



KAREN NI HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP

# Quarterly Briefe

The Karen Human Rights Group's third quarterly briefer will breakdown the human rights abuses committed by the Burmese military in Karen state from July to September 2022.



## Quarterly Highlights:

- ◊ The Karen State Consultative Council [published](#) directions on how to construct an emergency bomb shelter to protect from the Burmese military's attacks and aerial strikes.
- ◊ As the Burmese junta continues to block relief supplies in Karen state, KnHRG director Ko Banya attributes the supplies shortages to the [increase](#) of health risks among the IDPs.
- ◊ Due to the Burmese military's airstrikes and attacks, more than 70% of [children](#) and youth in Karen state are "studying in danger."



*Karen children learning at a makeshift classroom within an IDP camp.*

Photos: KnHRG



**Top Photo:** Home destroyed by junta troops.

**Bottom Photo:** Karen IDP camp in jungle.

Photos: KnHRG

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# ANALYSIS

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## Introduction

The situation in Karen state continues to deteriorate as Burmese military forces increase violence against civilians and destroy property. In the last three months, junta forces favored tactics that targeted mass numbers of Karen at once. In comparison to previous quarters, Karen state saw a drastic uptick in both the number of mortar shell attacks and the number of civilians arrested and detained; those detained became the military's "human shields" during conflicts. At the same time, the favored "shoot on sight" tactic from the last quarter continued. This resulted in the largest number of Karen killed and detained over a three month period to date, and further points to a concerning trajectory of the Burmese military's devaluation of Karen lives. Junta attacks on internally displaced persons' (IDPs) camps, shelters, and children this quarter further highlights this concern. Destruction of houses and buildings by mortar shelling increased; the Burmese military intentionally torched other structures. This caused the displacement of an additional 5,000 civilians this quarter, capping the total displaced population at 205,000, which is over half the entire Karen state population. However, continued attacks on Karen state have made it difficult to report accurate numbers, so the actual number of displaced individuals is most likely higher than these records.

For this quarterly briefer report, KnHRG collected the raw data from areas of conflict to present accurate information. The raw data can be found in Graphs 1 through 10 at the end of this briefer report.

## Human Rights Violations

Compared to the last two quarterly reports, this quarter saw the largest impact on the Karen. While the first quarter recorded an estimated 52 deaths, and 19 deaths in the second quarter, this third quarter estimated at least 27 deaths ([Graph 1](#)) - including four children.

Reports also included a total of 42 civilians injured ([Graph 2](#)). In order to attack Karen civilians, the military favored mortar shelling and airstrikes in the first quarter and shooting to kill in the second quarter. The third quarter saw the use of all three tactics. The junta also used Karen civilians as human shields after their arrests.

The number of civilians arrested and detained, and used as human shields have increased compared to last quarter. The use of human shields is a tactic that has been used by junta forces to deter resistance forces from attacking by placing civilians as a cover in front. The use of human shields was a common tactic before the coup and it has gained more traction specifically in this quarter. Similarly, this quarter also saw a



*Karen child killed during attack by the Burmese military.*

Photo: KnHRG

slight decrease in the number of civilians shot and killed, but this may also be explained by the strategic desire to utilize people as human shields first, rather than kill them immediately.

During the last three months, the Burmese military favored mortar shelling, which accounted for the majority of deaths. This may indicate yet another switch in elimination tactics to target and kill mass numbers of Karen at once, and more frequently, compared to individual shootings.

### *Arrested and Detained*

This quarter recorded the arrest and detention of thirteen Karen in total ([Graph 3](#)). There were five individuals in July and four in August that were arrested and detained. In September, four more individuals were arrested. Two men from Cile Done Village in Deemaw Soe Township were arrested, tortured, and killed during detention. On September 30th, two more individuals were arrested and detained. Additional information about the nature and manner of these arrests are unavailable.

### *Human Shields*

Even though there were no reported cases of human shields in July, the same cannot be said for the rest of the quarter. In August and September, the Burmese military increasingly arrested civilians to be used as human shields during armed conflict with resistance forces.

In August, a total of 14 civilians were arrested: 10 from Law Khu Ku and four from Kaw Tamaw village. All of the civilians were taken by the Burmese military and forced to march with them as they retreated to their armed base in Hprusoe. Knowing it would stop resistance forces from attacking, the military used the civilians as a cover through the jungle. Once they reached Hprusoe, the civilians were released.



*Elderly woman killed from mortar shells launched by the Burmese military.*

Photo: KnHRG

In September, the Burmese military scaled up the number of civilians they arrested to be used as human shields. In Moe Bye Town, at least 100 civilians were arrested and used for cover. Currently, all of those arrested still remain detained without further information on their health, safety, and expected release.

### *Mortar Shells*

Compared to last quarter's total of 36 mortar shelling attacks, this quarter saw a large increase with a total of 69 attacks, which left 16 civilians dead and 42 injured ([Graph 4](#)). In July, the junta targeted civilians at Moe Bye and Saung Patan IDP camps with 16 shelling attacks. The attacks left three dead and seven injured. In August, another 16 attacks

occurred which resulted in three deaths, including a 12-year-old boy, and 15 injured. September saw the highest number of attacks. Civilians in Moe Bye Town, Phe Khong Township, and Kon Tar Village were targeted 39 times by junta forces. This resulted in 10 deaths that included three girls (all aged seven years old) and one elderly woman (age unknown). The same attacks injured 20 people, including another 17-year-old boy.

### *Landmines*

There were a total of three landmine explosions during this quarter ([Graph 5](#)). There were no recorded landmine cases in July. However, this was soon followed by two explosions in August - killing one man in Loikaw Township. In September, there was another documented explosion; however, there was no additional information available about the possible victims and/or damage to surrounding areas. Furthermore, a decrease in landmine explosions compared to last quarter does not mean that there was an actual decrease in the placement of landmines by the Burmese military. It is highly possible that communities in military-occupied areas are avoiding potential landmine locations.

### *Airstrikes*

There was only one airstrike over the quarter in August, resulting in the death of a man from Daw Papar village ([Graph 6](#)). Similar to last quarter, the Burmese military appears to have reduced their emphasis on aerial attacks.

### *Shot on Sight*

There were a total of four Karen men who were shot and killed in Loikaw between July and September ([Graph 7](#)). While the case in July occurred at a Burmese military checkpoint, there was no indication if the cases in August and September also took place at a military checkpoint. No additional information was available on the victims.

### *Outlier (Armed Conflict/Found Dead)*

Similar to last quarter, there were three outlier deaths between July and September ([Graph 8](#)). In July, one man was killed during armed conflict between the Burmese military and the joint forces of the Karen Nationalities Defense Force and Karen Army in Law Htut Village. Additional information on the victim and the conflict was not available. In September, two dead bodies were found in Loikaw's Pun Chanung River. There was no additional information on the nature of these deaths, but it is assumed to be caused by the Burmese military.



**Top Photo:** Religious structure damaged during an attack by the Burmese military

**Middle Photo:** Home sustained a lot of damage to during another attack.

**Bottom Photo:** Inside a home after the Burmese military attacked.

Photos: KnHRG



**Top Photo:** Home destroyed after intentionally torched by junta troops.

**Bottom Photo:** Another home destroyed by mortar shells launched by the Burmese military attacked.

Photos: KnHRG

## Destruction of Property

From July to September, a total of 138 buildings, including four religious buildings and one community hospital ([Graph 9](#)), were damaged or intentionally destroyed by the Burmese military. Similar to the tactics used to target civilians, the most common cause of structural damage was mortar shelling.

In July, 20 houses were damaged or destroyed. While some of the structures in Loikaw and Phe Kong were hit by mortar shellings, most of them were intentionally burned down by the Burmese military. Junta forces were documented to have torched houses between Daw Nga Ka village and Daw Kamee village, continuing into Moe Bye Town in Deemaw Township. In August, seven structures were documented as damaged. Like the previous months, most of these structures were hit by mortar shelling attacks, this time in East Deemaw Soe. A community hospital was also recorded to have been destroyed by an airstrike. September saw the largest amount of structural damage due to mortar shelling attacks. 111 structures,

including four religious buildings, were damaged in Moe Bye Town, Deemaw Soe, and Loikaw Township.

## IDPs

By the end of this quarter, there was a recorded estimate of 205,000 Karen civilians internally displaced ([Graph 10](#)). Karen Human Rights Group did not document new IDPs in July and August, but in September, there were 5,000 additional IDPs.

However, it is important to keep in mind that there is still a portion of undocumented IDPs across Karen state and neighboring states/regions that may not be reflected in these particular records.

IDP communities in Karen state are living in temporary camps and shelters with unstable structures, as well as lack food, water, medical care, and access to education. The Burmese military's pattern of violent behavior has also left a deep psycho-sociological impact on civilians. IDP camps were specifically targeted by junta forces using mortar shelling attacks. These attacks force communities in the camps to further flee for safety into nearby jungles without the proper resources or shelters, posing a myriad of health risks to individuals. KnHRG executive director Banya Khung Aung [shared](#) that prolonged malnutrition has created issues for pregnant individuals and the fetus, and have also harmed children's cognitive, mental and physical development.

## **Conclusion**

This quarter saw the combination of multiple aggressive tactics used by the Burmese military to make the most impact in Karen state. The Burmese military strategically targeted mass numbers of civilians at once through mortar shelling attacks. They also used the arrest/detain method in tandem with the usage of human shields. The “shot on sight” method also continues to be employed, indicating that elimination tactics are now widespread at both the community and individual level. The deliberate targeting of children and IDP camps/shelters, as well as the intentional torching of community and residential structures, also further points to the Burmese military’s total disregard for Karen lives. These events have internally displaced more than half of the entire Karen state population.

The Burmese military is evidently trying to adapt their tactics through observable changes in strategy every quarter for most impact. In order to counter the predicted increase in civilian casualties over the next quarter, it is critical for the international community to implement tangible action to prevent future atrocities. This is an important reminder for the international community of the immediate need for targeted sanctions and a global arms embargo, as well as ensuring impacted communities receive life-saving aid through collaboration with local groups on the ground. The Burmese military must be held accountable for their war crimes, crimes against humanity, and human rights violations.

*Karen children eating a meal at one of the IDP camps.*

Photo: KnHRG



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Direct coordinate emergency humanitarian aid provision efforts, including through cross-border channels, for the aid to reach the vulnerable population of more than 200,000 Karen IDPs resulted from the military violence and airstrikes, and combat COVID-19, by providing resources and working in equal and meaningful partnership and collaboration with ethnic and community-based humanitarian and civil society organizations;
2. Impose further targeted sanctions against the military and its leadership, military businesses including specifically targeting Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprises (MOGE), military-linked business partners and network of arms dealers;
3. Impose a coordinated global arms embargo on the Burmese military;
4. Sanction the supply of jet fuel to the Burmese military to end airstrikes and impose no fly zone;
5. Recommend the International Criminal Court to accept the declaration lodged by the National Unity Government of Burma, under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute accepting the Court's jurisdiction with respect to international crimes committed in Burma territory since 1 July 2002;



*Remnants of a mortar shell that was launched by the Burmese military during one of their many attacks in Karen state.*

**Photo: KnHRG**

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## OO REH AND MIE MIE'S SHARED ANXIETIES AS IDPS

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Internally displaced Karen continue to suffer many hardships the longer they are displaced as they flee from the fighting. They struggle with basic necessities of daily life such as food and housing, finding it impossible to live life with a purpose. Oo Reh relates that because he cannot farm as usual, his family has "very little to eat" and "only has rice soup for breakfast" since they do not have enough rice. The place they currently reside at is "very difficult to access due to very bad road conditions," and thus are cut off from donors. Karen IDPs express that they feel "like we are dead although we are still breathing."

The IDPs reveal their anxieties regarding inflation and their lack of income. Mie Mie stated that "as the price of commodities sky rockets, we cannot buy anything nor dare to buy anything. Since we have no income, we solely rely on people's donations. Since we are fleeing the fighting, we can no longer tend to growing paddies, we do not know what we will eat and how we will live in the future."

Karen IDPs face difficulties in getting access to proper healthcare and necessary medication. Before being displaced, they had jobs that provided a daily wage to afford medicine. However, now that they are fleeing war, they "have no jobs and no income" and when they are sick, they "have to just suffer." This is especially difficult for Mie Mie because she is "suffering from hypertension and has to rely on medication everyday."

Mie Mie also shares the barriers to education that her children face as IDPs. She has to "send my kids to school far away. I cannot support them at all." Sometimes, she provides them with "a part of whatever rice or food I received from the donors." She is worried that as the revolution and the fighting continues, she "does not know how to continue to send my children to school nor how to support ourselves with our daily necessities."

The international community needs to ensure that the internally displaced people have their basic necessities met. Access to food, medicine, and education are of utmost importance for IDPs who live in constant fear and anxiety of what they will face the next day, as well as the stress of ensuring access to some form of education for their children.

\*Names changed to protect identity



*One of many Karen IDP camps throughout the state*  
Photo Cred: KnHRG

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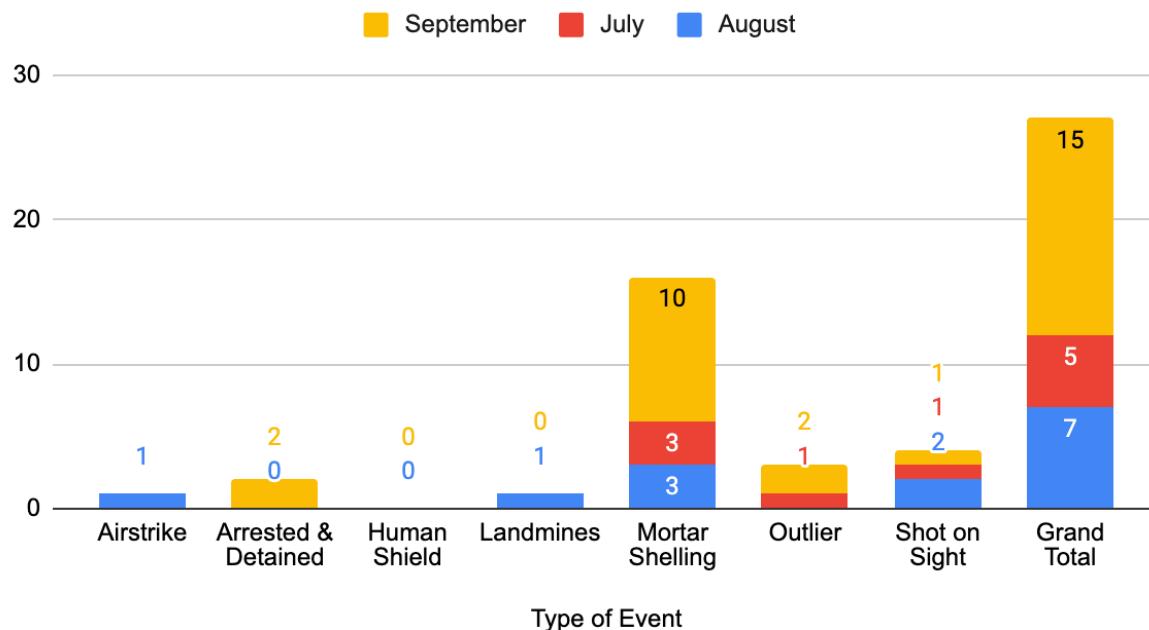
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# APPENDIX

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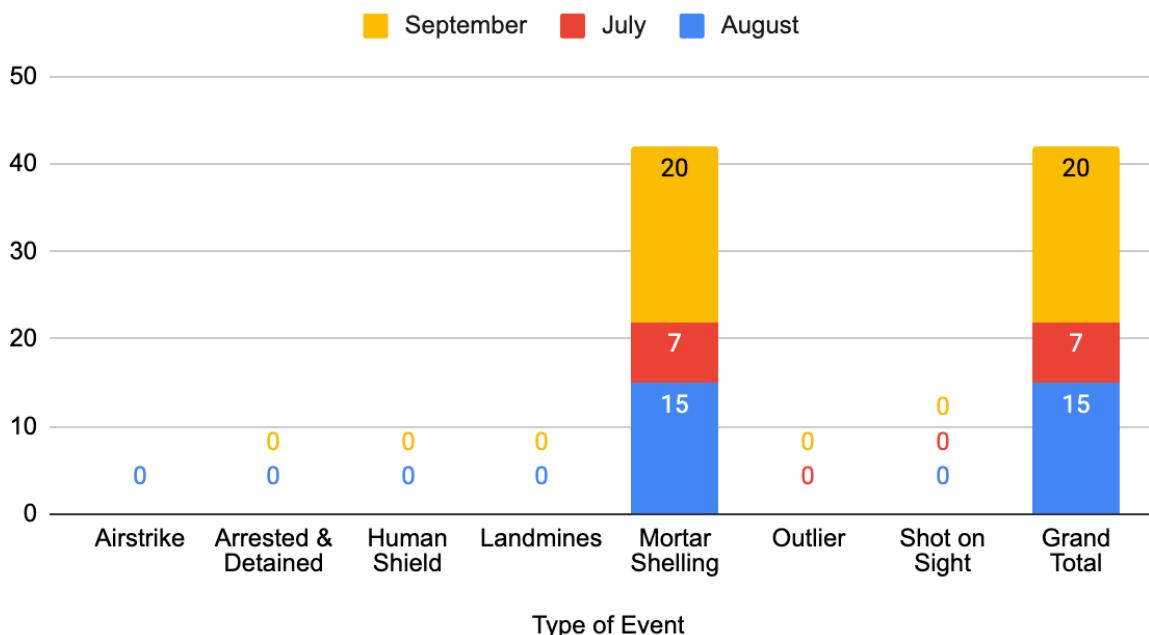
## Graph 1

Number and causes of Karen deaths in 3rd quarter



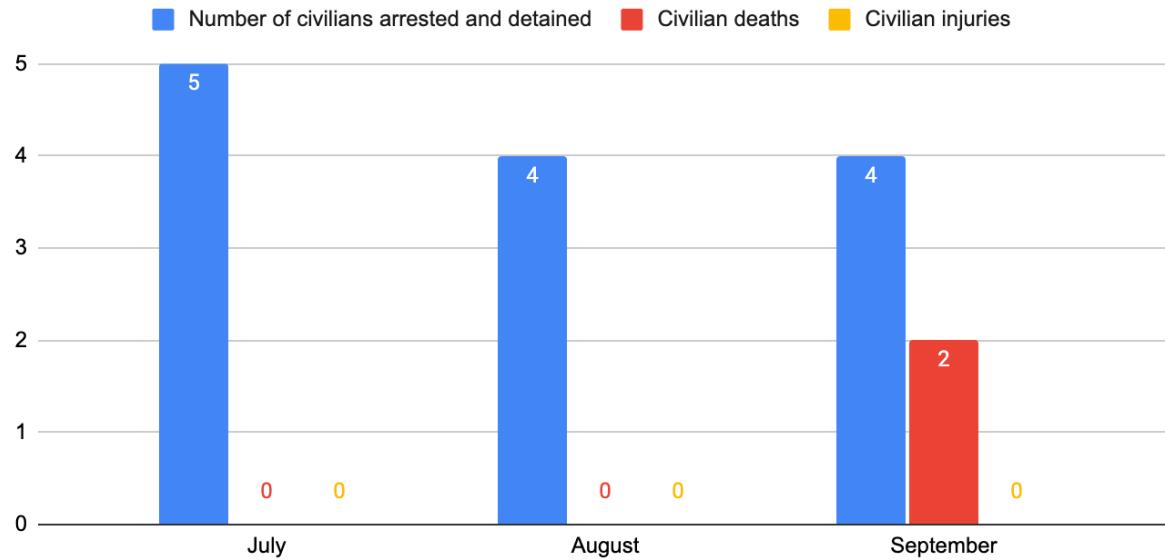
## Graph 2

Number and causes of Karen injuries in 3rd quarter



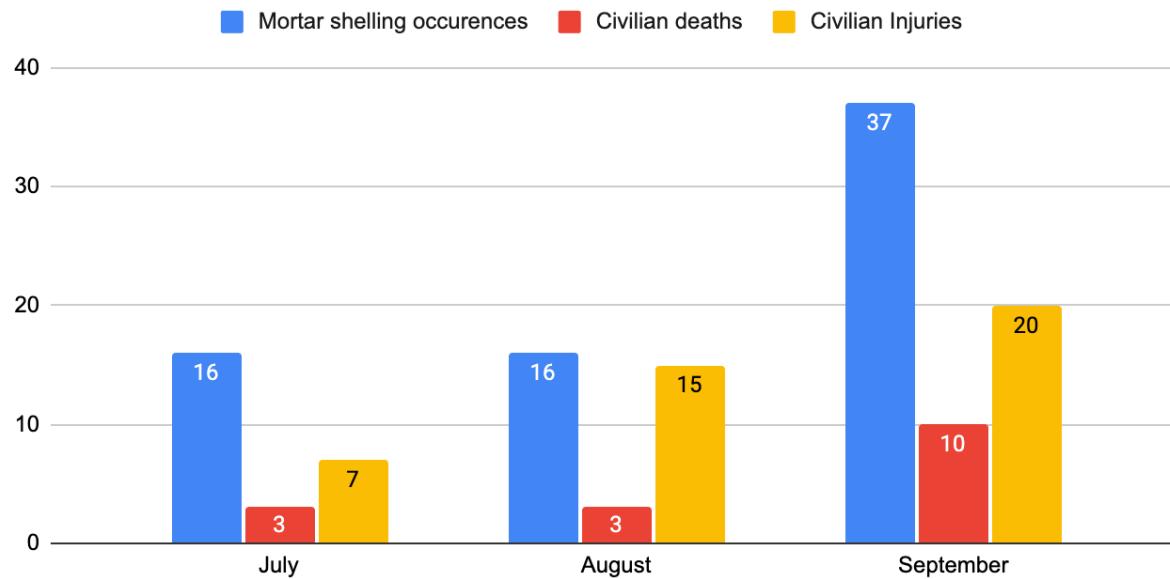
## Graph 3

Arrested and Detained occurrences and impact on civilian death/injuries



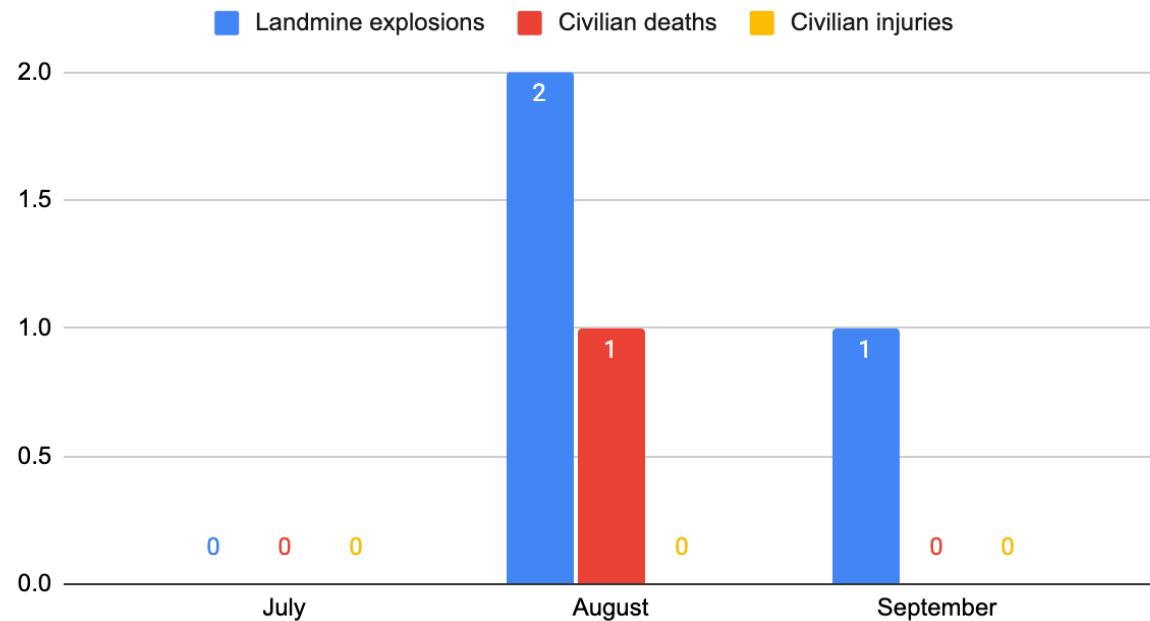
## Graph 4

Mortar shelling occurrences and impact on civilian deaths/injuries



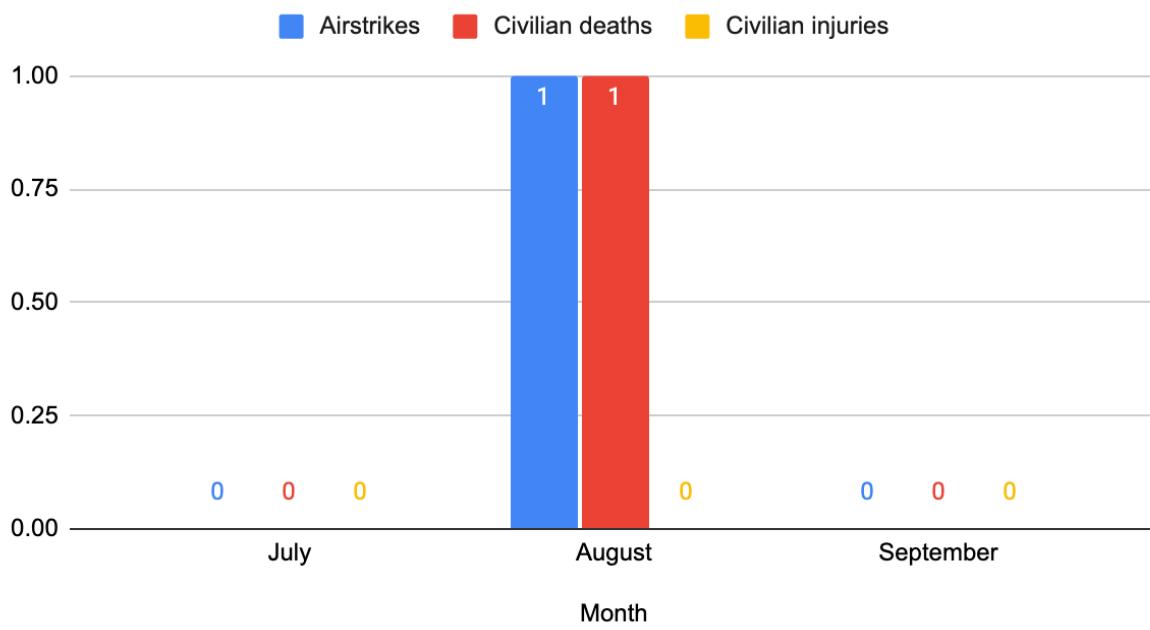
## Graph 5

Landmine explosions and impact on civilian deaths/injuries



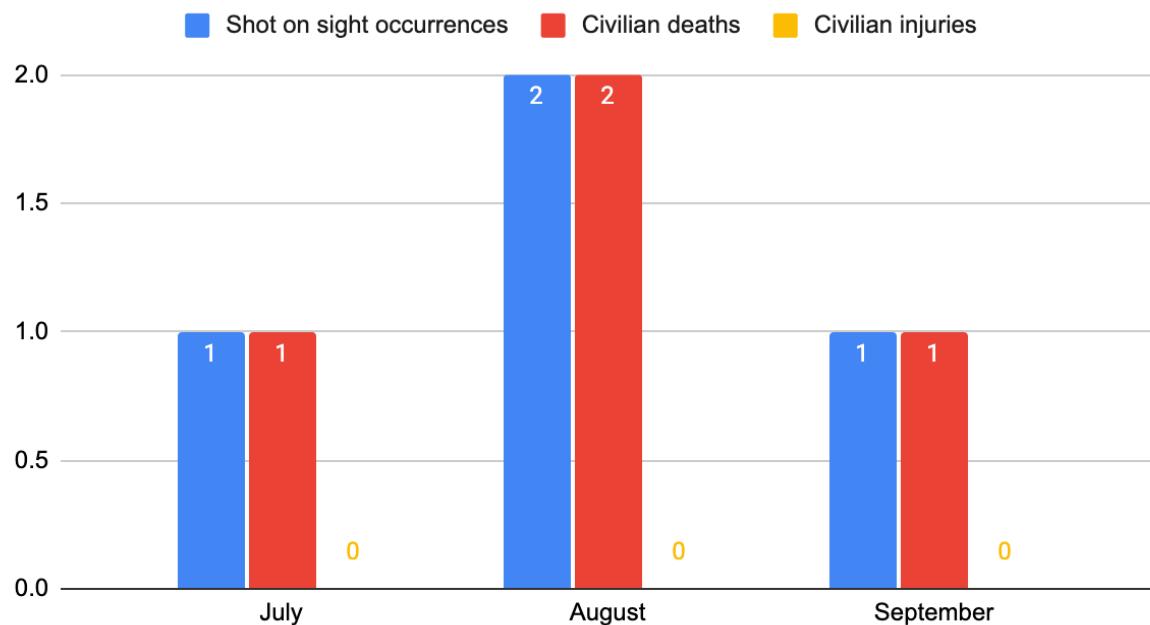
## Graph 6

Airstrikes and impact on civilian deaths/injuries



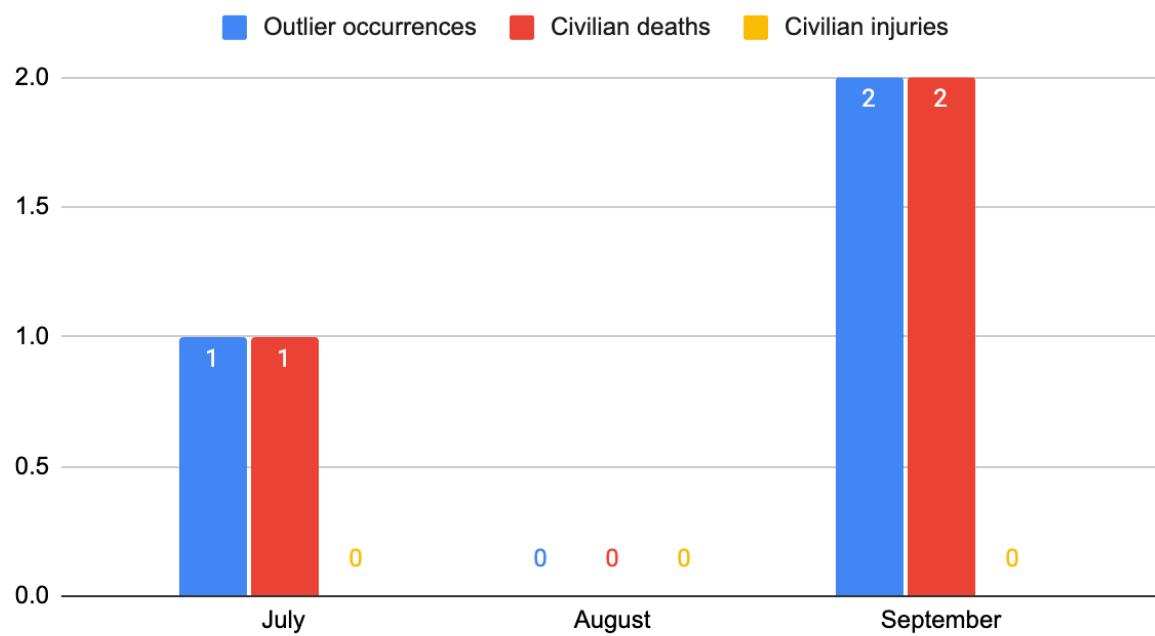
## Graph 7

Shot on sight occurrences and impact on civilian deaths/injuries



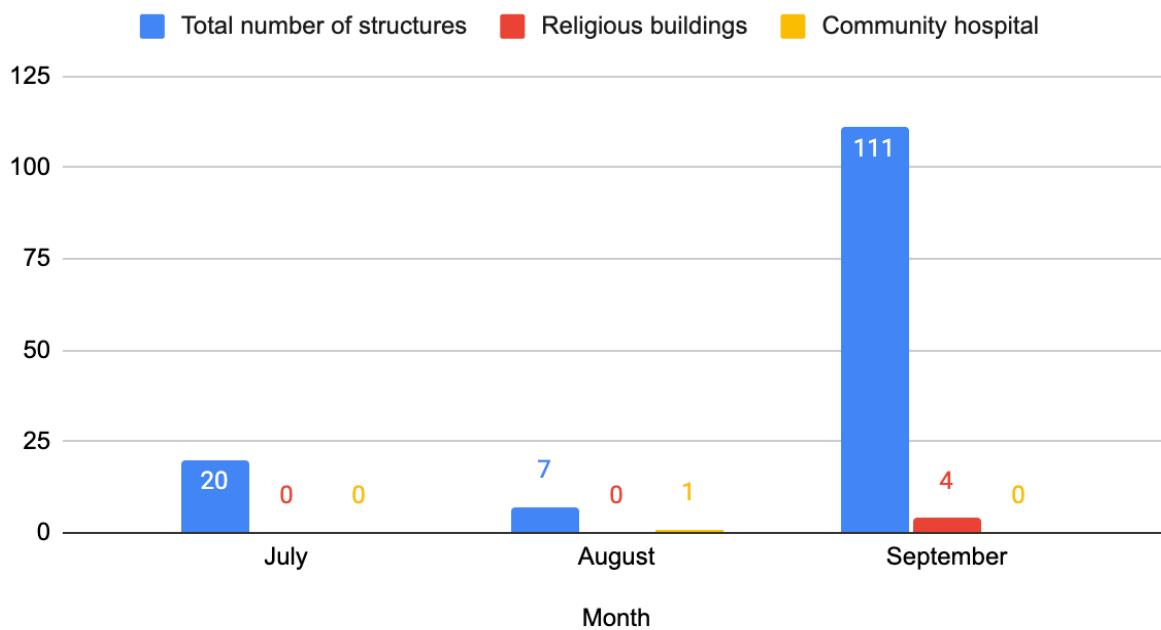
## Graph 8

Outlier civilian deaths/injuries



## Graph 9

Destruction of property in 3rd quarter



## Graph 10

Total number of IDPs per month in 3rd quarter

