



# RESISTING A COUP

*Human Rights Violations in Myanmar  
Between January - June 2022*





Network for Human Rights Documentation - Burma  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



ND-Burma is extremely grateful to all interviewees for their courage in speaking out against the violations perpetrated against them, and for speaking the truth. ND-Burma is also appreciative to its member organisations and their fieldworkers who continue to gather invaluable testimonies at their own great personal risk.

This report would not be possible without the work of ND-Burma members and their coordinated efforts to collect evidence of human rights abuses at the expense of their safety and security. We are reminded through the voices of civilians in this report that there is still a long way to go for peace in Myanmar, but are nonetheless motivated by their resilience to continue to speak truth to power against forces undermining prospects for change.

## ABOUT US



ND-Burma is a network that consists of 13-member organisations who represent a range of ethnic nationalities, women and former political prisoners. ND-Burma member organisations have been documenting human rights abuses and fighting for justice for victims since 2004. The network consists of nine full members and four affiliate members as follows:

### Full Members:

1. All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress
2. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners
3. Association Human Rights Defenders and Promoters
4. Future Light Center
5. Human Rights Foundation of Monland
6. Kachin Women's Association – Thailand
7. Ta'ang Women's Organization
8. Ta'ang Students and Youth Union
9. Tavoyan Women's Union

### Affiliate Members:

1. Chin Human Rights Organization
2. East Bago – Former Political Prisoners Network
3. Pa-O Youth Organization
4. Progressive Voice

# FIELDWORKERS SITUATION



Due to the current political context in Myanmar, armed conflict and related human rights violations occur on a large scale. Security concerns are high for fieldworkers, and human rights monitoring cannot take place openly. Fieldworkers from ND-Burma's member organisations put themselves at great risk to document human rights violations.

Thus, it is not possible to document the true breadth and scope of all violations that take place in Myanmar. Fieldworkers and the people who communicate with victims to document the violations suffer great risk in their efforts. Junta-backed security forces often intimidate and/or threaten victims to remain silent. Documenting human rights violations in ethnic areas, especially in conflict areas, can lead to arbitrary arrest under repressive laws, harassment or even violent retribution.

The attempted military coup which took place on 1 February 2021, alongside the concerns of the ever-present COVID-19 pandemic, has also increased the limitations in documenting human rights abuses. The resiliency of our members in their documentation efforts, despite the extraordinary odds against them, must be recognized.

Documentation of abuses is always a major challenge for human rights defenders. However, over the past year and a half, it has become even more difficult. As the junta intensifies its campaign of terror, soldiers have also targeted those who attempt to collect evidence of their crimes. Internet blackouts and scorched-earth campaigns are just two of the ways the regime is attempting to cover its tracks.

Each organization was responsible for their own data, which may include duplicates of cases for human rights organizations based in the same region. We have maintained the integrity of the documentation by not compromising or altering what ND-Burma members have collected during the reporting period.

The Network Data team notes that the quality of the data varies depending on the conditions provided on the ground, even if the specified quantity is met. The data collection technologies we have, Online/Off-line communications and security requirements and efforts have been made to collect data, including through voice interviews with victims, reliance on existing and reliable local networks.

Based on ND-Burma's controlled category list, ND-Burma developed a documentation manual series to support its members in effectively documenting human rights violations, which includes the following:

- Killings and Disappearances
- Arbitrary Arrest and Detention
- Recruitment & Use of Child Soldiers
- Forced Relocation
- Rape and other Forms of Sexual Violence
- Torture and other Forms of Ill-Treatment
- Forced Labor
- Obstruction of Freedom of Movement
- Violations of Property Rights
- Forced Marriage
- Forced Prostitution
- Human Trafficking
- Obstruction of Freedoms of Expression and Assembly
- General Documentation



For over ten years, the Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma) has produced bi-annual summaries on the human rights situation in Myanmar. The reports are a data-driven overview of the atrocities being perpetrated against innocent civilians in the states and regions where ND-Burma members are active. They are released twice a year; once every six months.

In January 2021, ND-Burma's report which covered human rights violations between July to December 2020, was being finalized. Days before its release, the Myanmar military attempted a coup on 1 February 2021. Since then, the security of human rights defenders and their respective documentation efforts have been seriously compromised. The junta has declared war on an innocent population who have rejected the dictatorship in its entirety. ND-Burma findings were immediately put on hold for the safety of our members, who faced immense threats to their well-being for their pro-democracy activities.

The situation since the coup in Myanmar has not improved. Peaceful protesters have been met with violence and subsequently jailed on fabricated charges in closed-door, military-run courts. Democratically elected officials have also been imprisoned and sentenced under nonsensical, authoritarian driven laws, while conflict remains rampant along Myanmar's various borders. Much of the attacks by the military junta are in response to those who have been vocal in their condemnation of the coup, including ethnic revolution organizations (EROs) and pro-democracy activists for their refusal to accept the dictatorship.

A new, wider opposition movement has been formed, known as the People's Defense Forces (PDFs), who are fighting battles, often alongside EROs, to crush the Myanmar military. The internal conflicts, which have consumed most of the country, have led to a humanitarian crisis. Hundreds of thousands of civilians continue to be routinely displaced amid blockages to aid and pathways to safety. At least three million people are being deprived of urgently needed emergency assistance.

Alongside state-wide oppression is the persistent threat of COVID-19. Decentralized ethnic healthcare providers are filling gaps in the provision of services, though with limited funds and resources. Instead of containing the virus, the junta has used the pandemic to justify their attempt to isolate the population, limit their access to humanitarian aid and restrict the movements of civilians. The military deploys excessive checkpoints which terrorize residents throughout the country through extortion, bribery and threats.

This report, which covers human rights violations documented by ND-Burma members between January and June 2022 uses case studies, interviews and research to prove the immorality of the Myanmar military and the crimes they are guilty of committing. A blanket of impunity has propelled the junta's war on the people, which spans decades and yet continues to this day.

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Among ND-Burma's strongest final recommendations are for the international community to act with urgency and to move quickly to refer the situation on the ground to the highest levels of jurisdiction, including the International Criminal Court. The lives of innocent people are dependent on global actors exercising their moral will and capacity to act swiftly and with intention.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Throughout the reporting period of January to June 2022, ND-Burma members witnessed the Myanmar military make a mockery of democratic norms and principles. Our findings make clear that the regime is continuing to act with deeply ingrained impunity amid a full fledged humanitarian crisis which has now seen over one million people internally displaced by the junta's violence.<sup>1</sup>

When the Myanmar military attempted their coup on 1 February 2021, it changed the political discourse in the country. It also triggered a domino-like effect of opposition groups forming to protest the junta's illegitimate seizure of power. Within the first few months of the junta's rejection of the democratically elected National League for Democracy (NLD) government, a Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) which continues to show its strength, emerged. Led by the civil service sector, medics, teachers, engineers and those representing other professions, announced that they would refuse to adhere to their responsibilities under the military junta. In March 2021, the CDM was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>2</sup>

The Spring Revolution has rallied support through strategic organizing efforts, which have even exposed the military junta for violating their own Constitution in the attempted power-grab. The establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG) and the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) were formed as legitimate platforms for formal engagement and diplomacy in Myanmar. Armed opposition groups referred to as People's Defense Forces (PDFs) were created in direct response to military violence being deployed against civilians who rejected their illegal coup. Civilians across various backgrounds and ethnicities continue to work in solidarity in fierce opposition to the dictatorship.

What has become abundantly clear is that the junta is no match against the resilience and bravery of civil society organizations and pro-democracy affiliated organizations, including EROs. While some global actors have failed to adequately respond to the multiple crises in Myanmar, those inside the country have exemplified bravery by even sacrificing their lives for their freedom. Rather than work with trusted, long-time activists, including the NUG, some international bodies have risked legitimizing the junta by working with them.<sup>3</sup>

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1 "Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 18 | 31 May 2022," *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 31 May 2022

2 "CDM nominated for Nobel Peace Prize," *Frontier Myanmar*, 27 March 2021

3 "UN AND ASEAN RISK COMPLICITY IN MYANMAR JUNTA'S WEAPONIZATION OF AID AND ATROCITY CRIMES," *Progressive Voice*, 31 May 2022

Unfortunately, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and ASEAN's humanitarian body have taken steps to coordinate aid-relief efforts with the junta.<sup>4</sup> This is a regime with a track-record of misusing aid and depriving those most in need of basic necessities including food, water, medicine and shelter. Civil society has called upon the UN to work with reliable, trusted stakeholders on the ground, or else risk legitimizing the Myanmar junta.<sup>5</sup>

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management - National Unity Government, the Karen National Union (KNU), the Chin National Front (CNF) and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) echoed objections to the decision by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to facilitate aid through the junta, as the Myanmar Army has abused funds intended for humanitarian purposes.<sup>6</sup> These acts risk complicity in the junta's path of obstruction which includes perpetrating heinous crimes against unarmed, innocent civilians.

The junta's attempts to silence and weaken the various resistance movements have failed. Despite endless threats and increasing violence by the military, the coordinated effort to speak truth to power has largely prevented the junta from succeeding and gaining the recognition and legitimacy they so desperately crave.

Across ND-Burma's member target areas are cases of extreme violence perpetrated by the soldiers of the Myanmar military. The wide-spread antagonism against the junta has led to the regime responding the only way they know how – by waging war. This is evident in the mass numbers of civilians who have been routinely internally displaced, and is inexplicably linked to the worsening humanitarian crisis.

Evidence of the military junta deliberately embarking on a 'trajectory of terror'<sup>7</sup> suggests that the regime will not stop their merciless attacks until the masses submit. ND-Burma members have documented crimes committed by the Myanmar Army including arbitrary arrest and detainment, torture, rape and sexual violence, destruction of property, enforced disappearances, murder and others.

There can be doubt that human rights have been curtailed in Myanmar. However, despite these devastating circumstances, it is critical to observe and credit the resilience of the Myanmar people who have rallied together across diverse walks of life in the spirit of a shared mission to overthrow the dictatorship.

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4 Ibid

5 Ibid

6 "Myanmar's NUG, Allied EAOs Urge ASEAN, UN Not to Work With Junta on Aid," *The Irrawaddy*, 1 June 2022

7 "Trajectory of Terror," *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, December 2021



**Photo:** Shwe Yote Hlwar holds a portrait of her father as she weeps with her mother, Thet Htar, during the funeral of her father Zwe Htet Soe (26), a construction worker who was shot and killed when the military opened fire. **Credit:** Panos Pictures

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS



### CHIN STATE



Civilians in Chin State were among the first in the country to boldly resist the military junta's presence in their territory. Protests which were organized and held daily were met with swift and unrelenting force and arbitrary arrests by the Myanmar military. This led to the formation of Chin PDFs including the Chinland Defense Force (CDF). The joint forces of the CDF and CNF continue to fight against the junta.

Within the first few weeks of 2022, nearly 40 000 people were displaced by violence in Chin State.<sup>8</sup> In northeastern India, which borders Chin State, the government of Mizoram has granted identity cards to civilians fleeing violence in Myanmar. Nearly 30,000 have sought refuge and safety in eleven districts of Mizoram since 1 February 2021.<sup>9</sup>

8 "Myanmar Emergency Update (as of 17 January 2022)," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 21 January 2022

9 "India's Mizoram issues IDs to refugees from Myanmar," *The Daily Star*, 17 May 2022

The opposition forces in Chin State have successfully managed to hold off many of the Myanmar junta's offensives. A part of the strategy of resistance groups has been regularly intercepting military convoys.<sup>10</sup> In response, the terrorist regime has burned down entire villages, and desecrated religious buildings, including dozens of churches. The scorched earth campaign seeks to wipe out the pro-democracy forces, and to also weaken morale of those supporting the resistance movement.

ND-Burma affiliate member, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), has documented many cases of the Myanmar military violating the rights of civilians, particularly against women. On January 11, 2022, an 11-year-old child was arrested along with other six women in Dawrhun Ward, Hakha Township, one hour after the CDF attacked military soldiers and police. An additional 21 men were arrested, for a total of 28 civilians, who were arbitrarily detained upon the escalation of armed fire between CDF and regime soldiers.<sup>11</sup> Abducted civilians had been used as human shields by the junta.

A few weeks later on 24 January 2022, a Chin woman and mother of five children, Mrs. Theresa Nu Len, age 40 and her two daughters, Angela Ngun Za Thian, age 15 and Regina Thian Nun Cawi, age 13 were found burnt to death near Chaungkhuah village in Kalay Township. As the military approached their village on January 23 2022, all of the men fled and the women remained in the village assuming that they would not be harmed by the military soldiers. Her husband and three other surviving children continued hiding in the forest.<sup>12</sup>



Northwestern Chin State continues to be ravaged by the worsening offensives. On 30 June 2022, 300 junta soldiers arrived at Kyaukhtu Airport.<sup>13</sup> The Chin Defense Force subsequently warned civilians to prepare for the worst by digging bunkers to shelter in the event of air or ground strikes. These are signs which indicate that the Myanmar Army has no interest in easing or halting their attacks in the State, particularly against villagers.

The ongoing atrocities being perpetrated in Chin State speak to the lack of protection civilians have access to. Their villages and homes have been inundated with Myanmar soldiers who have spared no concern to their right to life. Those who have escaped the junta's worsening offensives are struggling to survive in forests where they are deprived of food, medicine, and shelter. Civilians are forced to flee often at a moment's notice and therefore cannot carry all their belongings. Women, children, and the elderly comprise the majority of those who fled.

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10 "Resistance forces strike Myanmar army convoys on Chin State roads," *Myanmar Now*, 9 May 2022

11 Chin Human Rights Organization, News Bulletin

12 Ibid

13 "Clashes Expected in Chin State as Junta Deploys More Troops to Western Myanmar," *The Irrawaddy*, 1 June 2022



## KACHIN STATE

Military violence in Kachin State has exacerbated fears, anxieties and growing concerns among local people. Between January and June 2022, ND-Burma member, the Kachin Women’s Association Thailand (KWAT) documented eight cases of shelling, five airstrikes, five cases of killing, four cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, two cases of torture, one case of indiscriminate firing, and one case of portering.<sup>14</sup>

On 3 February 2022, an aerial attack in Sumpi Yang Village, Putato Township, injured a 12-year-old girl and a 50-year-old woman.<sup>15</sup> The military junta has also killed and tortured civilians in Kachin State. In an unprovoked, reported attack in Hpakant Township, a man was shot dead by military soldiers.<sup>16</sup> Alongside the violence, thousands have been forced to flee their homes. Humanitarian aid has also been blocked as the junta continues to position themselves along key routes in the area, where they have forcibly intercepted emergency assistance intended for displaced communities.

In further acts of disdain towards the junta, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) has cautioned civilians in northern Myanmar not to work for the military.<sup>17</sup> In a letter issuing a warning to those who continued to be employed under the regime, the KIO said there would be consequences. The armed revolutionary group has been providing civilians targeted by the junta with shelter, food and medicine as they continue to fight for their territory.

Civilians who have fled military offensives in Kachin State and sought shelter in camps for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) near Kutkai Township, northern Shan State, have been attacked by artillery strikes. On 15 June 2022, three women were killed, and one man was injured in the attack that seemed to deliberately target displaced people.<sup>18</sup> Witnesses said that the aerial strike took place

14 KWAT Bulletin

15 Situation Overview February – March 2022, *The Women’s League of Burma*

16 “Burma Army Kills Man In Hpakant,” *Kachin News Group*, 25 May 2022

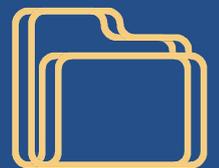
17 “KIO Warns Civil Servants in Northern Myanmar Not to Work for Junta” *The Irrawaddy*, 16 May 2022

18 “Junta Attacks Displaced Camp Near Kutkai” *Kachin News Group*, 21 June 2022

at a time when there were no clashes in the area. The shell landed in the camp, sparking immediate fear and terror. Following the assault, fighting resumed. Villagers fled to a nearby church as they felt the camp was no longer safe. The junta has increased their presence in areas of fierce resistance by opposition forces.

KWAT released “New Threats from the Air,” a groundbreaking report which found evidence of human rights violations perpetrated by the military junta in Kachin State, and northern Shan State between November 2021 and April 2022.<sup>19</sup> Included in KWAT’s documentation were five airstrikes in civilian areas, thirteen artillery attacks and 13 instances of indiscriminate shooting of villagers.<sup>20</sup> Their data also indicated fourteen instances of arbitrary arrest, and five accounts of villagers being used as human shields or porters.<sup>21</sup> The fighting, and endless brutality led to over 5000 newly displaced people<sup>22</sup> and between January and February 2022 where two civilians were killed and fifteen injured.<sup>23</sup>

KWAT also documented instances of sexual violence and rape being used as a weapon of war. On 12 April 2022, a military junta soldier attempted to rape a 50-year old woman in Kutkai township in broad daylight.<sup>24</sup> The survivor screamed and drew attention to the soldier attempting to violate her, even as she was being beaten, and managed to escape. She received 100 000 Myanmar kyat (approximately 53 USD) when villagers complained. In a series of unfortunate precedents, the soldier responsible evaded accountability and was protected by the regime.



KWAT’s documentation alongside the work of other Kachin based human rights organizations indicates further evidence of the military’s ongoing war against innocent people who are unfairly caught in the midst of the junta’s dark and sinister quests for power at all costs.



**Photo:** Three women were killed, and a man wounded by a regime artillery strike on a internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp near Kutkai. **Credit:** Kachin News Group

19 “New Threats from the Air: human rights violations by SAC forces in Kachin and northern Shan State, November 2021 - April 2022,” *The Kachin Women’s Association Thailand*, June 2022  
20 Ibid  
21 Ibid  
22 Ibid  
23 Ibid  
24 Ibid



## KAREN STATE

Since 1 February 2021, at least 170 000 civilians have been displaced in Southeastern Myanmar. In Karen State, the violence against innocent people has deliberately targeted civilians living in areas controlled by the KNU. ND-Burma member, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) documented rising numbers of displacement. Kawkareik Township in particular, saw deplorable levels of military violence which led to over 13 000 civilians being newly displaced by the end of April 2022.<sup>25</sup>

Reports of artillery fire and aerial attacks are rampant. On 4 April 2022, residents in Kawkareik Township awoke to firing by the junta's 97th Infantry Battalion. The shelling resulted in the death of a 17-year-old girl who died from her injuries on the way to the hospital. HURFOM claimed that an additional four others were seriously injured.<sup>26</sup>

Dozens of air and ground attacks have prevented civilians in Karen State from living freely. Thousands have sought refuge in caves<sup>27</sup> and homemade bunkers to protect themselves from the junta's indiscriminate firing. The ongoing bombardments led to local community based organized, the Karen Women's Organization, to call for an immediate referral of the situation on the ground in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court in order to stop the junta from continuing to perpetrate war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to indiscriminate firing upon innocent civilians, locals are regularly stopped at military checkpoints situated along key-routes. Following intense interrogations, many have had their belongings confiscated, especially those who possess evidence of supporting the democracy movement on their devices. HURFOM reported that hundreds of motorcycles have also been stolen and millions of Myanmar Kyat extorted while the 'stop and frisk' operations continue to be deployed.

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25 Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region April 2022, *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*

26 "There's a Crisis Unfolding in Southeastern Myanmar", *The Diplomat*, 22 April 2022

27 "Burned Homes and Hiding in Caves: 10,000 Villagers Flee Burma Army," *Free Burma Rangers*, 3 May 2022

28 "Farmers in Myanmar's Kayin State Face Indiscriminate Attacks," *Voice of America*, 19 May 2022

Forced disappearances are also on the rise, and human rights defenders are under attack and often forced into exile. Alongside increasing surveillance, HURFOM has documented that local people in southeastern Myanmar are living in constant fear, with no protection, no security, and no rule of law.<sup>29</sup>

The KNU has been very clear about their directions to the Myanmar junta. The armed group sent a letter on 7 March 2022 giving the military three days' notice to withdraw their troops from their territories in Lay Kay Kaw and Southern Kawkaik areas.<sup>30</sup> Their retreat would have allowed families, including women with young children, to return home and live in peace. However, the military refused to comply. Extreme weather conditions have made survival for displaced civilians even more difficult amid the current instability. The KNU rightfully accused the junta of lawlessly destroying homes and livestock, while placing landmines in areas where local people frequent for work and daily tasks.<sup>31</sup>

Against the backdrop of increasing militarization efforts by the junta in Karen State,<sup>32</sup> are authorities in neighboring Thailand who have consistently failed to take seriously the gravity of the human rights situation on the ground. At the beginning of 2022, Thailand's Prime Minister, Prayut Chan-o-cha, assured the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer, that displaced villagers would not be pushed back.<sup>33</sup> However, in stark contrast to these comments, IDPs were in fact pressured by Thai authorities to return to Karen State.<sup>34</sup> The lack of action on humanitarian grounds by Thailand stakeholders failed to recognize the seriousness of the situation, and the harm which the military junta is capable of.

Flooding which took place at the beginning of the rainy season in May 2022 also worsened the conditions for refugees seeking safety, particularly as offensives worsened between the military junta and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). Emergency Response Team Members in HURFOM's network reported that the IDPs living in the temporary resettlement sites on the banks of the Thaung Yin River faced housing and food shortages due to incessant rains. The water levels of the river were increasing steadily, and soaked the tents and temporary shelters, and bags of rice at resettlement sites along the shore.

**Against the backdrop of increasing militarization efforts by the junta in Karen State, authorities in neighboring Thailand have consistently failed to take seriously the gravity of the human rights situation on the ground.**

29 Ibid

30 "KNU Gives Burma Army Three Days to Withdraw from its Territories," *Karen News*, 12 March 2022

31 Ibid

32 "Burma Army Planning Large Scale Offensive Against Combined Karen Forces –Displaced People Fear Forced Return from Thailand," *Karen News*, 24 January 2022

33 "Prayut: No forced return for Myanmar refugees" *Bangkok Post*, 17 January 2022

34 "Myanmar refugees receive little relief at Thai border," *Al Jazeera*, 21 January 2022

ND-Burma member, the Human Rights Foundation of Mainland (HURFOM), reported that junta forces in southeastern Dooطلا targeted seven villages and fired at least 50 mortars. The shelling took place on 29 June 2022 and in the morning of 30 June 2022. HURFOM said that details of the damage and injuries were not immediately available as medics responded to those on the ground. At least 500 people were forced to flee their homes. The KNU stated that the following weekend an additional 10 000 people had to leave their villages after fighting in eastern Bago Region’s Kyaukkyi Township.<sup>35</sup> At least 13 civilians were killed in a series of unrelenting airstrikes deployed by the military junta at the end of June 2022, prompting more calls from the international community to intervene, and specifically sanction aviation fuel.<sup>36</sup>



Villagers who fled the fighting reported almost a dozen attacks across the days of aerial assaults. The junta has reportedly sought reinforcements as the battles between the Karen armed groups intensifies with civilians caught in the crossfire.



**Photo:** Shelling by regime forces damaged homes and displaced thousands in eastern Bago’s Kyaukkyi Township during two days of fighting on June 25-26 (Supplied) **Credit:** Myanmar Now

35 “KNU says over 10,000 displaced by Myanmar junta shelling,” *Myanmar Now*, 28 June 2022

36 “AT LEAST 13 VILLAGERS KILLED IN ESCALATING ATTACKS IN KAREN STATE – STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL KAREN ORGANISATION,” *International Karen Organization*, 1 July 2022



## KARENNI (KAYAH) STATE

Civilians in Kayah (Karenni) State have been deprived of their humanity as unrelenting fighting makes the future more uncertain for civilians. The crimes perpetrated in Kayah (Karenni) State have devastated livelihoods. The Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) declared that the military junta is committing genocide for not allowing the necessary flow of food rations and for scorching homes.<sup>37</sup> Among the roads closed are three key pathways in Demawso Township as fighting continues unabated between the Myanmar military junta and armed resistance forces. According to the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF), the junta fires approximately 100 rounds of artillery per day.

In January 2022, KnHRG stated that six people were killed when the junta targeted civilian areas of Karenni State.<sup>38</sup> On 8 and 9 January 2022, the military junta attacked Loikaw township through air and ground attacks, which forced half of the population to flee. Helicopters were used to strike KNDF bases. Five civilians were killed and others seriously injured.<sup>39</sup> According to local media, the junta had launched approximately 12 airstrikes by Saturday, 8 January 2022.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, as KnHRG reported in their quarterly briefer in March 2022: **“The Burmese junta is systematically killing the Karenni people in order to maintain control of an already precarious situation.”**<sup>41</sup>

In addition to Karenni IDP camps being targeted with airstrikes,<sup>42</sup> KnHRG has also reported that drones are being used to attack civilians after a funeral home was shelled in early January 2022.<sup>43</sup> Light Infantry battalion 102, fired 120 mm artillery shells and 81 mm mortars. Despite zero injuries or casualties, this crime addresses the level of cruelty which the junta is bombarding innocent civilians with.

On 23 February 2022, civilians were faced with further bombardments when aerial attacks in Nan Mae Khon village led to the death of two villagers and wounded three. Thousands more were displaced.<sup>44</sup> The fighting has only exacerbated the already growing need for humanitarian assistance in the State with 200,000 out of a population

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37 “KnHRG Director Banyar: Military Is Committing Genocide In Karenni State” *Kantarawaddy Times*, 16 March 2022

38 “The World Must Know,” *The Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma*, 9 February 2022

39 Ibid

40 Ibid

41 “Karenni Human Rights Group Quarterly Briefer,” January to March 2022

42 “Junta Fighter Jets Attack Funeral In Karenni State,” *Kantarawaddy Times*, 16 February 2022

43 Ibid

44 “Myanmar Air Force Launches More Air Strikes in Kayah State,” *The Diplomat*, 25 February 2022



**Photo:** Footage of damaged infrastructure following aerial strikes by the military junta.

**Credit:** Kantarawaddy Times

of 300,000 urgently requiring emergency support<sup>45</sup> and over two-thirds of residents being displaced in Karenni State alone.<sup>46</sup> There are at least 42 people in Karenni State who have been reported as arrested, detained and/or missing following their detainment.<sup>47</sup>

Bordering Karenni State is Pekon Township, southern Shan State, which has also been hit with the heavy onslaught of the Myanmar junta's offensives.<sup>48</sup> Displaced civilians have sought refuge in southern Shan State but have come under attack in IDP camps, and temporary shelters.

According to the Karenni Civil Society Network (KCSN), since mid-May 2022, military junta troops have been expanding their clearance operations by perpetrating horrendous atrocities including airstrikes and indiscriminate shelling.<sup>49</sup> Survivors of the shelling, and firing are left with limited options as routes to hospitals are blocked and medical supplies are difficult to acquire. Ethnic health care providers are struggling to fill gaps in the provision of services, particularly amid a growing malnourished population. Women, children and the elderly are being deprived of their basic needs as fighting shows no indication of easing. By the second week of June, over 200 000 people had been displaced across Karenni State.<sup>50</sup>

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45 "Half of Kayah State capital flees in face of military airstrikes," *DVB English*, 10 January 2022

46 "BURMA COUP WATCH FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2022:" Not satisfied with metaphor, junta tries to burn Burma down" *ALTSEAN BURMA*, 5 May 2022

47 "Karenni Human Rights Group Quarterly Briefer," January to March 2022

48 "Myanmar Junta Reinforcements Spark Heavy Attacks," *The Irrawaddy*, 19 May 2022

49 "May 9- May 22, 2022 Summary of SAC human rights violations in Karenni State and Pekhon Township," *Karenni Civil Society Network*, 27 May 2022

50 "June 6-June 19, 2022 Summary of SAC human rights violations in Karenni State and Pekhon Township," *Karenni Civil Society Network*, 23 June 2022

Civilians are largely trapped in conflict zones and cut off from the supply of humanitarian aid including food and shelter. The junta has routinely turned back convoys attempting to bring life-saving materials to deprived communities. Karenni health workers are extremely limited in their capacity to ensure aid is delivered with only thirty percent of the civilian population being reached.<sup>51</sup> Humanitarian principles are being regularly denied in the midst of a crisis where the most vulnerable are suffering unjust consequences because of the junta's negligence.

Karenni people have been displaced at an unprecedented rate and are fearful of a possible return home. Hundreds of buildings, including local villages, have been scorched by the junta. In addition, the military junta has not shied away from planting landmines in civilian areas, particularly in places where conflict is active. Villager homes, livestock and possessions have largely been looted, confiscated and destroyed by the military.

## MON STATE

Civilians in Mon State have been subjected to mismanagement and violence across the State by junta-appointed representatives. ND-Burma member, HURFOM, has documented human rights violations perpetrated against residents including extortion, arbitrary arrests, assault, torture and murder. Life remains strenuous for civilians who have unjustly been forced to carry the burden of ongoing military impunity. With the economy in turmoil and fighting rampant, the military is relentlessly extorting civilians for monetary gain. Between 18 and 24 April 2022, HURFOM documented over 50 cases of civilians forced to forfeit their belongings at security toll gates, in addition to over 60 million Myanmar kyats stolen, and more than 23 cases of motorcycles confiscated.<sup>52</sup>

HURFOM has reported that residents are also facing environmental threats to their homes and livelihoods as military officials attempt to forcibly displace them through land grabs. On 25 May 2022, villagers in Mudon Township, Mon State, complained that the Mon State's General Administrative Department and Land Record Departments were attempting to forcibly grab their land plots for the Mon State junta-led Airport and Deep Seaport mega project. HURFOM recounted that between May 20th and May 24th the junta's Land Record Department and General Administration Department (GAD) installed about 18 landmarks without any prior informed consent from the landowners in Kyaik Roi and Pai-Kamar village. These ongoing



51 “KSCC Can’t Provide Medicine For Majority Of Karenni State,” *Kantarawaddy News*, 28 April 2022  
52 Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region April 2022, *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*

violations are only the latest in a series of deliberate attacks on civilian fundamental freedoms.

Other military junta officials are showing their open disregard for the pro-democracy movement by intentionally targeting those who have joined the Spring Revolution in various roles. A junta-appointed Health Director in Mon State began investigating the presence of doctors and medics affiliated with the CDM in private hospitals, clinics, and labs that are not controlled by the junta in Mon State. There have been about 15 cases of arrests of CDM health workers so far, according to HURFOM records. In June 2022, at least 20 health workers, the majority being from Mon State, and Tanintharyi region, were dismissed from their positions for their pro-democracy activities.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the ongoing threats to the safety of revolutionaries, the commitment to the pro-democracy cause in Myanmar has been unwavering. While most government staff in Mon State quit following the attempted coup, those who have chosen to keep working are now losing motivation and are further incentivized to quit as military violence spurs instability.<sup>54</sup> University students in Mon State have also taken steps to show their disdain for the junta by continuing to protest and boycott military junta-controlled schools.<sup>55</sup>

Indiscriminate firing and shelling in Mon State has led to rising numbers of displacement as the junta unleashes attacks amid ongoing raids and arrests.

On 11 April 2022, HURFOM reported that two local female travelers from Mawkanin village, Lamine sub-town, Ye Township were seriously injured by the junta's indiscriminate gun firing while traveling to Thanbyuzayat Township after being struck on the chest, and head.<sup>56</sup>



Cases of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearances have been increasing in Mon State. According to family members, a civilian was arrested in Thaton Township and had been missing since he was arrested on May 17th 2022. Ko Zeyar Lin, age 45 and a resident of Dae-Ba-Reim Village in Thaton Township, Mon State was arrested on unproven allegations of being affiliated to a local defense group.<sup>57</sup> Among those arrested by the military, many are forced to porter and act as human shields for the junta soldiers.

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53 June Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region,” *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, 1 July 2022

54 “Most government staff want to quit their jobs” *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, 24 May 2022

55 “Mon National College popular among Mon communities: Mon university students boycott junta-controlled universities,” *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, 19 May 2022

56 Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region April 2022, *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, 1 May 2022

57 HURFOM Fieldnotes

Sources told HURFOM that crime rates are rising throughout Mon State as the political tensions worsen and commodity prices steadily increase, while there has been no deterrent to stop the rise in thefts and burglaries. In March 2022, over 63 motorcycles were seized by the junta, and 27 million Myanmar Kyat was extorted (approximately 14,600 USD).<sup>58</sup>

The targeting of innocent people is in violation of several internationally binding human rights treaties in addition to humanitarian law. In Mon State, turmoil and terror have wreaked havoc on communities desperately seeking peace and an end to the violence which has consumed their daily lives.

## MAGWE REGION



Over 700 homes have been destroyed by the military junta in Magway region since 1 February 2021.<sup>59</sup> Hundreds of civilians have also been arrested in the area as military junta troops attempt to devastate the opposition forces. Villagers have been forced to flee the raids but even places of religious worship are not safe from attack as monasteries and churches increasingly come under fire.

Civilian homes have turned into battlegrounds. The military junta launched a series of arson attacks on three villages on 10 May 2022.<sup>60</sup> Homes were systematically burned to the ground, which forced residents to flee. Days later on 13 May 2022, three civilians were killed after an artillery shell detonated when it was fired at a village in Myaing Township.<sup>61</sup> The conflict has led to thousands fleeing with many previously inhabited areas now completely abandoned. In Magwe region, at least 155 people have been murdered by the regime, and nearly 650 arrested.<sup>62</sup>

Landmines strategically placed in civilian areas by the junta have led to growing risks for villagers. On 19 June 2022, two children were killed when an unexploded ordinance they found detonated in Gangaw Township.<sup>63</sup> The two young victims are among the hundreds of children who have been killed by the junta since 1 February 2021. According to a paper by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the junta is stealing the lives of a ‘generation.’<sup>64</sup>

The situation has created an atmosphere of fear and tension as civilians are increasingly targeted. People are afraid to return home, and are living on the bare minimum while trying to seek refuge. The military junta has denied all responsibility for their war crimes though overwhelming evidence from human rights groups suggests otherwise.

58 Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region March 2022, *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*

59 “Myanmar’s Magway region suffers under military’s March offensive,” *Radio Free Asia*, 1 May 2022

60 “Myanmar military carries out systematic arson attacks on Yesago villages,” *Myanmar Now*, 11 May 2022

61 “Three civilians killed by artillery shell as Magway villages come under heavy fire,” *Myanmar Now*, 17 May 2022

62 “Deaths and arrests rise in Myanmar’s heartland,” *Radio Free Asia*, 10 May 2022

63 “Two children killed in explosion in Myanmar’s Magway region,” *Radio Free Asia*, 21 June 2022

64 A/HRC/50/CRP.1: Conference Room Paper of the Special Rapporteur, “Losing a Generation: How the military junta is attacking Myanmar’s children and stealing their future,” United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, 13 June 2022



## SAGAING REGION

Sagaing region remains significantly hard-hit by the junta's violence. Innocent people caught in the crossfire, including women, children and the elderly have had their homes raided, and their lives forcibly uprooted by the regime's merciless attacks. Throughout the reporting period dozens of civilians were killed and hundreds of homes were burned to the ground. Clearance operations in Sagaing region continue to target civilians. Victims and survivors have been forced to endure grueling and illegal methods of torture.

Civilians remain trapped where military junta offensives are made worse by the lack of humanitarian aid access. Witnesses and victims of the junta's assaults in Sagaing region are seeking justice and reparations for the many attacks perpetrated against them and their communities. Residents said that the atrocities are not slowing.<sup>65</sup> Air and ground strikes remain an unfortunate constant in their daily lives. Testaments of victims indicate their homes and villages have been 'destroyed in a second.'<sup>66</sup>

As military junta convoys continue to relentlessly attack villages and deprive innocent people of their fundamental rights, the urgency to respond remains even greater. In February 2022, over 50 000 people were forced to flee their homes across the country. Sagaing region has been heavily targeted due to the strong hold and success of civilian opposition forces who are committed to overthrowing the military junta.

The numbers of casualties, injuries and destruction of property in Sagaing region were significantly more than other regions and States. Country-wide, at least 3,379 homes have been burned down from 136 villages and townships in nine regions and states since 1 February 2021<sup>67</sup> and more than 1400 homes have been deliberately set on fire<sup>68</sup>, in addition to nearly 6000 killed.<sup>69</sup> The success of opposition forces has enraged the military junta who have brutalized local people in their unjust appeals for power. In an attempt to hide evidence of their crimes, the junta has continued to cut off Internet access in nearly a dozen townships in Sagaing region, particularly in areas where opposition forces have been dominating.<sup>70</sup>

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65 "Troops burn villages in Myanmar heartland, seek to crush resistance," *Reuters*, 14 April 2022

66 "Thousands of homes burned by soldiers in Myanmar's Sagaing region," *Radio Free Asia*, 5 May 2022

67 "Nearly 40 civilians killed in 10 days by military in Myanmar's Sagaing," *Radio Free Asia*, 9 February 2022

68 Ibid

69 "Over 5,600 Civilians Killed Within a Year of the Coup," *The Institute for Strategy and Policy – Myanmar*, 14 May 2022

70 "Myanmar Regime Cuts Phone, Internet Access in Resistance Stronghold Sagaing," *The Irrawaddy*, 24 May 2022



**Photo:** Displaced civilians in Yinmabin Township. / Bo Thurain-Yinmabin PDF

**Credit:** The Irrawaddy

The increase of force and airstrikes comes as the junta is losing their offensives across the country. In January 2022, nearly forty civilians were forced to guide junta soldiers as human shields, including women and children.<sup>71</sup> The attacks against civilians in Sagaing region are happening on a regular basis. Air and ground strikes have been unprovoked and led to mass insecurity across the region. Torture has also been a common domineering tactic used by the junta.

On 18 June 2022, five men were brutally tortured in Nyaung Pin Tae.<sup>72</sup> Three women, including a youth, were among those initially detained. The men were killed, and their bodies burned in Chaung-U Township. The charred bodies were discovered with evidence of gunshot wounds to their faces and heads. Villagers were also reportedly arrested and used as human shields and to carry their weapons and food supplies.<sup>73</sup> Several were shot and killed when they were physically unable to carry the loads.

During an assault on Taze Township, a teenage girl was fatally shot in the thigh and chest while trying to escape a raid on her village in early March 2022,<sup>74</sup> and an elderly woman burned in her home when it became impossible to flee. Throughout the reporting period, hundreds of homes have been burned by the Myanmar military in Sagaing region. Dozens of innocent civilians have also been arbitrarily arrested. Those who are released are severely injured and traumatized.

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71 “Soldiers use civilians as human shields during raid on PDF base in Sagaing region,” *Myanmar Now*, 11 January 2022

72 Regime Slaughters Civilians In Sagaing Region,” *Burma News International*, 21 June 2022

73 Ibid

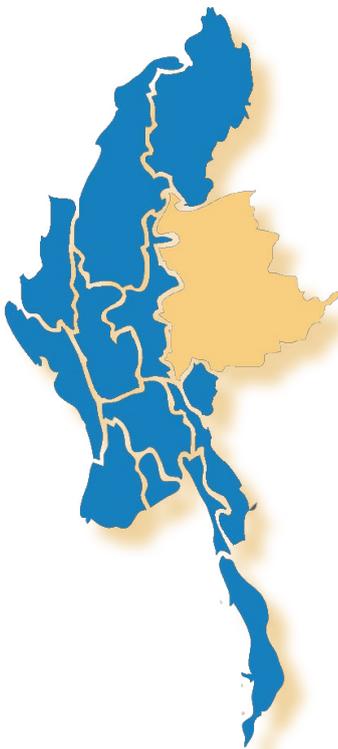
74 “Girl and elderly woman killed as junta raids continue in northern Myanmar,” *Myanmar Now*, 14 March 2022

Additional unprovoked artillery strikes launched by the military junta forced thousands of villagers to flee Yinmabin Township on Monday, 20 June 2022.<sup>75</sup> Two civilians were injured in the attacks, and dozens of homes were scorched. Civilians have been heavily targeted in the offensives in Sagaing region, and throughout the country as the junta continues to act with impunity.

Opposition forces have also been targeted relentlessly in Sagaing region. Three youths, all in their 20s, were run-down by junta backed security forces when attempting to return home.<sup>76</sup> They were arrested and killed when it was discovered they were planning to join anti-military forces. The bodies were not found far from the police station. In a related case, civilians were tortured while the military junta began a search of the leader of a local PDF.<sup>77</sup> Approximately 15 men were forced to follow junta soldiers to a monastery where they were violently interrogated and tortured.<sup>78</sup> These volatile acts are further evidence of the inhumane crimes against humanity which the junta has endlessly perpetrated without consequences.

The crimes committed in Sagaing region amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and warrant immediate investigations. Further, the onslaught of offensives in Sagaing has devastated civilian livelihoods. Fear mongering tactics are deliberately used by the junta who seek to distract people from the revolution and rather on their survival by depriving them of the bare minimum.

## SHAN STATE



The human rights situation in Shan State led to rights-monitoring group, the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF), to condemn the ongoing brutality being waged by the Myanmar military, stating, **“instead of protecting civilians, they’re committing human rights violations. They’ve become the enemy of the people.”**<sup>79</sup>

At the beginning of the reporting period in January 2022, SHRF reported on a case of a 44-year-old farmer, who had been displaced, and was tortured to death in Kyaukme township, northern Shan State.<sup>80</sup> Military intelligence officers violently forced their way into his home where they searched for drugs. When their search failed to yield any results, the farmer, Sai Tun Win, was beaten. His family members were also assaulted by the soldiers and robbed of their possessions, including 30 000 Myanmar Kyat.<sup>81</sup>

75 “Thousands Flee Junta Artillery Strikes in Upper Myanmar,” *The Irrawaddy*, 22 June 2022

76 “Would-be resistance fighters arrested, killed by junta police in northwestern Myanmar,” *Myanmar Now*, 15 March 2022

77 “Sagaing villagers tortured by soldiers searching for PDF Leader,” *Myanmar Now*, 12 May 2022

78 Ibid

79 “Burma Army Killing Civilians In Ywar Ngarn Township,” *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 16 May 2022

80 “Displaced farmer tortured to death “by mistake” by SAC MI officers in Kyaukme town, northern Shan State,” *Shan Human Rights Foundation*, 15 February 2022

81 Ibid

During the Burmese New Year celebrations of Thingyan, the military junta kidnapped two youth in YwaNgan Township, in addition to setting fire to two houses.<sup>82</sup> One of those taken away by the regime was reportedly only 16 years old. The junta is continuing their unlawful spree of abductions. Youth and affiliates of the PDF and the CDM are being targeted. On 9 and 10 April 2022, a child was among those abducted by the junta in Nwar Bangyi.<sup>83</sup>

Residents in Thaikhun township were forced to flee for their lives when fighting broke out between the regime and local resistance groups on 12 May 2022.<sup>84</sup> The junta used military fighter jets to carry out attacks from the air, as well as artillery shelling. Locals awoke early in the morning to the sounds of war and witnessed their villages being burned to the ground. Battalions 471 and 336 have been routinely shelling homes and properties in Loi Paung village and Lar Lay.<sup>85</sup> In February 2021, villagers in northern Shan State were forced to flee airstrikes.<sup>86</sup> The majority of those who fled were women and children. The Army continues to violate international norms and laws by forcibly displacing innocent people.

ND-Burma member, the Ta'ang Student Youth Union (TSYU) reported that three villagers were killed and nine people injured in an explosion in Kho Lan village, Mai Yaw, Lashio district, northern Shan State during the first week of May 2022. Among those injured were three children. According to local witnesses who spoke to TSYU, before the explosion, Myanmar troops were stationed in the surrounding villages for approximately one month. Children were fearful who worried that they could be injured or killed while playing. The area near the Mai Yaw, is in the area of many armed organizations such as the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Arakan Army, and the military junta.



Earlier in the year on 5 January 2022, the Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO) documented the case of six civilian injuries, including one child, when the military junta stationed at Sakhan Thit hill in Namkhan township began indiscriminately firing and shelling into local areas.

A devastating report by Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar found that hundreds of children had been brutally killed by the military junta since 1 February 2021, depriving them of their dignity and right to life.<sup>87</sup>

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82 "Regime Kidnaps Youths After Burning Homes In Southern Shan State," Burma News International, 20 April 2022

83 Ibid

84 "Due to SAC Air Strikes and Shelling, Residents Fled Homes in Phaikhun," *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 18 May 2022

85 "Displaced local witness 'whole village' burn following junta occupation in southern Shan State," *Myanmar Now*, 18 May 2022

86 "Northern Shan State Villagers Flee Regime Airstrikes," *Shan Herald Agency For News*, 16 February 2022

87 "UN expert releases new report documenting military junta's impact on Myanmar's children, urges immediate coordinated action to prevent "a lost generation" *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, 14 June 2022

Temporary shelters have been targeted. Civilians who had fled military offensives in Kachin State and sheltered in an IDP camp near Kutkai Township, northern Shan State, were attacked by artillery strikes. Three women were killed, and one man was injured in the attack that seemed to deliberately target displaced people.<sup>88</sup> Witnesses said that the aerial strike took place at a time when there were no clashes in the area. The shell landed in the camp, sparking immediate fear and terror. Following the assault, fighting resumed. Villagers fled to a nearby church as they felt the camp was no longer safe. The junta has increased their presence in areas of fierce resistance by opposition forces.

Alongside the rampant human rights abuses is humanitarian aid which is urgently needed for the people of Shan State. Over 50,000 were displaced in southern Shan State and more than 6500 in northern Shan by the end of March 2022.<sup>89</sup> In a report covering documented atrocities against civilians by SHRF between February and April 2022, it was reported that ten villagers were killed and twenty-five arrested.<sup>90</sup> Six homes were raided and an additional seven were burned to the ground and nearly one thousand residents fled their homes.<sup>91</sup>

ND-Burma affiliate member, the Pa-O Youth Organization, reported that at least 200 000 IDPs relocated to Hsihseng, Pinlaung, Hopone, Taunggyi townships in Southern Shan State. Though those who have fled want to return, however the circumstances are volatile as the junta continues to commit crimes with impunity. The impacts of the conflict have led to restrictions of movement, increased landmines and civilian injuries and casualties. Human rights violations, including human trafficking are rampant. Civilians are in need of basic food, shelter, water, hygiene and healthcare, as well as protection.

The lack of accountability and responsibility is bred within the very fabric of the Myanmar junta. For decades, victims and survivors have been denied justice or threatened in exchange for their silence. Human rights groups, including ND-Burma members, have documented rights abuses and gathered evidence to pursue accountability through international legal mechanisms.



**Photo:** Displaced civilians fleeing conflict in Southern Shan State

**Credit:** Burma News International

88 “Junta Attacks Displaced Camp Near Kutkai,” *Kachin News*, 22 June 2022

89 Humanitarian aid for displaced people in Shan State,” *Burma News International*, 29 March 2022

90 Extrajudicial killing, torture, arbitrary arrest, looting, torching of houses by SAC troops in Ywangan, southern Shan State, February–April, 2022,” *Shan Human Rights Foundation*, 11 May 2022

91 Ibid

## RAKHINE STATE



The human rights situation escalated during the reporting period. Rakhine State has been the target of heavy offensives and violence deployed by the military junta. Since the beginning of May 2022, clashes have been becoming more frequent amid civilian concerns that the two-year ceasefire was being violated. People throughout the state are apprehensive of the growing tensions, especially as the junta targets Muslim villages and arbitrarily arrests young people in transit.

In northern Rakhine State, the junta fired heavy artillery at a temple where internally displaced people were sheltering on 30 May 2022.<sup>92</sup> A few days before, military junta soldiers also fired at an IDP camp causing immense fear in the camps over civilian security. During the first of May 2022, a fire destroyed over 200 shelters.<sup>93</sup> An elderly woman was also killed after stepping on a landmine in Kyauktaw Township at the end of May 2022.<sup>94</sup>

A new report by the International Crisis Group, suggested that if a full-fledged conflict were to emerge in Rakhine State between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military, it would result in “the worst violence Rakhine State has seen in years.”<sup>95</sup> The report also found that if civil war were to re-erupt, up to three million people in Rakhine State would be impacted. Between December 2018 and November 2020, hostilities in Rakhine State had completely engulfed the population in a series of ongoing, unabated attacks.



ND-Burma member, the All Arakan Students’ and Youths’ Congress (AASYC) documented rising numbers of illegal arrest and detention with seventeen cases reported between January and June 2022. Most of the atrocities documented were perpetrated by the junta backed Myanmar Police in Sittwe and Mrauk-U. There were five cases of civilians killed and seven incidents of torture and inhumane, degrading treatment.<sup>96</sup>

As a result of fighting between the Arakan Army and the junta, over 200 000 people have been displaced during two years of clashes. Thousands remain in internally displaced camps.<sup>97</sup>

92 “Myanmar military fires heavy artillery at IDP camps in northern Rakhine,” *Myanmar Now*, 1 June 2022

93 Ibid

94 “Elderly woman killed by landmine reportedly set by Myanmar military in northern Rakhine State,” *Myanmar Now*, 1 June 2022

95 “Resumption of conflict would put millions at risk in Myanmar’s Rakhine State: report” *Radio Free Asia*, 1 June 2022

96 Ibid

97 “Amid food insecurity, Arakan IDPs face landmine perils to survive,” *Burma News International*, 29 June 2022



## TANINTHARYI REGION

In the Tanintharyi region, civilians are being forced to face a variety of challenges waged upon them by the military junta. Conflict has displaced thousands while a mounting presence of soldiers has been a breeding ground of insecurity. Villagers have been routinely subjected to violent interrogations and abductions.

Travel restrictions are also being increasingly tightened as the military junta uses the toll-gates as an opportunity to extort civilians for money and valuables. This tremulous situation has led to further disregard of the rule of the law by the regime. Homes have been deliberately set on fire by the junta as their belongings are looted and destroyed.

Over the course of the reporting period, Tanintharyi region has been subjected to mass brutality and force, including indiscriminate firing by the military junta. At least 9,000 IDPs are hiding in nearby forests and are in dire need of medicine and food, according to the local service providers.<sup>98</sup> On 23 May 2022, HURFOM received reports from the ground that at least 15 houses were damaged by indiscriminate artillery fire by the junta in Taku and Tharabwin villages in Tanintharyi Township according to villagers whose homes were destroyed.<sup>99</sup>

On May 21st 2022, the military council set fire to two houses in Taku village and two houses in Tharabin village. The volatility of the situation has led to growing fears in communities throughout the region.

Arbitrary arrests and unlawful detainment have been increasing in Tanintharyi region as the Myanmar Army cracks down on those suspected of being involved with civilian armed defense forces. In the month of April 2022, HURFOM reported over 36 arrests, 5 charged and 16 detained without cause in Tanintharyi region.<sup>100</sup> A state of fear has overcome residents in the region who are living with a growing presence of Myanmar military soldiers.

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98 Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi Region,” *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, April 2022

99 Ibid

100 “Monthly Overview: Human Rights Situation in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi Region,” *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*, April 2022



Human rights violations perpetrated in Myanmar by the terrorist junta have increased since 1 February 2021. The safety of civilians has been seriously undermined as ongoing bombardments threaten to further destabilize the state. Problematic patterns of impunity have jeopardized prospects for justice as residents are ruthlessly targeted while soldiers evade accountability.

The four pillars of transitional justice are truth, justice, reparations, and non-recurrence (institutional reform). In Myanmar, however, all pathways towards granting and ensuring transitional justice have been blocked by the regime. A blanket of denial continues to smother the very function of institutions meant to uphold and preserve the rule of law.

There is no rule of law in Myanmar, or any reliable transitional justice mechanisms that would hold the military accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide. Attacks against innocent civilians continue with impunity. It's important to emphasize that transitional justice is not solely about prosecutions and punishment. Justice also involves the provision of reparations to victims, recognition and acknowledgment of the truth about mass violations, and legal security reforms to guarantee non-repetition.

Justice for victims is routinely denied as soldiers are protected in military courts. As it stands, Myanmar also has no reparations policy which would provide redress to victims or their families. In 2015, the Reparations Working Group was established to advocate for a state-led reparations program. Since February 2021, these efforts have been forcibly put on hold. With no significant policy related to institutional reform in Myanmar, military violations against various ethnic groups and civilians have continued.

Truth-telling and human rights documentation initiatives have long been carried out by civil society organizations. For victims and survivors of the military junta's harrowing assaults on civilian lives, justice is long overdue. These attacks have spanned decades, yet in the context of the failed coup, the calls for accountability demand concrete action which would finally put an end to the impunity.

### **All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress: 28 May 2022**

Maung Aung Aung Oo, age 20, was returning from Me Kyaung taung, Paletwa township with his mother when he stepped on a landmine and was seriously injured on 28 May 2022. He was transferred to Swittwe hospital and had his right leg amputated. Other parts of his body, including his left foot and hands also required medical treatment. One villager said that the cause of the mine blast followed fighting between local armed groups who planted landmines but failed to inform local villagers.

### **The Human Rights Foundation of Monland: 2 January 2022**

University students and some local activists who took part in the Spring Revolution were sentenced by the junta-backed court, according to family members. Two young residents from Kyat-Sar-Pyin Ward, Dawei who were shot and arrested on May 31st 2021, were sentenced to 11-years imprisonment each and the other four University students, including Ko Nyan Win, 24, and Ko Waiyan Phyo, 22. In addition, two civilians were sentenced to two years each, according to family members of these students.

### **The Human Rights Foundation of Monland: 22 February 2022**

At around 1PM on February 22, a total of 24 teenagers, including 15 boys and nine girls, were arbitrarily arrested by the junta military forces in Tha-Byar village, Long Lone Township, Dawei, according to local villagers who talked to HURFOM reporters.

### **The Human Rights Foundation of Monland: 11 April 2022**

Two local female travelers from Mawkanin village, Lamine sub-town, Ye, Mon State were seriously injured by the junta's indiscriminate gun firing while traveling to Thanbyuzayat town. They were each injured on the chest and head.

### **The Kachin Women's Association Thailand: 12 April 2022**

On 12 April, at about 8:30 am, Lum Mai went to help in the nearby garden of her elder brother, who is the village head of Hu Nawng. However, that morning he had to go out on urgent business, so Lum Mai changed her plan to help with the gardening the next day and she returned home at 9 am. It is about a 10-minute walk from her home to her brother's home.

As she was walking home, she noticed a Burma Army soldier following her, so she quickened her pace and entered her compound. The soldier was in uniform and carrying a gun, and was about 30 years old. When she entered her compound, the soldier followed her and asked her "What have you put in your bag?" She said "Nothing." After that, the soldier grabbed her and began groping her body sexually. She was terrified and began shouting. The soldier then hit her in the head and body with his fists.



Her younger brother's garden was beside her home, about 200 feet away. At that time her younger brother and his 17-year-old son were repairing a garden fence. When they heard her shouts, the father said to his son, "Go and look, maybe someone's been bitten by a dog." The son went to Lum Mai's house and saw the soldier beating her in the head, and also starting to choke her neck. When the soldier saw the boy, he threatened him with his gun, then left in the direction of where his unit was camped in the village. The boy rushed back to his father and told him what he had seen.

The father was quick-thinking, and realized he needed to identify the perpetrator, so he took a shortcut to where the soldier was taking security. He saw the commander asking the perpetrator "Where did you go? Why didn't you stay here?" The commander then beat him once. Neither of them saw the survivor's younger brother, who went back home, fearing that if he challenged the soldier straight away he might be attacked.

When he got back home, he called the village head, the survivor, and other villagers. At about 10 am, they went to where the soldiers were camped in the village and met with the commander. The commander ordered all his soldiers to stand in a row and asked the survivor to identify the perpetrator. Even though the perpetrator had removed the sweater he was wearing at the time of the incident, the survivor was able to identify him. The commander said "We will take action," and the perpetrator was then tied to a tree.

### **The Kachin Women's Association Thailand: 3 January 2022**

A male youth, Ram Sing, was arrested by regime troops at Naw Mung, under a warrant for having participated in a prayer ceremony "To get Justice for Myanmar" on 3 March, 2021. On January 6, 2022, he was charged under Article 505 (b) and imprisoned in Putao Jail.

### **The Kachin Women's Association Thailand: 18 February 2022**

Two men, Lahpai La Pa (37 years) and Gareng Ting Nan (55 years old) were returning from Bhamo to their homes in Momauk at 9 pm. When they came close to the LIB 437 Momauk military base, a Burma Army soldier shot at them, injuring them fatally. Lahpai La Pa was shot in the mouth and Gareng Ting Nan was shot in the eye. That night the military sent their dead bodies to the Momauk public hospital.

### **The Ta'ang Women's Organization: 22 February 2022,**

Villagers from Pan Nan village, Pan Thabay tract, Maiyaw, Lashio district temporarily escaped fighting between MNDAA troops and military junta troops. They came back to their village on 17 February 2022 when four villagers were killed by military shelling. Another three were injured and in critical condition. They were transferred from Lashio military hospital to Pyin Oo Lwin military hospital.

Villagers who were killed on the spot were identified as Daw Aye Kywel (30), Daw Aye Ee (30) and her 5 years old daughter Lway Aye Kyan and Daw Aye Man (26). The injured included Lway Aye Lot (25), Lway Aye Kham (17), Lway Aye Zin (20) and Mai A Like Hla (28).

## CONCLUSION

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Throughout the reporting period, ND-Burma observed a litany of human rights violations perpetrated by the Myanmar military which continue to seriously undermine civilian security. Their increasing presence in local villages and areas has led to growing fears as they remain extremely limited in their capacities to protect themselves against raids and attacks.

The military junta continues to benefit from decades of military impunity for committing crimes against civilians across 70 years of civil war. Patterns of human rights violations, behavior and tactics of the military are always the same, such as targeting the civilian, gender based violence and the use of the four cuts policy. In addition to overwhelming opposition to the junta, the people of Myanmar do not trust them to deliver aid, to know their whereabouts, or to not abuse or even kill them.

It has been a difficult, and complicated reporting period that was met with even more challenges amid the 2021 attempted coup and pandemic. Documentation from members shows that the failed seizure of power has resulted in a spiraling economic and political state of affairs.

ND-Burma supports a United Nations Security Council resolution on a global arms embargo, to refer the situation of Myanmar to the International Criminal Court and for an urgent UN-led humanitarian intervention to address the COVID-19 pandemic. We call for diplomatic, political and economic pressure on the military junta to immediately cease the targeting of the civilian population in Myanmar. Attempts for peace and reconciliation will not be taken seriously under the military junta.



## To the International Community

1. Refuse to engage with the Myanmar junta and any representative the regime claims as legitimate. In doing so, the representation of any military junta official at international affairs, meetings, summits and gatherings must be strictly prohibited. All efforts to engage with the country's leadership must be with the National Unity Government.
2. Immediately pursue more effective sanctions on the Myanmar military junta leadership and soldiers as well as their families.
3. Reinforce calls for humanitarian restrictions to be lifted so that aid can flow freely and safely to communities in need.
4. Strengthen international protection mechanisms to ensure that victims of human rights violations and organizations on the ground have access to ready and reliable pathways of accountability.
5. Support local community based organizations and the facilitation of cross border aid as they work to urgently support the crisis along the Thai-Myanmar border and inside Myanmar.
6. Take more transparent, concrete steps towards working with local organizations and ethnic political parties to achieve peace and solutions to the country's longstanding challenges that are in line with the desires of local people, and not the military junta.
7. Maintain calls for the release all political prisoners and charges to be dropped immediately and unconditionally
8. Cooperate with UN mandated investigations to ensure justice for all people in the country.

## To United Nations bodies including the Human Rights Council, the United Nations Security Council

1. Immediately refer the human rights situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court, and further evaluate and consider all pathways to justice for victims of the military junta's mass crimes against civilians
2. Impose and enforce aviation fuel sanctions to deter the ongoing use of airstrikes by the military junta.
3. Immediately adopt a resolution which acknowledges the worsening of the human rights crisis on the ground in Myanmar and impose a global arms embargo which would halt the free flow of weapons into the conflict-torn country.
4. Support civil society organizations on the ground and respective human rights defenders by advancing documentation and evidence of mass crimes against humanity perpetrated by the military junta.
5. Immediately dispatch a monitoring team to assess the situation on the ground in Myanmar.
6. Child protection stakeholders including UNICEF must lobby for the young victims of the junta's crimes by calling for investigations into their unlawful murders. Mechanisms must be further instituted to set a precedent that children are not targets.

## To the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

1. Members of ASEAN must engage with members of the National Unity Government and other related democratic affiliates in the country who believe in a future in Myanmar which is free from violence, political prisoners and ongoing conflict
2. Support peace-driven solutions from civilians in Myanmar outside of the military junta. ASEAN must end their dialogue with the military junta if they are serious about pursuing and supporting prospects for peace in the country.
3. The problematic '5-Point Consensus' must be immediately abandoned and a new approach must be considered to ensure reforms make progress
4. ASEAN must support restrictions on foreign currency revenues and the purchasing of arms weaponry
5. ASEAN must show their solidarity to the people of Myanmar by supporting UN mandated resolutions, including a global arms embargo, to put an effective end to the military junta's assault of innocent people.



# RESISTING A COUP

*Human Rights Violations in Myanmar  
Between January - June 2022*

