

[A year after the Nong Bua Lamphu mass shooting, a community remain scarred](#)

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The mass shooting in Thailand's Nong Bua Lamphu province on October 6, 2022 was a tragedy that stunned the world. A former policeman used a gun and a knife to attack a childcare center, killing 37 people and injuring more than 10 others. Many of the victims were young children. One year has passed. The Isaan Record went to the site to talk to those who lived through the nightmare about how their lives have changed.

A cursed land

"The Uthai Sawan sub-district has become a cursed land," says Ratnikorn Somparn, a survivor of the tragic massacre at a daycare center in Thailand's northeast Nong Bua Lamphu province, where 37 people — mostly young children — were killed.

Ratnikorn is a food vendor. Her shop sits on a street that the shooter one year ago used, as he was heading to the local authority's nursery, on October 6, 2022. She is one of the five people injured after the shooter rammed his car into a group of residents on the way. A motorcycle fell on her, spraining her ankle and fracturing her bone.

"The day it happened, I was delivering food to the Ban Tha Uthai School," she says. "The local leaders were holding a meeting about the end of Buddhist Lent. I attended the meeting, too. Then we parted ways to have lunch. Not long after I left, the head of the village called me saying there was a shooting. I volunteered to go around asking people what happened."



“There was a sweetcorn seller who had stopped by to ask about what happened. A granny who lived nearby also came out. We talked for a while, thinking the whole thing was over,” Ratnikorn recalls.

“Then suddenly there was a loud noise from a car. It hit the granny and the seller’s vehicle. My motorbike was in the front; we were all slammed together.”

Ratnikorn thought the driver who hit them was drunk and hoped he would come to help them. He did get out of the car as she expected, but he didn’t come to their aid.

“He got out and shot people who cried for help,” she says. “He shot everyone, including a passerby. He then pulled out a knife and attacked them. I was trying to be as silent as I could. There was a child with the sweetcorn seller, and he cut the child and the seller with that knife.”

Ratnikorn says she laid there as still as she could. She was next to the truck. On the opposite side lay the old woman who was injured. They couldn’t make a sound, although they wanted to know what was going on in each other’s minds. In the gap between the vehicle and the ground, they could only look at each other. The old woman later died in the hospital.

“It was so depressing to see such bloodshed before my eyes,” Ratnikorn says, shuddering. “I couldn’t tell whether it was a dream or reality. I never thought this could have happened in real life. I saw all that he did – the gun, the knife, the screams, people squirming. Emotionally, it hurt me badly.”



Ratikorn's left leg is getting better since her leg got injured

Since that terrible nightmarish day, Ratnikorn's life has never been the same. Her left leg was long numb from the bone fracture. Her condition has improved over the last year, but her heart remains broken.

Now, even a year later, Ratnikorn says the residents are still frightened, too afraid even to go out for lunch. Her income has decreased accordingly, and subsequently the local economy also became sluggish. So Ratnikorn has come to think of the area as cursed.

"They are afraid of what happened to the children, and are still afraid it might happen again. Now, we feel that guns and weapons can be bought so easily, causing an unthinkable incident."

A dream of people who still alive

"It was a working day and we were cutting metal. I heard there was a shooting. Once I arrived home, I opened the Line app to check the news, and I didn't see any news about my daughter. Then, my daughter's colleague called and told me that the shooter had arrived at the nursery, and the line was cut."

A father recalls that fateful moment. He and his son-in-law were "stunned," by the alarming call, temporarily paralyzed.

"Soon after," he continues, "the same colleague called again and said someone was killed, a teacher whose name begins with E. I was so heartbroken and I collapsed."

Thawee Lasopha was the father of Maliwan "Ee" Lasopha, one of the two teachers killed at the nursery.

“From that day, the whole week after that,” he says, “I kept having these images in my mind. I’d been with her since the day she was born. Going through something like this... I was lost for words.”



The day he received her body, Thawee says he decided he didn’t want to see her face because of the emotional toll it might have taken on him. On the day of her cremation at a local temple, at the last minute he made up his mind to see her and say goodbye forever.

“An official asked if I wanted to see my daughter. I was trying to be strong. Images of her lingered in my mind. I hadn’t yet seen her,” Thawee recalls.

“I decided to tell them that, if I didn’t see her now, I wouldn’t ever have a chance to see her again. It took me a while to pull myself together. I told them that I wanted to see if my daughter still looked the same as she looked in my mind.”

Thawee finally decided. “The moment I saw her face,” he says, it was “exactly” what one might expect: “She had been shot and cut in the face. That was the last time I saw her.”

The loss of Maliwan left the family devastated. Her father, though, still feels lucky that Maliwan’s youngest son — now three years old — is still alive. He hadn’t gone to the nursery that day with his mom.

Thawee has become both a caretaker and family breadwinner, now raising Maliwan’s two children and one of his son’s children.

“I think the future of my grandchildren is still unclear,” he says. “I’m not sure how much the responsible authorities can help take care of my grandchildren. I’m making ends meet. I give all the money from fishing and working to my grandchildren. I want their lives to be good. I’m trying my best these days for them because their mother is now gone.”

A year has gone by, and the small town has fallen into silence. Many businesses have closed, leaving behind empty shops along the street, a sign that this street once was filled with customers.

Following the tragedy, many of them closed their business and moved to other provinces or in Bangkok to find work.



The abandoned house of the shooter, Panya Kamrab.

Residents don't know where the mother of the shooter, former police officer Panya Kamrab, is living now. After the shooting, local people did not allow the body of the shooter, who the police said ended by killing himself, to be cremated in the same temple as his victims.

The livelihood of people in the community has changed. Going out during the daytime is still frightening for them. When night falls, everyone hurriedly scatters to go home. They can only hope that their simple countryside routine will one day return.

[Who was the Nong Bua Lamphu mass shooter?](#)

[Questions left unanswered on motive behind Nong Bua Lamphu mass shooting](#)