



ON-THE-GROUND IN BURMA

A DIGITAL BRIEFER

Issue 21 | October 31, 2022

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

- The International Parliamentary Inquiry committee chair, European Parliament VP Heidi Hautala, and committee members, U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar and Malaysian MP Charles Santiago, [called](#) for the international community to address the humanitarian crisis, implement targeted sanctions, and recognize the NUG.
- The U.S. Dept of Treasury’s OFAC [imposed](#) sanctions on arms dealers providing support to the Burmese junta.
- Despite the Burmese junta’s ongoing violent campaign, [Toyota Motor](#) opened operations near Yangon.
- Malaysia [deported](#) 150 Burmese nationals back to Burma despite calls to cease deportations.
- 457 CSOs [called](#) on ASEAN to cease inviting junta reps to all summits and meetings, as well as revise the mandate of the Special Envoy to Burma.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hold the Junta accountable by taking tangible actions, including, but not limited to: the passage of the BURMA Act, imposing immediate targeted sanctions on Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank;
2. Provide immediate cross-border assistance directly to local civil society organizations;
3. Recognize and engage with the National Unity Government (NUG) as the legitimate government of Burma instead of the illegal military junta;
4. Exert all possible pressure through every available means, including multilateral, regional, and bilateral engagement, to ensure that the military allows humanitarian assistance in impacted areas, immediately stops offensives throughout the country, and unconditionally releases all arbitrarily detained protesters and political prisoners.

ANALYSIS

The Need to Uphold the Principle of Non-Refoulement: A Case Study on Malaysia, Thailand, India, and Bangladesh

Given the extreme levels of persecution in Burma, all countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and India, must uphold the principle of non-refoulement when engaging with refugees and asylum seekers from Burma. Refugee communities require external protection from state persecution and violence, and no state should begin any repatriation or deportation while the Burmese military continues to perpetuate violence. It is important for the international community to address the recent actions taken by states to forcibly return Burmese refugees and asylum seekers, as well as provide humanitarian assistance to these vulnerable populations.

Latest Update



**1.2 Million
Refugees and
Asylum Seekers**



**26% Women
Refugees and Asylum
Seekers**



**47% Children
Refugees and Asylum
Seekers**



**150 Burmese Nationals
Deported from Malaysia**



**1,000+ Refugees
Deported from
Thailand**



**200 Rohingya
Placed in Detention
Centers in India for
Deportation**



**2,000 Rohingya
Arrested in
Bangladesh Upon
Arrival**

“

"People fleeing Myanmar must be allowed access to territory to seek asylum and be protected against refoulement. Myanmar nationals already abroad should not be forced to return when seeking international protection."

*UNHCR Spokesperson Shabia Mantoo on forced return of
Burmese nationals.*

”

Situation in Myanmar

Violence perpetrated by the junta continues to escalate in the year following the coup. Peaceful civilians experience harsher crackdowns in urban and rural areas complemented by an increase in police and military presence in order to quell local protests. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners [estimates](#) there are now over 12,000 political prisoners, with over 2,000 murdered by the junta for simply protesting peacefully to demand their basic human rights. The extreme levels of armed conflict in ethnic states results in the mass destruction and displacement of entire villages and their people.

The UN Refugee Agency [estimates](#) that, since the start of the coup, the number of refugees and asylum seekers increased to 1.2 million people, with 26% being women and 47% being children. These communities fled into other countries to save their lives but unfortunately, not all found safe refuge. In some instances, countries deported those fleeing Burma back into conflict zones, sometimes immediately upon arrival. The military captured some of these individuals when they reached Burma without any further information about their health, safety, or expected release. When deported refugees return and discover their nativeland remains unsafe or their home has been destroyed, some find themselves lost in borderlands, living in concerning conditions without adequate shelter or humanitarian support from both Burma and the country where they sought asylum.

This piece takes a closer look into cases of deportation from Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India to further uncover the particular challenges that refugees from Burma currently face while seeking safety.

Case study: Malaysia

Deportation began as early as the first month of the coup, with over one thousand refugees that fled from Burma to Malaysia being [sent back](#) to

conflict zones after having just arrived on packed trucks and buses. Over 130 human rights groups condemned these actions, causing the Kuala Lumpur High Court to issue an order putting deportation on hold as individual hearings proceeded. Defying this order, immigration still continued to lead refugees to the Malaysian military airbase to board three Burmese junta-owned ships and turn back to Burma. In response, Malaysia's director-general of immigration Khairul Dzaimie Daud said these were all voluntary returns, and that they had not deported asylum seekers, nor UNHCR registered refugees.

However, UNHCR itself has determined that six refugees registered with the agency were part of those deported. Human rights groups have also identified ethnic minorities under extreme persecution in Burma being deported. UNHCR has been unable to further confirm Mr. Daud's statement as access to immigration detention centers for investigation has been prohibited. One year after the coup, news of Malaysia deporting refugees continued to make headlines. In October 2022, 150 civilians seeking refuge, including former navy officers involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement, were [sent back](#). At least one navy officer was detained in Yangon on arrival by junta forces without any further information on his safety and release.

Malaysia plans to deport more nationals even though these processes are contradictory to Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah's [condemnation](#) of human rights violations in Burma. In his speech, he urged ASEAN to increase efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, but Malaysia must participate in these efforts as well. Immigration must prioritize the protection of civilians from human rights violations that will occur upon re-entry into Burma, as evident in the case of the navy officer.

Case study: Thailand

Armed conflict has also caused the displacement of thousands who have found refuge camping along the Burma-Thai border, waiting to cross into Thailand. Unfortunately, they instead found themselves lost in limbo without a home, caught between two countries who both equally and actively resist their settlement. Thailand has continuously deported over one thousand refugees from Burma back to conflict zones since the start of the coup; some individual accounts also shared that Thai authorities reportedly pressure refugees to return to Burma at least once a week. In some instances, refugees were forcefully deported, [packed onto trucks](#), or [onto small boats](#). In October 2022, a group of students were [forced](#) to return back in dangerous rainy conditions along the fast-flowing river in a boat that almost sank, causing those on board to swim to safety, leaving them even more traumatized.

However, due to safety concerns, these refugees have not returned home on arrival in Burma, but have instead chosen to reside in concerning living conditions along the riverbank of the Burma-Thai border. There, refugee communities live in crowded cattle sheds or flimsy tents made of tarpaulin and bamboo, providing no protection from the scorching sun, cold monsoon rains, or mosquitos and other insects that can cause illnesses. Food, water, and medical supplies are scarce and aid is unable to directly reach the hands of refugees due to the restriction of international aid organizations by Thai authorities.

The Thailand Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tanee Sangrat has [stated](#) that these were all voluntary returns that occurred when conflict conditions improved, and other Thai authorities have further justified deportation by [sharing](#) that these communities actually desired to go back out of concern for their leftover property. Refugee accounts contradict these statements, [explaining](#) that they are forced to return as soon as there is

even a brief pause in fighting, even though they have nothing to return to, with their entire village torched and destroyed and their property indefinitely inaccessible under the military regime.

Case study: Bangladesh and India

Bangladesh and India execute their own deportation crackdowns on refugee populations through their recent “[verification drive](#)” processes, arresting those without identification or travel documents for “illegal entry.” This has affected refugees registered with the UN and other human rights organizations, whose documents are now being [doubted and disregarded](#) by local authorities. In India, over 200 individuals have now been [arrested](#) and placed in detention centers to be deported back to Burma.



As part of a “verification” exercise, hundreds of Rohingya refugees with their luggage were summoned and/or detained by the police in India - March, 2021.

Photo: Jaipal Singh/EPA via The Guardian

Additionally, as part of the crackdown on refugee populations in India, refugee accounts [report](#) that local authorities regularly come to camps with a list of household names, asking families to pick 3 to be arrested and deported and 2 to be left behind. Because children need to have maternal support, if a family has multiple children, the mother and children will often accept deportation in order to remain together while the father is left alone. This has only increased the separation of families and the vulnerability that women and child populations face. Furthermore, in some particular [cases](#), authorities have even tricked individuals into

following them by stating they have a list of names that must undergo COVID testing and then imprisoning them once in their authority. All of these processes have heightened the insecurity that Rohingya communities are facing, raising concerns of further human rights violations being committed on a population that has already suffered from genocidal acts.

Fearful of deportation and the poor conditions in these centers, around [2,000](#) refugees have since migrated into Bangladesh attempting to avoid this situation, but have found themselves arrested on arrival by Bangladeshi authorities and pushed back into Indian detention centers. However, these deportation policies present a concerning contradiction as the majority of the individuals facing deportation lack formal documents due to the inaccessibility of their home and property under the military regime. Despite the danger of Rohingya refugees returning home, Bangladesh is also considering [restarting](#) their repatriation processes by working in collaboration with the military regime.

The junta continues to deny the ongoing genocide and has made no real effort to reinstate Rohingya citizenship or provide equitable plans for these communities' resettlement. As a result, repatriated refugees will most likely be coerced into accepting citizenship status as "Bengali" foreigners, erasing their ethnic identities. This will only further legitimize the military's narrative of Rohingya origins and increase the military's ability to enforce tighter restrictions on Rohingya livelihoods.

Principle of non-refoulement

Under international human rights law, the principle of [non-refoulement](#) ensures that all

migrants at all times, irrespective of status, are not returned to a place where they may be tortured, persecuted or receive inhumane treatment. This principle is explicitly stated in the Convention against Torture and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and non-refoulement is widely accepted as a norm of customary international law that all countries are obligated to respect, even if they have not signed the former two conventions.

Given the extreme levels of persecution in Burma, **all** countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and India, must uphold the principle of non-refoulement when engaging with refugees from Burma. As the State Administrative Council continues to attempt to rule, no legislation has passed that promises safety to refugees or provides citizenship for Rohingya refugees. Grave concerns remain for the health and safety of deported individuals upon arrival in Burma, and both Burma and the state that deported the refugees share in the blame for any acts of violence inflicted upon those returned.

Refugee communities require external protection from state persecution and violence, and no state should begin any repatriation or deportation while the Burmese military continues to perpetuate violence. In order for Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, and other countries to be able to support the influx of refugees from Burma, the international community must come together to provide more humanitarian assistance and aid for these vulnerable populations while also holding the Burmese junta accountable for their war crimes and human rights violations.

Refugee Resettlement - One Rohingya's Long Journey to the United States

Refugee resettlement is a valuable tool to support some of the most vulnerable refugees to find a permanent solution to their need for protection. Participation by the United States in refugee resettlement is one facet of refugee support around the world. Recently, the resettlement of refugees to the United States drastically dropped. Last fiscal year, the number of refugee spots approved by Congress for resettlement was 125,000. The United States fell miserably short of this goal, using about 20% of the allocated spots – a shortfall of nearly 100,000 opportunities to support refugees find safety and home. The below story, penned by Maung Maung Tin, explains his experiences as a refugee in Malaysia, the process of entering the United States in fall of 2022, and why resettlement is an important option for refugees who fled the military led violence in Burma.

By Maung Maung Tin (*Mr. Tin chose to write under a nickname. His submission has been slightly edited for clarity)

I am a Rohingya refugee who sought refuge in Malaysia in 2007 due to ongoing persecution by the Military Myanmar. In September of 2022, some 15 years after leaving Burma, I arrived under the refugee resettlement in the United States.

Time in Malaysia and my resettlement process

I was arrested by Malaysian immigration in 2009. I was detained in an immigration detention center for four months. I officially registered with UNHCR Malaysia in 2009. Once recognized as a refugee, I keep sending application letters to the Resettlement Unit of UNHCR to apply for resettlement to a third country as I do not have other durable solutions.

I was first interviewed for resettlement by the Resettlement Unit in 2012. I had my second, third, and fourth interviews on 05 February 2013, 10 March 2014, and 11 June 2019, respectively. Later again USCIS interviewed me on 01 December 2021 and 08 December 2021.

I had my first IOM medical checkup on 13 December 2021 and second IOM medical checkup on 10 January 2022, but after 6 months I was not resettled and my medical is no longer valid to enter the USA. I wrote again to UNHCR Malaysia and the Resettlement Support Centre (RSC) asked me to go for a third medical check up on 28 June 2022.

On 25 & 26 July 2022, I went for Training at Kuala Lumpur for Cultural Orientation Course (COC). The course is designed to provide refugees with specific information and skills required for resettlement in the United States of America. Finally, I resettled to the USA on September 13, 2022, after it was postponed a few times.

As a Rohingya refugee, it was very hard for me to get a resettlement country. It took me 13 years to get a resettlement country. Similar to the Rohingya refugees, it took very long to get resettlement to a third country. In some cases, it took 20 years or more to get resettled.

Some UNHCR staffs were practicing discrimination towards refugees from different ethnic groups and do not treat refugees with respect. Some UNHCR officers were involved with corruption and fired from their job.

Obviously, the resettlement quota for the Rohingya is very small despite our vulnerable situation as stateless and victims of ongoing genocide as well as victims of human trafficking. I have to constantly send application letters to the UNHCR Malaysia by email and mail. I constantly call the UNHCR office to get an update on my application.

For the Rohingya refugees, it is very hard to get resettled. It is also extremely hard to be recognized as a refugee by the UNHCR office. Usually, it takes between 3-6 years to get refugee

status. For some Rohingya asylum seekers it takes more than 6 years to get refugee status. This put the lives of Rohingya asylum seekers at extreme risk without any protection, including deportation to Myanmar.

Some highly vulnerable refugees were not able to get resettlement while less vulnerable refugees got resettled.

What's happening in Burma

There are ongoing genocidal attacks on Rohingya by both the military regime and Arakan Army (AA). On October 23, 2022, AA terrorists killed 12 Rohingya in Buthidaung. Previously, lots of incidents and evidence that AA and Myanmar military shared the same policies to kill the Rohingya villagers. Both the military and AA wanted to expel the Rohingya from Arakan State. They turn the Rohingya village into their war zone. On top of that Rohingya women have been raped by AA while Rohingya educated people have been head shot and kidnapped.

There are ongoing atrocities in Myanmar, especially in Arakan State, Rakhine State, Kachin State, Kayah State, Kayin State, Chin State and Sagaing division.

On October 20, 2022, 122 innocent Rohingya were arrested without reason and directly sent to Yangon Insein prison.

On October 22, 2022, in Inn Din village in Maungdaw Township, the military chief of the city and the Military Council were instructed to seize 718.87 acres of land owned by the Rohingyas in Aung Sipyun Village and Buthidaung Township.

On October 23, 2022, fishermen found a dead body of 27 years old mentally ill Rohingya, Md Sadek, who lived in Maw Thein Nyar IDP camp in Sittwe. His body was found under the bridge in Aung Mingalar village, near artillery unit 354. He went missing on October 21, 2022 and is believed to be killed by Junta.

The Myanmar military agreed for repatriation of Rohingya from Cox's Bazar refugee camps. This must be stopped immediately. Actually, the military intention is not for repatriation, they are just acting for the international community.

Following the Bangladesh-Myanmar repatriation plan, Malaysians started pushing the government to send the Rohingya back to Myanmar.

Malaysia General Election will take place on 19 November 2022. This is very dangerous for the Rohingya refugees and asylum seekers in particular the Rohingya human rights defender Zafar Ahmad Abdul Ghani, President of MERHRM, as this issue can be used as a political issue for Malaysia General Election. All CSOs must monitor this as we are afraid of the massive rise again in xenophobia, hate campaigns, and violence against the refugee etc. There are already bad comments on social media platforms. Zafar Ahmad's safety will be at risk again including refugees particularly the Rohingya.

Comments from Malaysians following the repatriation plan shows that they will give their vote to the political party who is willing to send the Rohingya back to Myanmar.

Malaysia recently deported 150 Myanmar nationals back to Myanmar. They will be prosecuted in Myanmar.



Myanmar nationals bussed in an immigration vehicle to a Malaysian naval base for deportation.

Photo: Mohd Rasfan/AFP via Getty Images

In order to restore democracy, peace, unity, and justice in Myanmar, NUG must recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic group in Myanmar. NUG must recognize the Rohingya officially as indigenous people of Myanmar and declare this. This must be translated into action including appointment of Rohingya Minister in NUG due to long decades of ongoing Genocide against the Rohingya.

The need for continued resettlement from Malaysia

There is urgent need for the US government to increase resettlement for refugees from Malaysia, especially for highly vulnerable refugees and human rights defenders at risk including Zafar Ahmad Abdul Ghani, President of Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organization Malaysia (MERHROM).

With the recent development on the closing of the UNHCR office in Malaysia, we hope the US government will increase the resettlement of refugees, particularly the stateless Rohingya before the closing of the UNHCR office as we do not know if resettlement is possible after the closure of UNHCR office.

We are frustrated to know that the USA government leaves it to Malaysia on a proposal to close the UNHCR office. Many Malaysians supported the closure of UNHCR and asking Malaysia to send refugees back, especially the Rohingya, following false accusations against Zafar Ahmad (MERHROM) resulting in tremendous increase in xenophobia and hate speech against Rohingya refugees.

Human rights defender at risk

Zafar Ahmad Abdul Ghani, President of MERHROM is a highly vulnerable refugee and human rights defender at risk in Malaysia. For the past 30 months Zafar and his family members live under ongoing threats, harassment and insults which are deteriorating their health and well-being. Their access to livelihood was denied due to security reasons. Zafar could not continue his advocacy work in a safe environment as he was confronted by locals in a few incidents when he went out to see his community.

It is very risky to appear in public as he was confronted by locals. Recent feedback from the Rohingya community shows that the Malaysian police still believe Zafar Ahmad is demanding Malaysian citizenship and equal rights for the Rohingya in Malaysia. Some Rohingya refugees inform Zafar that they were questioned by the police about Zafar when they lodged a police

report in regard to their problem. The police asked them “Why has Zafar Ahmad demanded Malaysian citizenship and equal rights for Rohingya here?” This is very dangerous as until now the police believe the accusations, more the public.

Even though Zafar applied for resettlement many times, there is still no decision. On 3 November 2020, UNHCR informed Zafar that he does not meet the criteria for resettlement. Zafar also wrote to the US embassy and US government for resettlement. In 2021 two political officers from the US Embassy Kuala Lumpur visited Zafar and his family at their home as Zafar cannot expose himself in public due to security reasons. However, there is no response from the US Embassy and the US government on his application and appeal.

Zafar’s plight was highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defender, Ms. Mary Lawlor, and Joint Communication was sent to the Malaysian Government which they failed to respond in 60 days.

It is very important for the US government to prioritize Zafar’s case as he had well-founded fear, including the death threats from the human traffickers following his work in combating trafficking in persons. Zafar has worked intensively with the US Embassy and US government on combating human trafficking but there is no intervention by the US government when his life is at risk. Furthermore, Zafar has 2 brothers resettled in the USA.

Both Zafar and his wife are human rights defenders at risk. Both of them work endlessly in combating trafficking in person. If the United States stops resettlement from Malaysia, or the Malaysian government ends UNHCR run programs in Malaysia, defenders like this will be at greater risk.

AN OVERVIEW OF BURMA

CHIN

Two churches and nearly thirty homes were [destroyed](#) by soldiers that were camping along the Falam-Hakha road. Since a convoy of two armored vehicles and over 35 trucks left for Hakha, junta soldiers have decimated the land and set fire to local communities. In Paletwa, a school principal and two other civilians were [detained](#) for having ties to the Arakan Army. Two brothers were [also detained](#) while junta soldiers pretended to be checking for overnight guests. Earlier in the month, the entries and exits of the town were [sealed off](#) by the military council, which grossly inflated the price of basic commodities. In a village near the Chin capital of Hakha, two children [were killed](#) and one was injured by an artillery shell. The origins of the shell are thought to be from a drone. The regime also launched [four additional airstrikes](#) on Chin resistance forces between Thangtlang and Hakha. Since October 19, between Chin and Rakhine State, fighting has led to the additional displacement of [16,000 refugees](#).

KACHIN

On October 2, the junta forces shot two men after they failed to stop their motorbike at a nightly checkpoint near Club Kon intersection. Two days later, the military detained and abused a fifteen-year-old at Lon Khin Bridge. On October 3, the junta [released](#) 12 political prisoners from Mazup Yang Prison in Hpakant Townships. Junta soldiers have been intimidating Hpakant residents for not stopping at the [checkpoint](#) by shooting into the air. On October 4, junta jet fighters shelled the KIA and PDF, forcing 800 locals to take shelter from the airstrikes in Momauk. To starve the KIA, the junta enforced [severe restrictions](#) on food shipments to Chipwi, hurting civilians who cannot bribe junta soldiers to bring more rice. On October 23, the junta dropped [four bombs](#) in Hpakant during a concert celebrating the founding of the Kachin Independence Organization, killing 80 people and injured 100- making it the deadliest air attack since the coup. Regime soldiers blocked the injured from getting treatment in nearby hospitals. The junta denies the bombing, calling the high death toll “rumors.”

KARENNI

Heavy artillery was [fired](#) by the junta near Kone Thar village, killing a 35-year old man and severely injuring his wife and eight-year old son. Since the military's rule, thirteen junta bases have [been abandoned](#) in Karenni state due to resistance forces such as the Karenni army beginning to regain control of the regions. Recent rounds of fighting in Loikaw and Demoso Townships have resulted in the evacuation of at least [ten villages](#), the death of seven junta soldiers, and the injury of another nine. Food insecurity also [worsens](#) as the number of fleeing farmers grows; thus far, Karenni state has seen [170,000](#) people internally displaced.

MON

Since the [defection](#) of 12 junta soldiers, the Burmese military tightened its security in Yebyu Township, Dawei District. Local civilians also shared that junta forces are conducting nightly searches with extreme force as part of the repercussions. The handicraft industry in Mon State has [ceased operations](#) because of raw wood shortages, which has hurt tourism. On October 10, the Mon Peace and Defence Forces turned into a junta militia group, further dividing the state between military supporters and opponents. Two days later, civilians were caught in the [crossfire](#) of a battle between the Karen National Liberation Army and military at Kyaiktiyo Hill. 17 people were injured and hospitalized while three women were killed. The military [shelled](#) Peinne Kon village on October 19. Afterwards, they looted it, burned down six houses, and abducted two villagers. The military [forced](#) Mudon Township farmers to sell their land for far below market value so they could build an airport.

KAREN

On October 4, Thai authorities [repatriated](#) 980 residents from Karen State who fled from fighting into a border town Mae Sot. The residents were from Lay Kay Kaw new city and Mae Htaung Tha Lay, Falu Lay, and Min Letpan villages. Among the repatriated are students, elderly, and sick people. On October 6, the junta [bombed](#) Mae Ka Tha Monastery in Win Yay Township. The monastery burned down, a monk was injured, and several people in the surrounding area had to flee. On October 15 and 16, the Karen National Union [ambushed](#) junta soldiers going to Myawaddy Township twice, killing 6 and capturing 16. Among the 16 soldiers captured, there was a major and two captains. On October 21, the junta [fired mortar shells](#) while fighting for control in Kawkaik, killing three civilians and injuring 17. On October 29, five junta troops [defected](#) and joined the KNLA.

SHAN

An IDP camp in Mongsi village in Kutkai Township that houses 253 people from 41 families since 2012 has struggled after being cut off from donors in June. The children are sick and so malnourished that some [cannot stand up](#). On October 6, two men in motorcycles [attacked](#) a township judge named Yazar Min Soe, killing him after four shots in the border town of Muse. On October 4, the junta [indiscriminately shelled](#) Mangton for two hours while fighting with the KIA and the PDF, destroying homes and causing civilians to flee to Namtu or Lashio. On October 16, junta soldiers [looted and torched homes](#) in Sin Li Kawng Ra, ate livestock, and dumped weed killer into water after battling resistance forces. Artillery and shells have landed in various villages along the road from Namtu to Mangton. In early October, regime soldiers seized 28 acres of land in Taunggyi Township to build a 15-mile [railway](#) line to transport iron ore from Mingyan to Mandalay. This is a joint venture between Russian company Tyazhpromexport and Myanmar Economic Corporation which will negatively impact 20,000 residents from 30 villages and devastate forests and local water sources.

RAKHINE

On October 8, the Burmese junta [stole](#) 700 acres of land from Rohingya refugees, who were forced to flee the country during the 2017 Rohingya genocide. The junta [opened](#) a Chinese-funded \$180 million power plant in Kyaukphyu during the second week of October, showing their ties to China. From October 14 to 16, the junta arrested over 20 people around the state and tortured one villager to death. On October 19, the military [threatened](#) to charge villagers displaced by armed conflict with trespassing if they did not return to their homes. The military likely wants to use the civilians as human shields against the AA. The same day, soldiers in Rathedaung Township randomly shot four artillery shells despite no fighting in the area. One hit a house and [killed](#) a 13-year-old girl. Due to import [restrictions](#) on medicine, pharmacies are facing [drug shortages](#).

CENTRAL BURMA

On October 3, pro-junta forces [killed](#) six NLD supporters in Mandalay's Nyaung U Township. Three of the victims were detained by soldiers and their bodies were dumped the next day with their throats slashed. Two were stabbed repeatedly, and one was found dead after being surrounded by a mob. The same day, five men in Mandalay's Natogyi Township were [found](#) decapitated, and some had their throats slashed. On October 13, resistance forces in Magway Region's Htilin Township [discovered](#) the charred remains of four people in a village that was occupied by the junta. On October 15, the junta [raided](#) two monasteries and two youths were tortured. On October 17, the junta [dumped](#) five bodies of the people they killed. The victims, one female, had their hands tied behind their backs and bullet wounds in their heads. The junta [abducted](#) 46-year-old Saw Moe Tun, a CDM teacher, cut 3 of his fingers off, beheaded him, and hung his head at the school's entrance.