

SPOT REPORT

School teacher killed and body mutilated

Vicious attack on school designed to terrorise pupils
and teachers

REPORT BY MYANMAR WITNESS, 19 October 2022

Myanmar Witness has been investigating horrific events at a school in Magway from 16-17 October 2022.

Key Event Details

On 16 October 2022, a school in Taung Myint village went up in flames. This attack was reportedly carried out by the military.

The burnt out buildings signalled a stark warning to the community, as did the graffiti left during the attack, which threatened to return for the individuals who escaped.

It soon became evident that these were not just threats. The following day, the mutilated body of a teacher was discovered in front of the school gates, with the head severed and impaled on one of the spikes.

The teacher's three fingered salute - a symbol of the CDM - had been chopped off and placed on his body.

Summary

This attack represents a marked escalation in terms of the brutality and symbolic power of the violence used against people associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Beheadings are rare and designed to shock. The CDM's symbol of peaceful resistance - the three fingered salute which has been used in protests throughout Myanmar - was used to send a bleak message.

The removal of the head, the symbolic dismembering of the three fingers, and the prominent display of the body at the school gates all indicate that this killing was designed to have maximum psychological impact.

Unnecessary violence requires effort. The symbolic nature of this attack signals its coordinated nature. The result is increased intimidation and widespread fear.

This killing seems intended to cause the maximum possible disruption to the provision of education at this school. It also provides a warning to other schools linked with the former National Unity Government, the CDM or pro-democracy forces, who must now consider themselves a possible target for this sort of brutality.

Myanmar Witness has geolocated footage to verify:

- The burning of the school
- Threats made in graffiti
- A body was left at the school gates
- The head of the body was displayed on a spike of the school gate
- Three fingers had been chopped off and displayed on the body, in a reference to the three fingered salute of the CDM and pro-democracy protest movement

The investigation walkthrough

The mutilated body of school teacher U Saw Tun Moe was recovered on 17 October 2022, in front of Taung Myint (တောင်မြင့်ရွာ) Village School at around 1000 local time.

Source: [BBC Burma](#)

Source: [\[GRAPHIC\] Khit Thit Media](#)

Myanmar Witness geolocated the village and the school.

Coordinates of village: [21.399000, 94.478996](#)

Coordinates of school: [21.400753, 94.479275](#)



Figure 1: Geolocation of the CDM teacher's body and head at Basic Education Middle School of Taung Myint (တောင်မြင့်ရွာ) village.

On 16 October, the day before the body was found, it was reported that **the army burned down the school**. Source: [Khit Thit Media](#)

Although there is no matching FIRMS data, investigators found this image which claims to show fire in Taung Myint (တောင်မြင့်ရွာ) village.



Figure 2: Claims to show fire in the direction of Taung Myint (တောင်မြင့်ရွာ) village. Myanmar Witness analysts believe this footage was taken from 21.401250, 94.486905 looking west, but have not yet fully verified it.

Additionally, Myanmar Witness geolocated footage taken on 16 October of the burnt school. The geolocation of the destroyed buildings in this footage matches the coordinates for the school.



Figure 3: Images of a burnt green building show the geolocated school in the background. (Source: [Twitter](#))

Images also showed graffiti that had been left on the walls of the school during the attack.



Figure 4: Graffiti reads 'ပြန်လာခဲ့မယ် ထွက်ပြေးတဲ့ မအေလို့တွေ' ('We will come back for those mother fuckers who ran away'). (Source: [Twitter](#)).

The graffiti translates as "We will come back for those mother fuckers who ran away". It is a clear threat to those who escaped the first attack on 16 October.

The following day, 17 October, the dead body of a teacher was found at the school.

The school teacher was U Saw Tun Moe. Three fingers on his right hand were chopped off and left on his body, His head was severed and displayed on top of a spike of the school gate.



Figure 5: Head of an individual, separated from his body, is left on the gates of the school. (Source: [Twitter](#))



Figure 6: Head on the school gates of Basic Education Middle School of Taung Myint Village.



Figure 7: Geolocation of graffiti on the wall to the same school. (Source: [Telegram](#))



Myanmar Witness continues to investigate these horrific incidents.

While the escalation of violence is continually investigated by Myanmar Witness, the premeditated and brutal nature of this event, and the symbolism behind the removal of the three fingers, makes this event of particular concern.

If you have any additional information on this event, or others like it, please upload evidence [via our secure form](#) if safe to do so.