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Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation

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Farmer riding motorcycle shot dead by Burma Army patrol near China's trans-Burma oil and gas pipelines in Kyaukme, northern Shan State

On October 1, 2018, at about 6 pm, a 34-year-old farmer riding a motorcycle was shot and killed by a patrol of Burma Army troops from LIB 504 in Kyaukme township, northern Shan State, close to China's trans-Burma oil and gas pipelines.

The farmer, Sai Ai Htun, from Nawng Arng village, about 10 miles east of Kyaukme town, was on his way to his hill farm, when he saw a group of about 15 Burma Army soldiers from Hsipaw-based LIB 504 patrolling near the entrance of his farm. Fearful of meeting them, he turned his motorbike around and began riding away. The troops called out to him to stop, and shot after him. A bullet entered his back and killed him.

At 7 pm, the commander of the LIB 504 troops phoned to the chairman of Hong Hang village tract, Lung Kyaw Hla, and two headmen from Nawng Arng village. He said, "We have shot a villager by mistake. You can come and identify which village he is from."

At about 7:30 pm the chairman arrived at the scene of the shooting, and recognized the body as that of Sai Ai Htun. The captain then asked the village headmen what they wanted to do about the case. He said: "We are really sorry and apologize for mistakenly shooting him."

At about 8 pm, a villager called a car from the Nam Khong Foundation to take the body to Kyaukme hospital for a post mortem.

At about 9 pm, the headmen came back to Nawng Arng village to inform Sai Ai Htun's mother and wife about the killing. Then at about 11 pm, the headmen and mother went to the police office at Kyaukme to report the shooting.

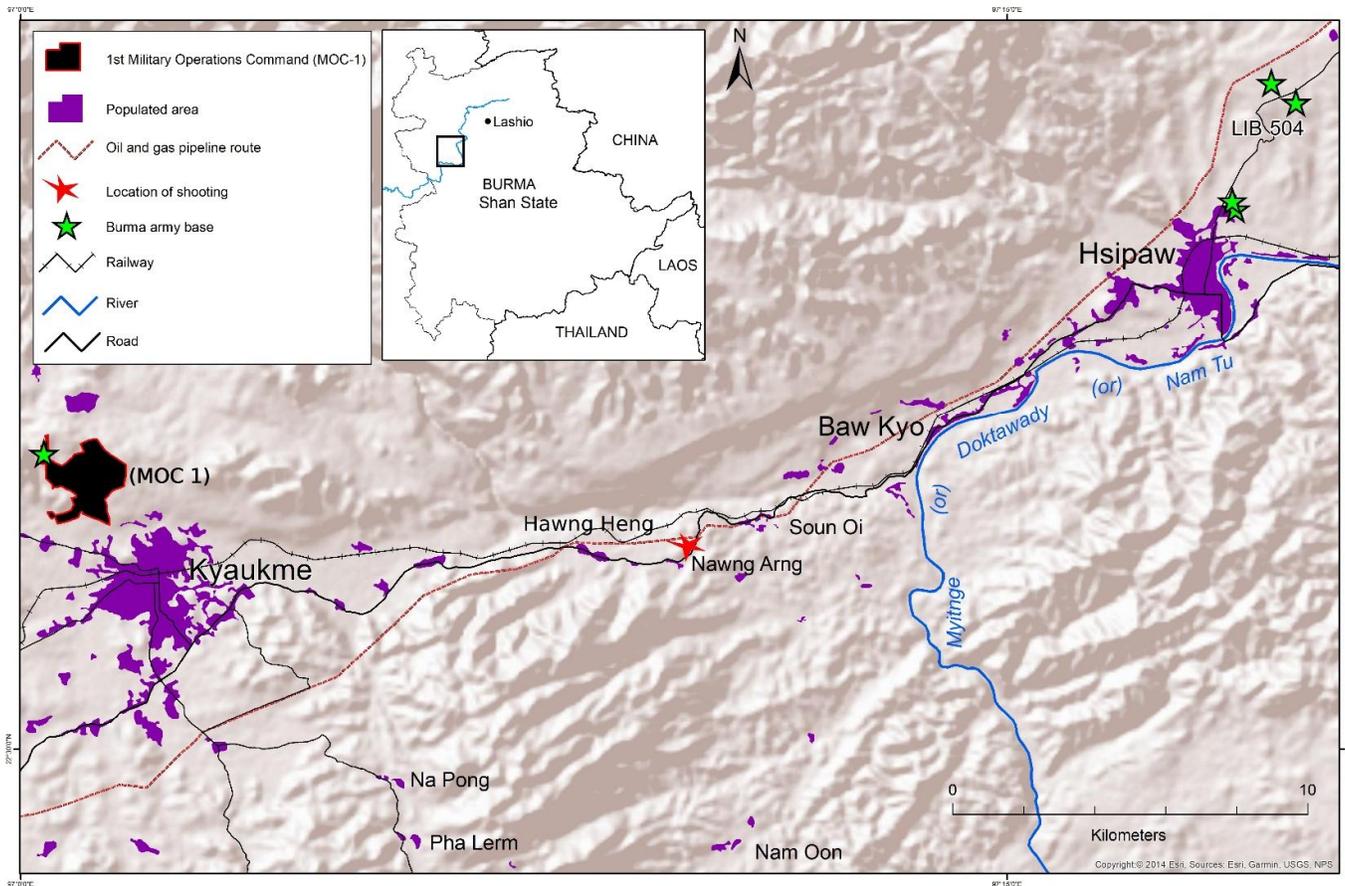
On October 2nd, at about 10 am, military officers from LIB 501 and 504, with about fifteen soldiers, came in three cars to the house of a headman of Nawng Arng village to talk about the case, and called Sai Ai Htun's mother and wife to join them.



Sai Ai Htun's body, with Burma Army soldier standing

Then they asked his mother what she wanted to do, and whether she wanted to bring charges in court. They said: "Whatever you want is fine with us, but if you take the case to court, it will be very time-consuming, also for us, and it will also not bring your son back."

Burma Army shooting of farmer near Chinese oil and gas pipelines



Finally, the headman and the mother said that they would not press charges in court, and that it should be settled out of court. Then the military provided one sack of rice costing 35,000 kyats (USD 22), three bottles of cooking oil, 1 kilogram of sugar, one packet of coffee and 1 million kiat (USD 630) to his wife. They said that the money and the food were not meant as compensation, but just to help the family. The chairman, headman, mother and wife all agreed to sign that they were satisfied with this. Then at about 1 pm the troops left the house. Then the headman, mother and wife went to the hospital and cremated Sai Ai Htun at Kyaukme cemetery at about 2 pm.

Sai Ai Htun was the son of Lung Htun and Ba Whar of Wan Nawng Arng village. His wife's name was Nang Shwe Ying, and they had one daughter, aged 6 months.

On October 3rd, another Burma Army officer from LIB 504, under Kyaukme-based Military Operations Command no. 1, came with about five soldiers to the Nawng Arng headman again to make sure that the decision was final, and that the family would not press charges.

The shooting incident occurred about 15 meters from the oil and gas pipelines traversing northern Shan State to China from the Bay of Bengal at Kyaukphyu in Rakhine State. The

pipelines run between Kyaukme and Hsipaw, close to the famous Bawgyo pagoda. Local farmers protested against the pipelines as they were being built by the China National Petroleum Corporation in 2012, but to no avail. Apart from the loss of land to the project, Bawgyo is a salt farming location, and residents were concerned that the high salt content of the soil would corrode the pipelines and cause leaks or explosions.

When the pipelines were built, fifteen farmers from Nawng Arng village lost about 25 acres of farmland.

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