

Retaliatory Fires after SAC Convoy is Ambushed

Local resistance in Khin-U township

REPORT BY MYANMAR WITNESS, 14 December 2022 (UPDATED ON: 24 February 2023)

Key Event Details

- **Location of Incident:** Multiple villages in Khin-U township (ခင်ဦး မြို့နယ်), Sagaing region (စစ်ကိုင်း တိုင်းဒေသကြီး)
- **Date/Time of Incident:**
 - 18-21 November 2022.
 - 2000 local time.
- **Alleged Perpetrator(s) and/or Involvement:**
 - The Myanmar Military (no further specification could be identified at this time).
- **Summary:**
 - From 17-21 November 2022, more than 70 SAC soldiers [allegedly entered](#) Khin-U (ခင်ဦး) township from Ye-U (ရေဦး) town with three vehicles. The Hero Army made up of Khin-U forces and allies attacked the SAC armed forces (source redacted for security reasons).
 - Allegedly, SAC armed forces stationed in Shwe Yamin (ရွှေယမင်း) village [entered](#) Paung Hle Kone (ပေါင်းလဲ့ကုန်း) village and started burning multiple neighbourhoods on 18 November 2022 at 2000 hours. In the morning of 19 November 2022 at 0750 hours, another fire started in Paung Hle Kone. An estimated [200 houses](#) were allegedly destroyed by the fire.
 - During this two-day fire in Paung Hle Kone (ပေါင်းလဲ့ကုန်း) village, [80 rice paddy warehouses](#) were reportedly burnt.
 - SAC armed forces were [reported](#) to have marched through several other villages in Khin-U township and Shwe Bo (ရွှေဘို) township in Sagaing, burning hundreds of houses.

Summary

On 17 November 2022 around 1300, a coalition of PDF forces reportedly [ambushed](#) SAC armed forces as they were marching from Ye-U (ရေဦး) town, through Kone Thar (ကုန်းသာ) village, Aung Thar (အောင်သာ) village, and Shwe Yamin (ရွှေယမင်း) village, towards the south-west of Khin-U township. The same source reported that the fighting lasted for about one hour. SAC armed forces allegedly [entered](#) Khin-U township in two convoys, one of which was part of Light Infantry Division (LID) 66.

On 19 November 2022, Khit Thit Media [reported](#) that over 100 houses were burnt down in Paung Hle Kone village, which is home to over 500 households. The fire started at 2000 on 18 November 2022 and another fire started at 0750 on 19 November 2022 in the same village. The “Khin-U True Information” (ခင်ဦးမြန်မာ့ သတင်းမှန်ပြန်ကြားရေး) page [estimated](#) that 200 houses were burnt.

Later Khin-U local Guerrilla Force [reported](#) that the number of houses burnt was 136, and the fire and shelling reportedly killed two people. On the same day, 20 houses in Let Yet Kone (လက်ယက်ကုန်း) (Leik Ya Kone (လိပ်ရကုန်း)) village were [reportedly](#) burnt.

On 20 November 2022, two [sources reported](#) that over 80 rice paddy warehouses were destroyed in the fire in Paung Hle Kone village. Additionally, SAC armed forces [reportedly](#) marched into three other villages in Khin-U township - Shwe Kar (ရွှေကာ) village, Si Son (ဆီဆုံ) village and Let Pan Gyi (လက်ပံကြီး) village - and started burning houses at 1200.

On 21 November 2022 at 1045, SAC armed forces [reportedly](#) combined forces with Pyu Saw Htee forces in Ma Daung Hla (မဒေါင်းလှ) village, before marching to Saw Gyi (စောကြီး) village and In Gyin Pin (အင်ကြင်းပင်) village, which they then started burning.

Village	Date	Number of Houses Burnt (Alleged)	FIRMS or SENTINEL	Coordinates
Paung Hle Kone (ပေါင်းလွဲကုန်း)	18, 19 November 2022	136	FIRMS and SENTINEL Detected	22.719469, 95.569946
Let Pan Gyi (လက်ပံကြီး)	20 November 2022	90	SENTINEL Detected	22.720569, 95.611511
Ma Daung Gyi (မဒေါင်းကြီး)	20 November 2022	110	FIRMS Detected	22.848350, 95.565292
Saw Gyi (စောကြီး)	21 November 2022	Unknown	SENTINEL Detected	22.837570, 95.603492
Tha Nat Sein (သနပ်စိန်)	21 November 2022	Unknown	SENTINEL Detected	22.850469, 95.614639

Table 1: [Reported](#) number of houses burnt from 18-21 November 2022.

This spot report focuses on the events in Paung Hle Kone village due to the allegations of rice paddy warehouses being burnt down. The destruction of vital food supplies must be investigated further as it could represent a breach of international law.

Myanmar Witness has Verified

FIRMS confirms (figure x) that there were high heat signatures in Paung Hle Kone (ပေါင်းလွဲကုန်း) village, Khin-U (ခင်ဦး) township, Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်း) region between 18-19 November 2022. The bottom image of figure x indicates that the sources of smoke in the north and east/southeast of the village are also consistent with the high heat signatures seen on FIRMS. The heat signatures in the west of the village have not been verified.



Figure 2: (Top) Heat signatures in Paung Hle Kone village on [18](#) and [19 Nov 2022](#). (Bottom) [Aerial footage](#) of the same village burning. [22.71946907, 95.56994629]

The areas where the smoke originated also match the Sentinel Hub imagery (Figure 3). Darker patches can be seen in the imagery from 21 November 2022 compared to that from 16 November 2022. The false colour image shows the plantation density and health. However, in this case, it is almost certain that the visible changes are due to the burning of the buildings since the location is inside a village.

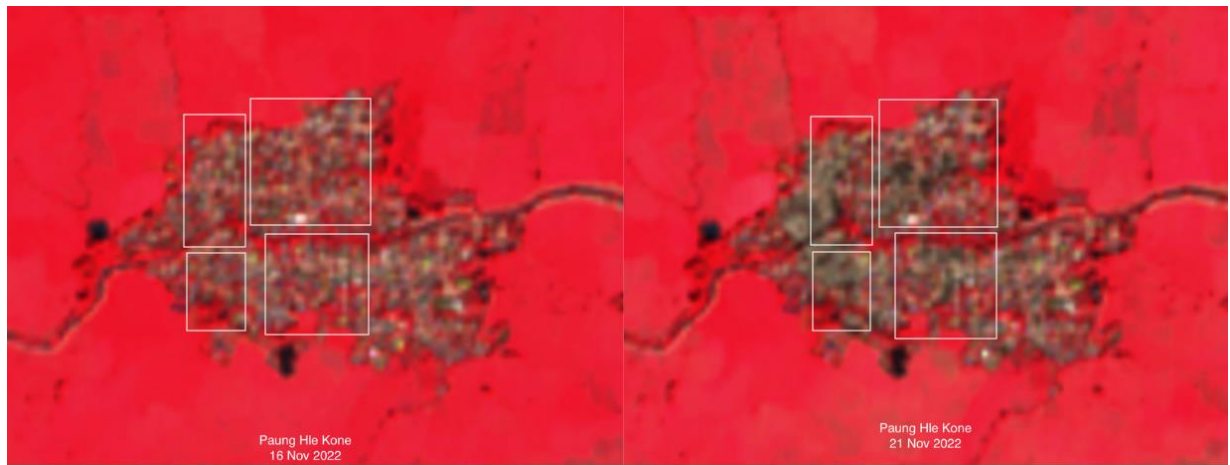


Figure 3: Sentinel imagery of Paung Hle Kone village on [16](#) (left) and [21 November 2022](#) (right)

Myanmar Witness investigators geolocated, verified, and counted the number of buildings burnt to the ground in this area next to two small pagodas, as shown in a video uploaded to social media. The video shows a wide view of the area burnt and the number of buildings burnt is counted to be at least 12.





Figure 4: Geolocation of the damages shown in the [video](#) footage [22.720263, 95.567659]



Figure 5: Geolocation of the damages shown in the [photo](#). [22.722084, 95.567714]

The Investigation Walkthrough

Location Map



Figure 6: Map of Paung Hle Kone (ပေါင်းလွဲကုန်း) village, Khin-U (ခင်ဦး) township, Sagaing (စစ်ကိုင်း) region. [22.720647, 95.569427]

Residents Killed in Paung Hle Kone (ပေါင်းလွဲကုန်း)



Figure 7: Burnt [remains](#) of a human victim and another unknown corpse

Two local civilians were reportedly killed by SAC during the military operation in Paung Hle Kone village (Figure 7). The two civilians are an elderly woman in her mid-80s who was allegedly burned alive and killed in her house, and a 53-year-old man who was allegedly hit by artillery and killed. The rest of the villagers fled to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in the surrounding villages, and their properties and belongings have been either destroyed or taken by the SAC troops.

The Destruction of Food Supplies

There are reports of the destruction of food supplies, including alleged burning of 80 rice paddy warehouses, sesame warehouse(s) (Figure 8), and the death of farm animals (Figure 10). Most images of this destruction are close-up and do not provide enough visual evidence to geolocate. However, Myanmar Witness investigators have been able to geolocate (Figure 9) footage showing the burnt remains of several buildings including one holding rice (yellow box). Myanmar Witness will continue to monitor incidents involving the widespread destruction of food supplies and footage related to potential targeting of food supplies.





Figure 8: (Left to right) (a) Partially [burnt](#) pile of paddy rice. (b) Possible rice harvester [damaged](#). (c) Burnt rice pile seen at the bottom of the [footage](#). (d) Possible [burnt](#) remains of sesame storage. (e) Possible rice paddy pile in the middle of burnt remains behind the blue truck.

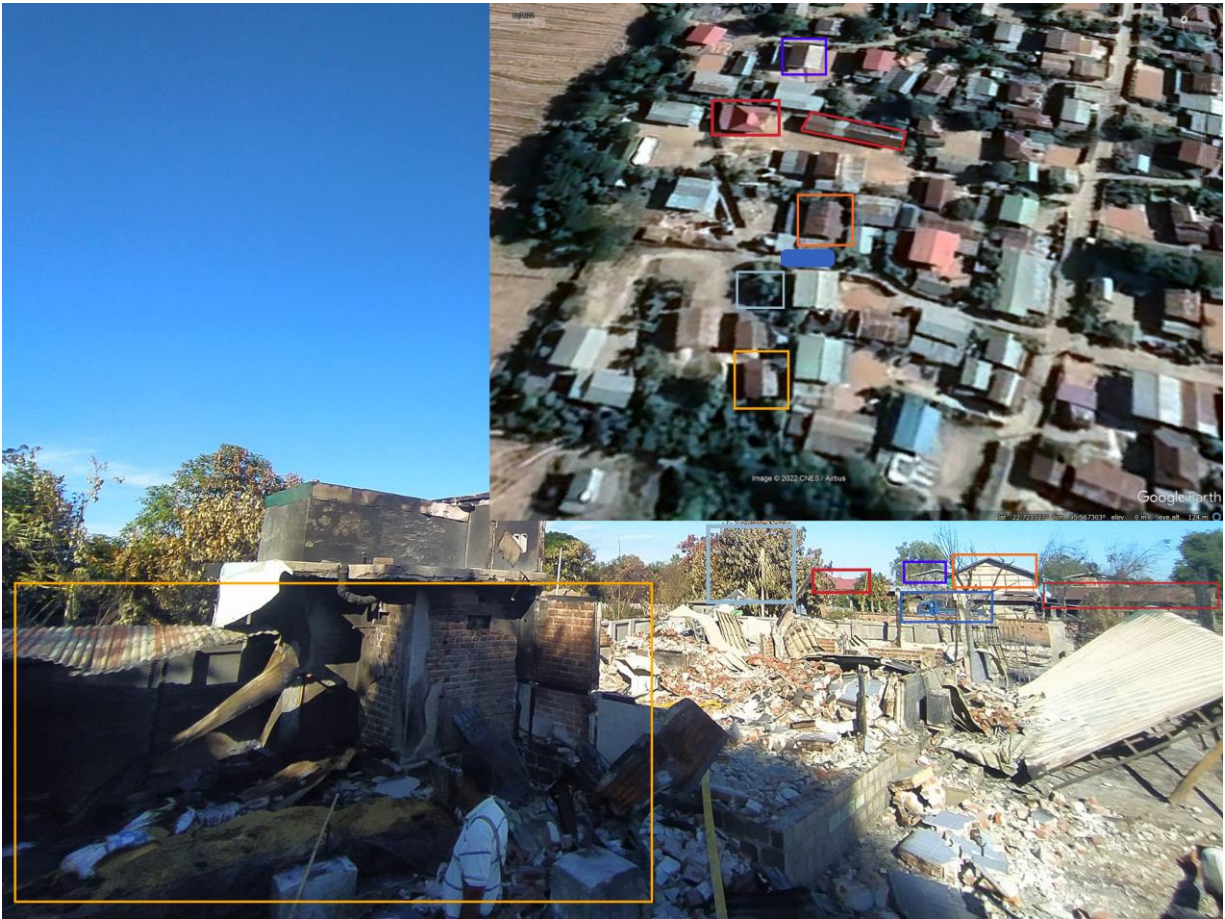


Figure 9: Geolocation of the location of rice paddy warehouse destroyed in the fire in Paung Hle Kone village. [22.722084, 95.567265]



Figure 10: (Top) [Burnt](#) remains of possibly a pig. (Bottom) Possible [burnt](#) remains of farm animals.

Post Attack Response

On 4 December 2022, state-sponsored media Myanmar National Post [reported](#) that the combined forces of PDF and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) set fire to the villages in Sagaing Division, Magway Division, Kachin State, and Chin State. Retaliatory attacks are not uncommon and Myanmar Witness is actively monitoring their occurrence.

Future Monitoring

After 22 November 2022, reports continue to arise on social media and news regarding the alleged burning of villages by SAC armed forces. Myanmar Witness will continue to monitor these events and any retaliatory attacks.



Abbreviations

Internally Displaced Persons	IDP
Kachin Independence Army	KIA
Light Infantry Division	LID
People Defence Forces	PDF
State Administrative Council	SAC