abbot, who called the SAC column leader to the temple. The column leader then called Nang Tuay and Nang Lao and asked them to point out the soldiers who had raped them. The rapists were then beaten in front of the public gathered at the temple, before being taken away. The SAC troops then threatened the elders of the village, saying that they would shell the village if the rape cases were reported to media agencies.

SAC shelling of historic Shan village in Muse

On July 29, heavy fighting broke out again between the SAC troops and TNLA near Selan village in Muse township.

On August 2 morning, about 100 SAC troops from Muse town were attacked by TNLA troops at Tong Khan Tai (Tong Khan south) near the 105 Mile trade zone, and heavy fighting occurred. Then the SAC artillery unit at 105 Mile began shelling indiscriminately. One shell landed in the 105 Mile village, hitting a house and injuring one villager.

Due to the fighting, about 20 Tong Khan villagers fled to take shelter at the Kachin Baptist Church in Nam Oom village.

Also on August 2 morning, fighting occurred at Loi Tay Mong mountain near Selan village in Muse township between SAC troops from Pekhon-based Military Operations Command 7 and TNLA troops. The TNLA troops then stationed themselves at Loi Tay Mong mountain.

From noon that day, the SAC troops at the 105 Mile base fired mortar shells into Selan village. The shells landed in the village, damaging six houses and injuring a 9-year-old child and one woman.

Due to the continuous shelling by SAC troops into Selan village, about 40 villagers fled to take refuge at the Loi Tay Mong meditation retreat temple and some fled to stay with their relatives in Namkham town.

Selan village was formerly the capital of the Tai Mao Kingdom, and birthplace of the famous Mao princess, Sao Nang Mawn La, who married King Anawrahta, founder of the Pagan Empire in the 11th Century. Ancient stone ruins still remain from the time of Sao Sur Khan Fa, the famous Mao monarch who ruled in the 14th Century.

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