



MYANMAR: Tanintharyi Region

Monthly Situation Update

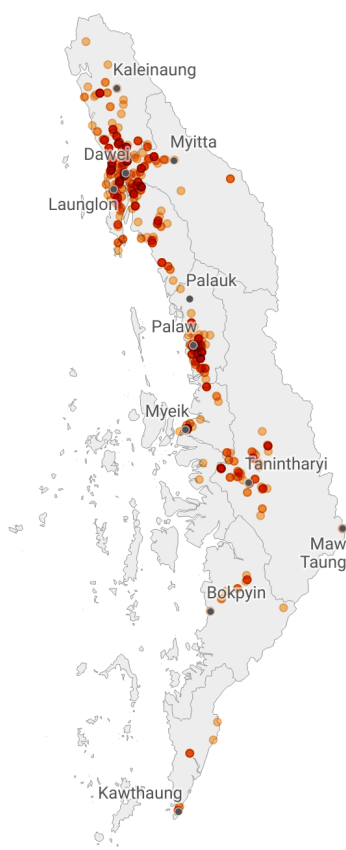
30 November 2022

This regular update, covering non-violent movements, conflict trends, human rights violations, and humanitarian developments up to 30 November is produced by Southern Monitor, a local research group. The next monthly situation update will be issued in December 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY MESSAGES

- In November 2022, a total of 43 armed clashes erupted across all districts in Tanintharyi Region.
- Junta forces deployed across Tanintharyi Region shot and killed civilians in Dawei and Launglon Townships, one of the victims was a 14 years old boy.
- The junta forces fortified search and arrest operations in Dawei and Palaw townships on suspicion of supporting local resistance groups.
- Humanitarian assistance has been largely impeded due to access constraints, and a widespread ban on transport of dry rations and medicines. Displaced populations are in dire need of adequate shelter and warm clothing.
- The junta forces conducted an increasing number of violent household inspections, arrests, arbitrary detentions, as well as increased troop deployments across Dawei and Palaw Townships.

Incident Map: Violent Incidents in Tanintharyi Region



*The incidents include armed clashes, remote violence and attacks targeting to civilians that occurred between February 2021 to November 2022.
Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper*

KEY FIGURES¹

3602

Nonviolent actions mobilized by activist groups between February 2021 and November 2022

771

Violent incidents occurred in the region between February 2021 and November 2022

317

People killed by conflict actors between February 2021 and November 2022

15K

People currently displaced by clashes and insecurity since February 2021

¹ Displacement figures fluctuate during any given month. These figures represent the number of people currently displaced. Cumulative numbers for returns and displacement are not always available.

WHO WE ARE

Southern Monitor is an independent research group that monitors socio-economic, peace, and human rights issues in Tanintharyi Region of Myanmar. This report is based on primary data collection from the field, and secondary data sources which include news from mainstream and local media. We also monitor social media pages of strike committees, student unions, civil society organizations, humanitarian support groups, and local people's defense forces operating in the region. This report is prepared by a technical team, in consultation with local partners and field monitors.

BACKGROUND

Tanintharyi Region is located in Southeastern Myanmar, bounded by Mon State to the north, Thailand to the east and south, and the Andaman Sea to the west. Tanintharyi Region, formerly known as Tenasserim Division, is a long and narrow strip of land along Myanmar's coastline and has a distinct positioning among the regions in Myanmar due to its proximity to the border with Thailand. The region was previously divided into three districts: Dawei (Tavoy), Myeik, and Kawthoung. Dawei and Myeik are the significant economic, political, and social hubs of the region.

According to government statistics, Tanintharyi Region has a population of 1,426,426, with 76% of the population living in rural areas.² The region is sparsely populated given that the land consists of mountainous terrain. Most rural populations live near the coast, or along one of the rivers and tributaries. The fishery sector is a main livelihood of the region, alongside rubber and palm oil plantations, and tourism. Despite the absence of frequent armed clashes in Tanintharyi Region, local populations have endured several decades of displacement, as a result of military operations, land confiscation, and commercial investment projects. Land confiscation and arbitrary taxation allegedly carried out by both the Myanmar military and the KNU were the major drivers of displacement in Tanintharyi Region. Despite the relative stability compared to other regions in Southeastern Myanmar, the large-scale rubber and oil plantations have prevented segments of the local population from residing in their desired locations.

A vast area of Tanintharyi Region is considered as Mergui-Tavoy (Myeik-Dawei) District, under the administration of KNU Brigade 4, although the map of the area endorsed by the KNU does not correspond directly with official government boundaries³. The KNU's territorial control has been historically scattered along areas bordering Thailand. The New Mon State Party (NMSP)'s operational area is limited to the northern parts of the region in Yebyu Township near the official border with Mon State. The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Karen National Defense Organisation (KNDO) are strategically significant, especially after the military coup on February 1, 2021. KNLA and KNDO territories have provided: refuge for political dissidents, a home for the influx of resistance groups, and safe passage for displaced populations.

² The 2019 Inter-censal Survey: The Union Report.

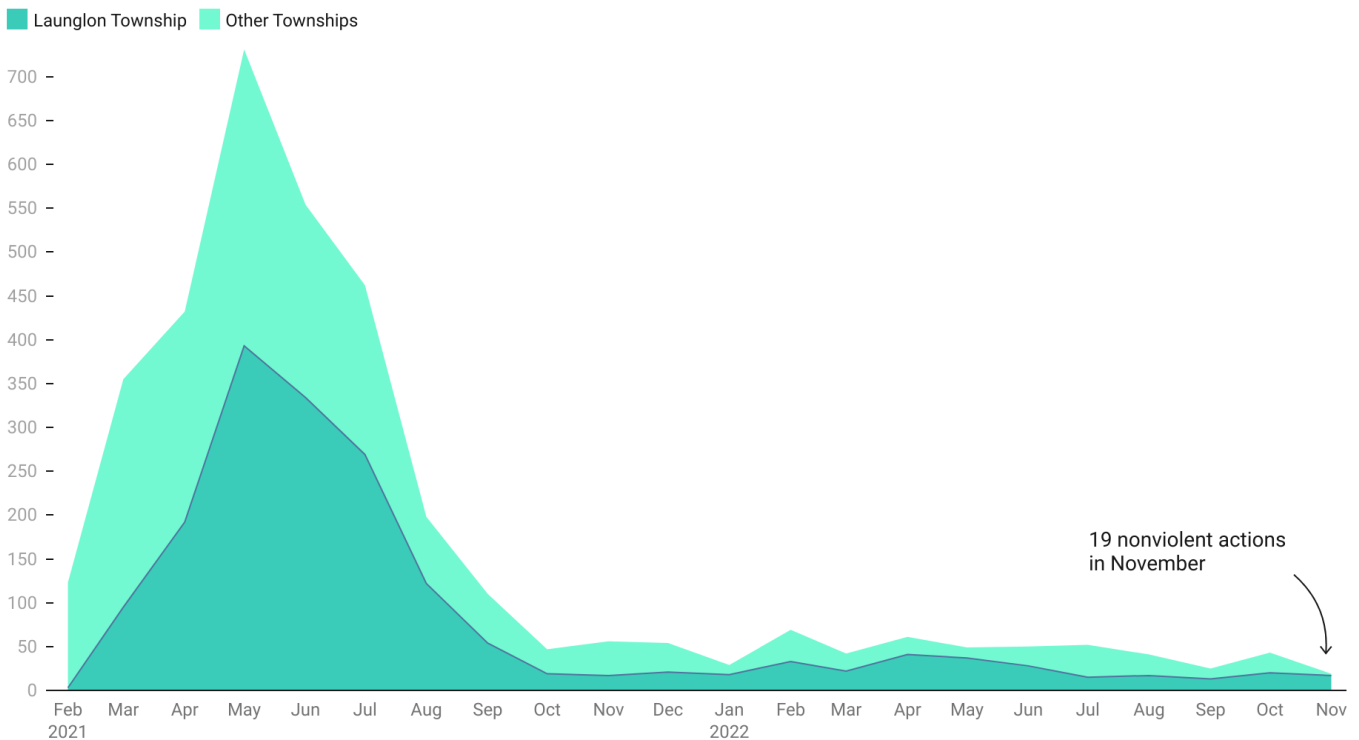
https://www.dop.gov.mm/sites/dop.gov.mm/files/publication_docs/ics_report_eng_7012021.pdf

³ This refers to the official government boundaries recognized by the NLD government. The administrative divisions of Tanintharyi Region (Tenasserim Region) of the state government are made of Dawei District, Myeik District, and Kawthoung District. The State Administration Council designated Bokpyin to be a district after the coup.

NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENTS IN TANINTHARYI REGION

Number of Nonviolent Actions in Tanintharyi Region

(February 2021 to November 2022)



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

Non-violent Movements in November 2022

Despite a considerable drop in the number of non-violent movements in November 2022 compared to the previous month, the non-violent resistance has been sustained to a certain extent. Students remained at the forefront of non-violent resistance in Tanintharyi Region, organizing protests across Launglon and Yebyu Townships in Tanintharyi Region throughout this month, November 2022. In Launglon Township on 3 November 2022, there was a flash protest where members of the Rose-Color Women Movement (Dawei), members of the LGBT community, Basic Education Students' Union (BESU), Democracy Movement Strike Committee Launglon chapter participated.⁴ Particularly, the members of the Rose-Color Women's Movement have been actively involved in many forms of nonviolent resistance. They have tried to ensure the well-being of fellow anti-coup activists and local populations, including providing financial support to the striking civil servants and assistance to internally displaced persons. The majority of the members have evaded from their homes in fear of arrests by the junta regime. Amidst the ongoing crackdown on protesters and members of the local strike committees, the local protesters have sustained the momentum of non-violent movement in Tanintharyi Region. The protesters staged another protest in Launglon town on 7 and 13 November 2022, making their appearances in public spaces such as marketplaces and near school compounds.⁵ On 13 November 2022, women protesters marched in Launglon town, wearing red shirts uniformly and calling for unity of the local populations in the anti-coup movement.⁶

⁴ People's Spring. 3 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/103536671835794/posts/504826981706759>

⁵ Field Monitor. 8 November 2022.

⁶ Myanmar Pressphoto Agency. 13 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8361792440528376>

Protests were also reported on the same day in a rural village in Launglon Township. A night protest was also organized in Launglon township by student activists on 15 November 2022.⁷ On 16 November 2022, Dawei District Strike Committee organized a protest in a core area of Launglon town, which was just 3 minutes drive away from the junta-controlled administrative departments and township-level police station. Protesters managed to successfully stage the protest and disperse the crowd amidst the deployment of junta forces to the area. Despite the significant risk of staging protests in the town center, the protest was specifically organized by the strike committee to boost the morale of the local populations in the anti-coup movement.⁸ Launglon Township continued to be a stronghold of non-violent movement as protests took place at least 3 times in the township in each week of the month November 2022. Protesters also distributed pamphlets and delivered speeches in the public spaces in both urban and rural settings of Launglon Township, in order to call for increased participation of the local populations in the anti-coup movement.⁹

CONFLICT TRENDS

There was a significant increase in the number of armed clashes between local resistance groups (People's Defense Forces)¹⁰ and junta forces, with the majority of clashes reported in Tanintharyi, Palaw, Dawei, Thayatchaung, Yebyu and Bokpyin Townships. The local PDFs, especially those based in Tanintharyi and Palaw Townships of Myeik District in the region attempted to gain greater momentum in the armed resistance movement, through the use of remote violence, ambushes on the junta outposts, and targeted killings. Additionally, assassinations of junta-appointed local administrators and alleged members of pro-regime militias were reported this month of November 2022. During this month, the majority of clashes between the local PDFs and junta forces erupted following the remote violence attacks launched by the local PDFs.

The current conflict trajectory suggested that the locations of armed clashes have been identified to become closer to the urban settings of Tanintharyi Region. In particular, the local PDFs based in Tanintharyi Township of Myeik District had increasingly targeted ambushes and skirmishes against junta troops, junta security checkpoints and the residential house of a junta-appointed local administrator. Such ambushes of local PDFs had also led to the clashes between the local PDFs and the junta forces, the use of heavy artillery by the junta forces, arrests and detention. Even after the clashes, the junta forces fired gunshots and shelling incessantly to the affected villages in Tanintharyi Township. Junta forces continued to fail to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants (civilians), as they fired shots indiscriminately using heavy weaponry at the residential areas of the township and the passenger vehicles. Similar to the conflicts reported in Tanintharyi Township, Palaw Township also saw increasingly intensified and frequent attacks by local PDFs against junta forces in some areas, which were closer to the urban settings in Palaw town.

Apart from recurring ambushes targeted against junta convoys and troops, local PDFs have also increasingly targeted the junta-appointed local administrators, who, to the common knowledge of local sources, were provided ammunition and security by the junta forces. In fact, local sources in Tanintharyi and Palaw Township witnessed the deployments of the junta forces at the compounds of the residential houses of the local administrators or the notorious members of the pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee local chapters. The junta regime's efforts to provide security to their allies have further fueled

⁷ The Tanintharyi Times. 15 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100072232759534/posts/209784074772683>

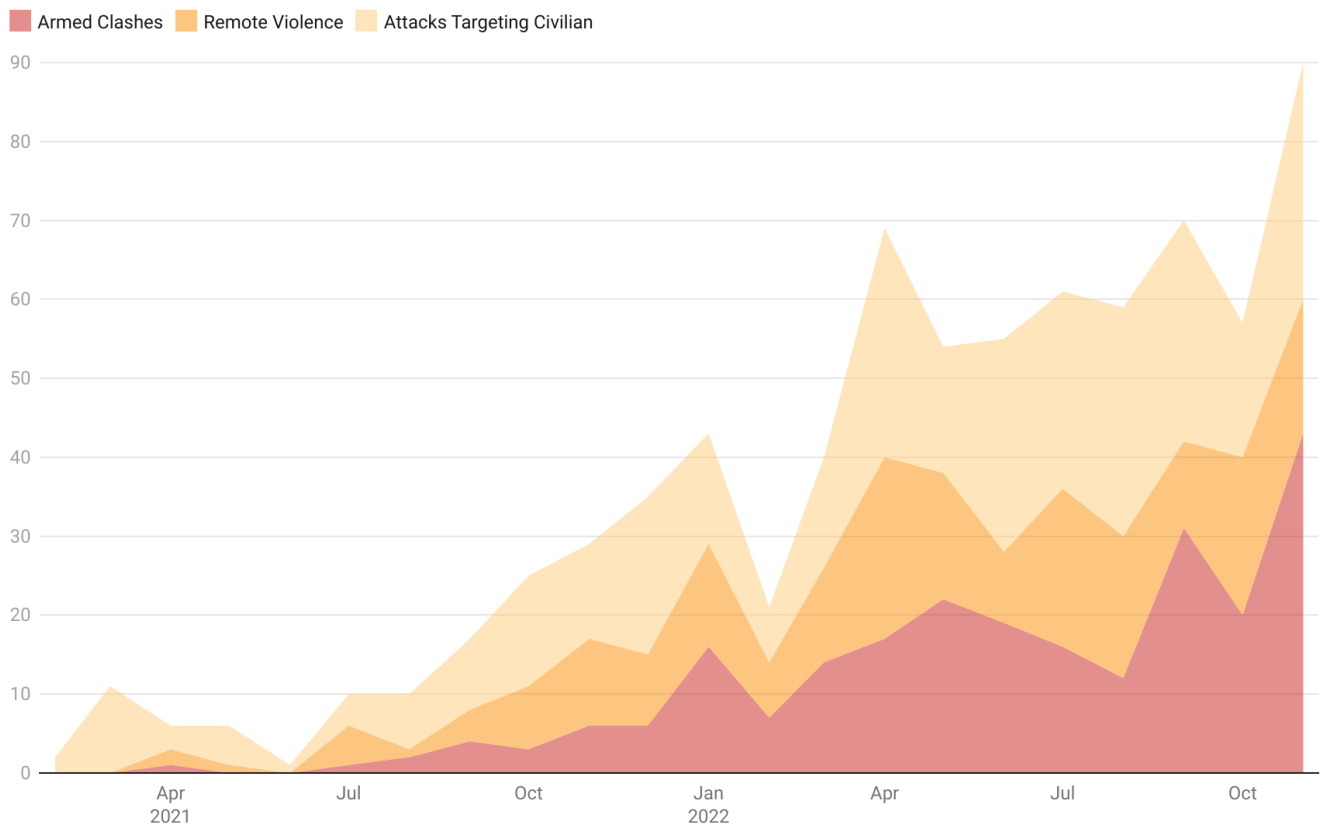
⁸ The Tanintharyi Times. 16 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100072232759534/posts/209994484751642>

⁹ Mizzima-News in Burmese. 20 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6131212813580239>

¹⁰ According to data collected by Southern Monitor, there are more than 35 local people's defense groups, and dozens of anti-coup resistance groups that have emerged in the region. Under the guidance of the National Unity Government (NUG), People's Administrations and People's Defense Forces were established in almost all townships of Tanintharyi Region.

heightened conflict. The local PDFs' attacks began to increasingly target the allies as well. As a result, many local populations fled their homes in fear of potential armed clashes.

Number of Violent Incidents in Tanintharyi Region



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

Junta forces have reduced their reliance on infantry on the ground, to a certain extent. However, that should not be construed as restored stability nor weakened offensives of the junta forces in the area. In fact, that raised concerns among local communities about possible airstrikes by the junta regime. In October and November 2022, junta forces opted for attacks using drones in a few locations in Palaw Township. The current trajectory suggests a pause in junta forces' offensives and a change of strategy to prepare its troops for fortified military operations in the area. Local sources confirmed that junta forces' surveillance aircrafts were frequently witnessed to be hovering in many areas in Dawei, Myeik, and Palaw Townships. They further expressed their concerns that junta forces' indiscriminate aerial bombing would occur in the upcoming months.

Additionally, the increased deployment of the junta forces across Tanintharyi Region have made local populations even more vulnerable to being shot, arrested, and/or fined. Even when there was no apparent breach of travel restrictions within curfew hours or under the "motorbike ban", civilians were exposed to risks of being shot, arrests, detention, confiscation of motorbikes, and fines of both small and large sums. An increased number of security checkpoints and a fortified presence of junta troops were reported in November 2022 particularly in Dawei and Yebyu Townships. There were also additional reports that the junta reinforced manpower during security patrols and operations that involved arbitrary household inspections under the pretext of checking overnight guest registration. Many local PDFs have also issued statements urging the general public to avoid use of some major roads and to stay away from junta forces, convoys, and security patrols.

Armed Clashes

From April 2021 to November 2022, there were a total of 240 clashes reported in Tanintharyi Region. A total of 43 armed clashes erupted in Tanintharyi Region in November 2022, demonstrating a more than two-fold increase from the number of armed clashes reported in October 2022. The clashes were reported in many townships across all districts in the region: Tanintharyi, Palaw, Dawei, Thayetchaung, Yebyu and Bokpyin Townships. The armed clashes led to the death of 3 civilians and 10 injured. There were also additional accounts of the arrests of the civilians and the use of “human shields” by the junta forces during and following the armed clashes.

Major Incidents in November 2022

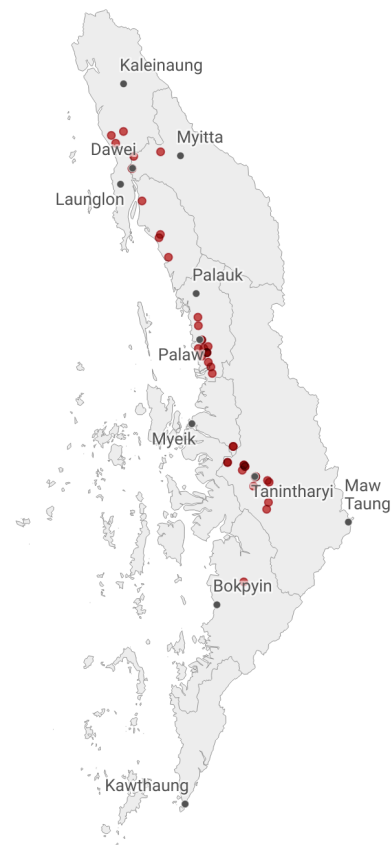
Myeik District

Tanintharyi Township

- An alliance of peoples’ defense force (PDFs) based in Tanintharyi Township ambushed a column of junta soldiers whom they witnessed burning down civilians’ houses in Ban Law Village on 31 October 2022. The junta forces reportedly entered Ban Law village after conducting operations in Baw Di Kan village. Following the ambush, the junta forces stopped setting the house ablaze and the PDFs and junta forces exchanged fire. During the clash, the junta forces used heavy weaponry and shot indiscriminately at the residential areas, causing civilians to sustain injuries.¹¹ In addition, junta forces arrested civilians in Ban Law and Baw Di Kan village and beat civilians severely following the clashes that took place between 19-31 October 2022. A total of 15 houses were damaged, as the junta forces burned down civilians’ houses (in Ban Law village) or the junta forces’ artillery shelling during the time of the clashes.¹²

Incident Map: Armed Clashes in Tanintharyi Region

(November 2022)



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

- A clash between local PDFs and junta forces broke out in Tone Byaw village tract affecting Tone Byaw, Kin Tat and Tone Byaw Gyi villages in Myeik Township on 2 November 2022. The junta forces fired indiscriminately with the use of heavy artillery leading to displacement of local populations from the affected villages. In the early morning of 2 November, local PDFs launched

¹¹ Myanmar Pressphoto Agency. 1 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8303367309704223>

¹² Local source. 3 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8303367309704223>

a skirmish on the junta forces' temporary station and the residential house of junta-appointed local administrator in Tone Byaw village. The administrator was shot and killed by the local PDFs. Junta forces sent troop reinforcements to the village tract and blocked the use of the only highway road connecting the village to Myeik, Tanintharyi and Kawthoung townships. A junta-appointed local administrator of Tone Byaw village was killed during the crossfire between the local PDFs and the junta forces. Due to increased presence of the troops and their counter offensives with the use of heavy weaponry, the local populations in the villages fled their homes to seek shelter in Myeik town. To common knowledge of the local populations, Tone Byaw village hosts some of the members of pro-regime militia Pyu Saw Htee group and other military supporters.¹³

- Additional clashes were reported to have erupted simultaneously in Hton Nwe, Ka De Leik and Baw Di Kan villages in Tanintharyi Township on 14 November 2022. As junta forces used heavy weaponry to counter the attacks of the local PDFs, the clash had intensified and civilians were injured.¹⁴ A clash also broke out between a junta column of 60 soldiers and local PDFs in Maw Tone (east) village in Tanintharyi Township. A junta artillery battalion based in Tanintharyi town launched artillery shelling towards Maw Tone east village, forcing the local populations to flee their homes to safety in nearby plantations and villages which were deemed to be relatively safer at the time of the incident.¹⁵
- Additional reporting stated that members of an alliance of Myeik District People's Defense Force Battalion (2) ambushed the junta column consisting of soldiers from 557th and 558th Light Infantry Battalion on 14 November 2022 in western part of Maw Tone village. An alliance between the Myeik District People's Defense Force Battalion (2) and other local PDFs also launched a skirmish against a junta checkpoint near Baw Di Kan village on the same day.¹⁶ Following the local PDFs' ambush against a junta security patrol, another clash erupted on the night of 14 November 2022, causing at least one civilian death in Tanintharyi Town.¹⁷

Since the areas where the clashes were identified to be in close proximity to urban settings of Tanintharyi Township, local sources expressed rising concerns about the recent deadly clashes and referred to them as "urban clashes". The recent clashes increased the risks of civilians getting shot, their houses damaged and forced to flee their homes¹⁸ due to indiscriminate shooting of the junta forces with the use of heavy weaponry.¹⁹ The telephone lines were cut off on the day.

Another clash between an alliance of Myeik District People's Defence Forces and junta forces erupted in Hton Taw village on 16 November 2022. Following the exchange of fire, junta forces continuously fired heavy artillery towards the village.²⁰

Palaw Township

- Local PDFs²¹ ambush on a junta convoy near Pi Tat village led to a clash between the local PDFs and junta forces on 4 November 2022. Junta forces used heavy artillery to launch a counter offensive against the local PDFs, causing the villagers from Pi Tat and Ma Daung

¹³ Local source. 8 November 2022.

¹⁴ Mizzima-News in Burmese. 14 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6113077022060485>

¹⁵ Myanmar Pressphoto Agency. 14 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8365584936815793>

¹⁶ Dawei Information Center. 15 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/479570274270429>

¹⁷ Dawei Watch 16 November 2022. <http://www.daweiwatch.com/2022/11/16/news/46528/>

¹⁸ Displacement reported in 12 villages including Baw Di Kan, Nyaung Pin Kwin, Auk Kin, Ban La Mut, Pyo Aing

¹⁹ Mizzima-News in Burmese. 15 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6116080881760099>

²⁰ Dawei Watch. 17 November 2022. <http://www.daweiwatch.com/2022/11/17/news/46610/>

²¹ A combined force including a people's defense force column led by Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO), and local PDFs (PPDF, PRDF and others)

village to flee their homes.²² Junta forces reportedly arrested a total of 10 male villagers from Pi Tat village.²³

- A series of clashes occurred on the Myeik-Palaw Road, between local PDFs and junta forces as the local PDFs launched a remote violence attack against the junta convoys. On 7 November 2022, near Min Htein village in Palaw Township, a local PDF attacked a junta convoy of 50 soldiers, leading to an exchange of fire between the members of the local PDF and the junta convoy.²⁴ Due to frequent attacks by the local PDFs, the junta forces restricted the use of the road, causing many passengers to be stranded for more than 24 hours on the road. In addition, a local source stated that junta forces had subsequently used the civilians to be the human shields to prevent themselves from the attacks by the local PDFs and for that reason, the forces commandeered several vehicles on the road or demanded that the passenger vehicles and other trucks driven by the civilians traveled on the road in a particular order that ensured that the junta convoy were protected from attacks. There were also accounts of arbitrary arrests of civilians from Min Htein village.²⁵
- A local PDF ambushed a junta checkpoint of 20 soldiers near Nan Taung village in Palaw Township on 8 November 2022.²⁶ Nan Taung village has seen continued presence of junta forces for several months and the security checks at the checkpoint often lead to arbitrary arrests of civilians in Nan Taung and nearby villages. Similar ambush by the local PDF was launched against junta forces stationed in between Hta Min Ma Sar and Nan Pa Yoke village in Palaw Township on the morning of 9 November 2022. The attacks led to the exchange of fire between the local PDFs and the junta forces.²⁷
- Another clash between a Palaw-based PDF and a combined force of junta soldiers and pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group was reported to have erupted in Za Yat Seik village in Palaw Township on the night of 8 November 2022. The local PDF reportedly conducted security checks at the passengers on the road in the morning the next day and withdrew their forces from the area.²⁸ Additional clashes were reported in Ka De, Set Taw Yar and Thin Gan Taw villages starting on the morning of 8 November 2022. Following the remote violence targeted against the junta forces, the junta forces set ablaze a total of 10 houses in villages (Ta Po, To, Tan Shin, Thin Gan Taw) along Myeik-Palaw road.²⁹ The road was blocked causing several vehicles and passengers to be stranded and subsequently increasing the vulnerability of them to the abuses of junta forces including but not limited to commandeering and being used as human shields. Subsequently, a junta column of 90 soldiers entered Ka De village on 10 November 2022 and fired rounds of artillery shelling before withdrawing their forces. The junta forces continued to station in Hta Min Ma Sar village, as of 11 November 2022.³⁰ Increased presence and the use of heavy weaponry may likely result in a spike in the number of displaced populations from the affected villages in Palaw Township.
- Palaw Township and Pa La town have continued to see an increase in the number of armed clashes in November 2022 as local PDFs strive to garner greater momentum in armed resistance through the use of remote violence and skirmishes against the junta forces stationed

²² Dawei Watch. 4 November 2022. <http://www.daweiwatch.com/2022/11/04/news/45867/>

²³ Myanmar Pressphoto Agency. 5 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8321872261187061>

²⁴ Mizzima News in Burmese. 7 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6092623587439162>

²⁵ Field Monitor. 8 November 2022.

²⁶ DVB TV news. 9 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/191574990881009/posts/6031246463580470>

²⁷ Karen Information Center. 9 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/225522737632555/posts/2096399520544858>

²⁸ Dawei Information Center. 10 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/476157247945065>

²⁹ People's Spring. 10 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/103536671835794/posts/509596804563110>

³⁰ Myanmar Pressphoto Agency. 11 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8351948254846128>

in the township. Due to the high likelihood of attacks by the local PDFs, junta forces had reportedly sent the troops reinforcements through waterways, according to a local source.³¹

Dawei Township

- Dawei Guerilla Revolutionary Force-DGRF released a statement on its social media page that a clash between DGRF members and the junta soldiers erupted following DGRF's ambush on a junta's security checkpoint near Maung Mei Shaung village on 31 October 2022.³² Junta forces' troop reinforcements were also attacked by the local PDF with the use of a remote-detonated explosive device.
- A combined force of local PDFs ambushed a junta column near Wa Kone village on Dawei-Hteekhee road on 19 November 2022 with the use of hand grenades. Before the incident, a junta troop of 80 soldiers were reportedly seen to be traveling to Pa Kar Ri village with military vehicles and fired shots indiscriminately at the houses along the road on the morning of 19 November 2022. Two young men were injured.³³

Thayetchaung Township

- K-PDF used remote-detonated explosive devices to ambush a junta convoy which was reportedly conducting the security patrol along the major Myeik-Dawei Road on 8 November 2022.³⁴ The road is frequently used by the junta forces to transport ammunition, supplies and troop reinforcements to the military bases.

Yebyu Township

- On 2 November 2022, a clash between local PDFs and junta forces erupted in Na Bu Lel area, where the junta regime has been attempting to revive the plan to transform the land into Dawei Special Economic Zone (Dawei SEZ). After the junta regime deployed troop reinforcements on 2 November 2022, its forces and local PDFs exchanged fire near Kha Maung Chaung village in Yebyu Township. Additional troops have been sent into Na Bu Lel area following the clash, causing new displacement in the township.³⁵ The troop reinforcements and security measures have been fortified in the area as a high-level official is expected to visit the area, in relation to rolling out the Dawei SEZ project.
- Launglone People's Defense Force (LLPDF) stated that an alliance of local PDFs³⁶ launched remote violence attacks with the use of a total of 6 remote-detonated explosive devices against the junta forces keeping vigil for a high-level junta official's visit to Yebyu Township's Na Bu Lel area during 2-5 November 2022. Similar attacks were reported in Htein Twin village in Launglon Township and Mu Du village in Yebyu Township.³⁷

³¹ Local source. 10 November 2022.

³² Dawei Guerilla Revolutionary Force (DGRF). 1 November 2022. https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0BM3mykXifPSTij5MqdK5mK16E2DCEpuwbneUn26wywLsFKCF7ii1D6CetZKuCddal&id=100076329110044&mibextid=UUwmYd

³³ Dawei Information Center. 19 November 2022.

³⁴ Dawei Information Center. 8 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/475010298059760>

³⁵ DVB Burmese. 3 November 2022. <http://burmese.dvb.no/archives/562146>

³⁶ Dawei Guerilla Revolution Force (DGRF), Launglone People's Defense Force (LLPDF), Thayetchaung-People's Defense Force (T-PDF)

³⁷ Dawei Information Center. 12 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/477803597780430>

Kawthoung District

Bokpyin Township

- A clash between a local PDF and a junta column broke out in Chaung Mon village in Bokpyin Township on 5 November 2022. The clash erupted after the local PDF attacked the junta column with the use of a remote-detonated explosive device.³⁸

Remote Violence

Local people's defense forces (PDFs) employed the tactic of remote violence to attack at the convoys of junta forces, troop columns, office buildings, and the commercial facilities of the military regime and its associates. During April 2021 to November 2022, there were a total of 207 remote violence incidents, with more than half of the attacks targeted at the junta convoys, police force, and pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee. The remainder of the total number of remote violence incidents involved attacks targeted at the office buildings of the military junta, the telecommunication towers, and showrooms of military-owned Mytel, and prisons. In addition, there were more than 9 incidents in which the residential houses of policemen, local administrators and alleged informants were attacked. There were some accounts of collateral damage involving young children and women due to explosions.

During November 2022, a total of 17 remote violence attacks were reported across Palaw, Yebyu Thayetchaung and Launglon Townships. Palaw Township has the highest number of remote violence reported, with a total of 56 remote violence during April 2021 - November 2022. The remote violence caused the death of 1 civilian (1 woman) and 7 injured. Despite the fact that local PDFs and some news sources stated that the attacks against the junta security forces and pro-regime militias resulted in varying numbers of casualties, it is difficult to independently verify the exact figures.

Junta forces continued attacking the areas in Palaw Township where they suspect to be the bases of the local PDFs with the use of drones equipped with bombs. Additional attacks by the junta forces with the use of drone equipped with multiple bombs were reported in Kyaung Neint village on 31 October 2022. Kyaung Neint village has been targeted by junta forces' drone attacks as the village was known to be one of the footholds of Palaw People's Defense Force (PPDF) and other local PDFs in Palaw Township.³⁹ One civilian's house was damaged due to the attacks. The majority of the local villagers in Kyaung Neint village fled their homes to seek shelter in other towns and villages as there were frequent armed clashes in the village. Notably, junta forces' offensives in Palaw Township involved aerial attacks with the use of drones. Additional reporting stated that junta forces also fired several shots with the use of heavy artillery towards Ka De village despite the fact that there were currently no active clashes in the area.⁴⁰ In addition, on 14 November 2022, junta forces dropped a bomb in an area of Ka De village, where they suspect were the location of the base of local PDFs. The bombs exploded near a school compound in Ka De village. The local PDFs stated that the junta forces had wrongly targeted civilians' area thus the drone attacks led to severe injuries of a female villager and another male villager.⁴¹

³⁸ Mizzima- News in Burmese. 6 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6089454294422758>

³⁹ Myay Latt Athan. 1 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/2206963259620238/posts/3297006607282559>

⁴⁰ Myanmar Pressphoto Agency. 1 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/874334009274294/posts/8304416829599271>

⁴¹ The Tanintharyi Times. 14 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100072232759534/posts/209690891448668>

Major Incidents in November 2022

Palaw Township

- A combined force of local PDFs organized by armed wings Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) used a remote detonated explosive device to set ablaze the office of junta-controlled General Administration Department (GAD) in PaLa town on 2 November 2022. The combined force also fired shots targeting the local fire station to prevent them from extinguishing the fire. Despite the presence of police forces and members of pro-regime militias in the incident area, no clashes were reported between the local PDFs and the junta forces following the attacks.⁴²
- Remote violence attacks launched by local PDFs against junta columns and convoys led to clashes between the groups and junta forces in Palaw Township. A local PDF stated that it ambushed a junta convoy of 3 military vehicles near Min Htein village on 7 November 2022. The junta soldiers continued their journey by different vehicles towards Pa Wut Kone village and were again attacked by the local PDFs with the use of remote-detonated explosive devices. The junta forces fired shots using heavy artillery.⁴³ Similar incident was reported in Set Taw Yar village in Palaw Township on 8 November 2022. Following the remote violence attack by a local PDF, the junta forces fired shots indiscriminately at the residential areas of the village, causing one female villager injured.⁴⁴ A local PDF attacked a junta convoy and a column near Ta Po village on 8 November 2022. The junta forces also burned a total of 3 houses in Ta Po village in Palaw Township on the same day.⁴⁵

Yebyu Township

- As the news about Senior General Min Aung Hlaing's visit to Dawei and Yebyu Township circulated, local PDFs responded by launching several attacks against junta forces mainly using the tactics involving remote violence in the first week of November 2022. On 2 November 2022, an alliance of local PDFs detonated an explosive device to ambush a junta column deployed to keep vigil near Wat Chaung village on the road connecting to Na Bu Le area in Yebyu Township. A convoy of junta troop reinforcements was also attacked with a remote-detonated explosive device on the same day. Similar incident in which a junta force of 16 soldiers was attacked took place on 5 November 2022.⁴⁶

Thayatchaung Township

- A vehicle carrying alleged members of pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group and two female civilians were attacked with the use of a remote-detonated explosive device near Kin Shey village in Thayetchaung Township on 2 November 2022. An alleged member of a local Pyu Saw Htee chapter and a civilian (1 woman) were reportedly killed during the incident.⁴⁷
- On 11 November 2022, an alliance of local PDFs attacked a junta convoy with the use of a remote-detonated explosive device between Ya Nge and Ka Twe village on Myeik-Dawei Road.

⁴² Mizzima-News in Burmese. 3 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6080310202003834>

⁴³ Dawei Information Center. 7 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/474226911471432>

⁴⁴ Dawei Information Center. 8 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/474981158062674>

⁴⁵ DVB Burmese. 9 November 2022. <http://burmese.dvb.no/archives/562912>

⁴⁶ Mizzima-News in Burmese. 13 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6110306792337508>

⁴⁷ The Tanintharyi Times. 4 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100072232759534/posts/207780584973032>

The general public has been repeatedly warned against the use of the road as the local PDF attempts to launch several attacks against the junta forces.⁴⁸

- Two civilians who were used as human shields and reportedly carried in the same vehicles as the junta soldiers were killed during a remote violence incident near Auk Thayetchaung village in Thayetchaung Township on 9 November 2022.⁴⁹
- An explosive device blasted in front of Thayetchaung Myoma Police Station in Thayetchaung town on 15 November 2022, leading to the temporary closure of the road by the junta forces.⁵⁰

Launglon Township

- On 2 November 2022, Yebyu People's Defense Force and other local PDFs launched attacks two times with the use of remote-detonated explosive devices targeted at the junta security forces deployed ahead of Min Aung Hlaing's trip. The troops had reportedly looted properties from civilians' homes and fired shots at a Buddhist monk in Mu Du village.⁵¹
- On 4 November 2022, an explosion was reported to have blasted in Na Khan Taw village in Launglon Township, which is 2 miles away from Dawei town. Na Khan Taw village connects to the villages in western part of Yebyu Township which falls within the bounds of Dawei deep-sea port. According to the junta-controlled state newspaper, on 4 November, the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing convened a meeting with local businessmen and also paid a visit to Na Bu Le area where the deep-sea port and special industries lie in.⁵²
- Local PDFs ambushed a military vehicle carrying 16 junta soldiers near Htein Twin village in Launglong Township on 5 November 2022. Junta soldiers fired shots indiscriminately, causing two civilians to be injured. Junta troop reinforcements were sent to the incident area shortly, raising the concerns of the local populations about clashes erupting in the area.⁵³

Attacks targeting civilians

A total of 30 attacks targeting civilians were recorded in November 2022, resulting in the death of civilians and injured. Some civilian casualties and injuries were the results of targeted killings allegedly committed by a joint force of junta soldiers and pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group. In fact, a father of a member of a local PDF and a 14 years old boy were among the victims of the killings by the junta soldiers in Dawei Township. In addition, a number of attacks targeting civilians were committed by the junta forces which were deployed to fortify security measures during the visit of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to Dawei and Yebyu Township in the first week of November 2022. Local PDFs have also increasingly targeted alleged military informants, members of Pyu Saw Htee network, and junta-appointed local administrators. Local PDFs, in most cases, claimed responsibility for the incidents.

⁴⁸ Mizzima-News in Burmese. 11 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6104193606282160>

⁴⁹ Dawei Information Center. 15 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/479848177575972>

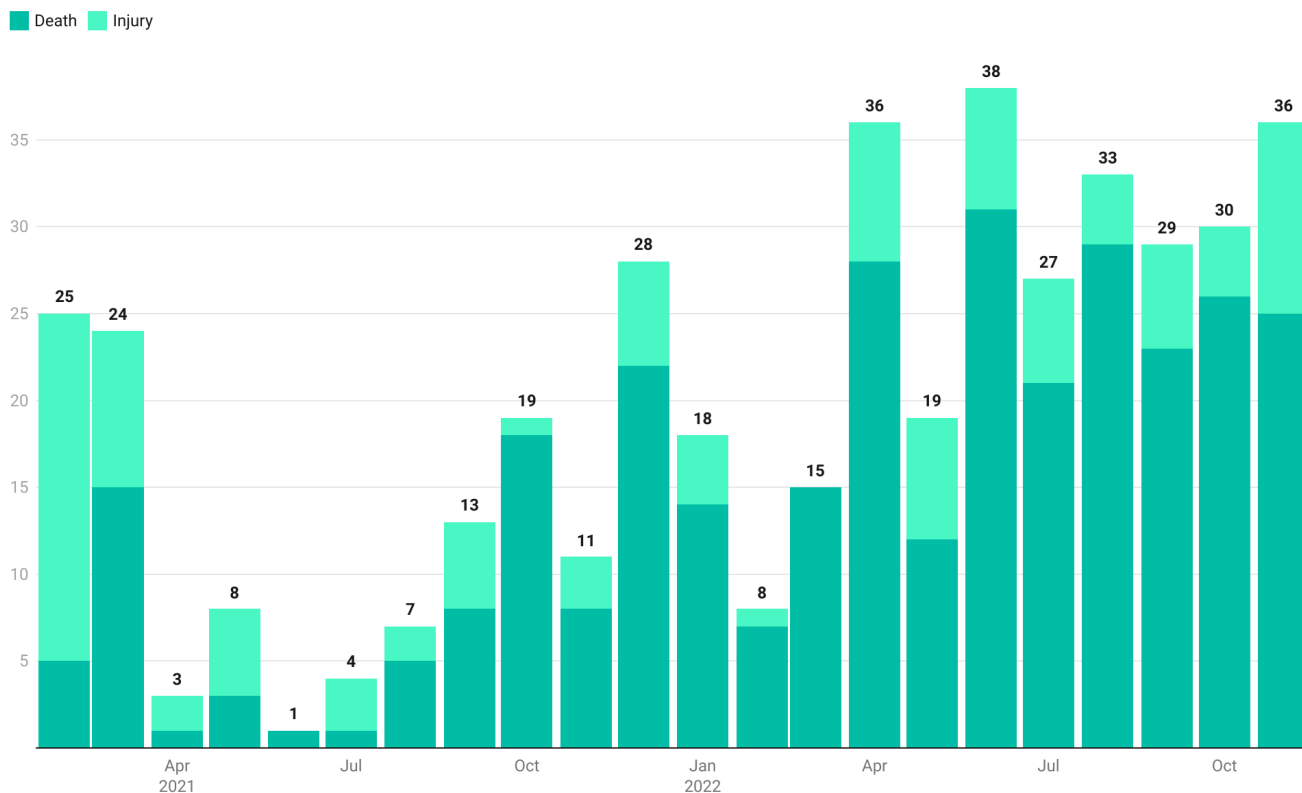
⁵⁰ Dawei Watch. 15 November 2022. <http://www.daweivatch.com/2022/11/16/news/local-news/46507/>

⁵¹ Dawei Information Center. 7 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/474226911471432>

⁵² DVB news. 5 November 2022. <http://burmese.dvb.no/archives/562345>

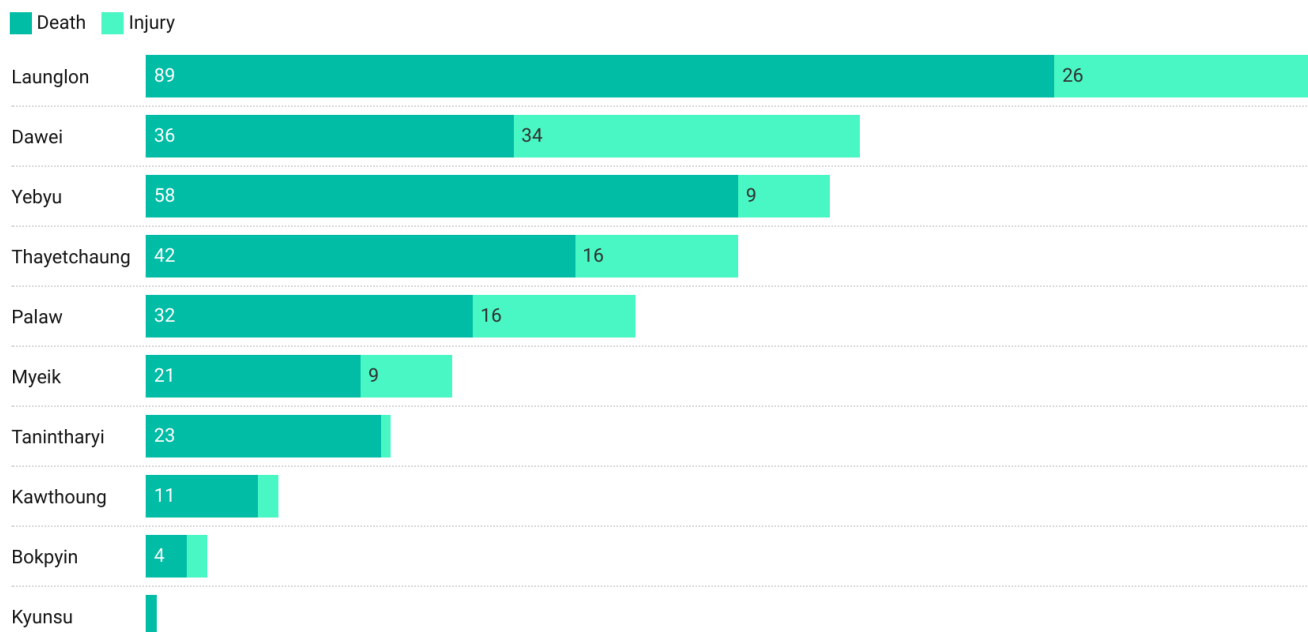
⁵³ Than Lwin Times. 6 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/163055077152350/posts/4270489593075524>

Number of Civilian Casualties in Tanintharyi Region



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

Number of Civilian Casualties in Tanintharyi Region



Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

Number of Civilian Casualties in Tanintharyi Region

Casualty	Township	Men	Women	Girl	Boy	Unknown	Grand Total
Death	Launglon	72	13	2	2		89
	Yebyu	52	5		1		58
	Thayetchaung	38	4				42
	Dawei	30	5		1		36
	Palaw	27	5				32
	Tanintharyi	19	2	2			23
	Myeik	19	2				21
	Kawthoung	11					11
	Bokpyin	2	1		1		4
	Kyunsu	1					1
Death Total		271	37	4	5		317
Injury	Dawei	12	2			20	34
	Launglon	11	13	1	1		26
	Thayetchaung	8	4			4	16
	Palaw	13	3				16
	Yebyu	8	1				9
	Myeik	3				6	9
	Kawthoung	2					2
	Bokpyin	1	1				2
	Tanintharyi	1					1
Injury Total		59	24	1	1	30	115
Grand Total		330	61	5	6	30	432

Source: Southern Monitor • Created with Datawrapper

Major Incidents in November 2022

- Junta forces raided the home of a member of a local resistance group and arrested two men, one of them is the father of the member in Kyet Sar Pyin ward, Dawei on 8 November 2022. On the next day, the dead body of the father was found. The whereabouts of the other man arrested on 8 November 2022 is not yet known. The mother was also shot and killed about 6 months ago. As the junta forces failed to arrest the members of the local PDF, they had specifically targeted the family members of the members of the local PDFs.⁵⁴
- A junta force on ambush patrol fired shots at a passenger vehicle carrying the abbot of a monastery in Mu Du village, Yebyu Township on 5 November 2022. Near a bridge between Mu Du and Htein Gyi village, a total of six gunshots were blatantly fired at the vehicle which hoisted a Buddhist flag and had the name of the monastery clearly written on the vehicle around 5am (after the curfew hours). The abbot sustained injuries in his thigh and was hospitalized at Dawei hospital.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Dawei Information Center. 9 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/475479361346187>

⁵⁵ DVB news. 5 November 2022. <http://burmese.dvb.no/archives/562383>

- A civilian, who was identified to be a staff of a local palm oil company in Bokpyin Township, was also arrested on 5 November and found dead four days later. Local media reported that the junta regime circulated propaganda in which they framed the local PDFs of killing the civilians.
- Junta soldiers fired shots at a 14 years old boy and his 12 years old sister who were riding a motorbike together in Launglon town on 20 November 2022. The boy died from the gunshot wounds. His sister also sustained gunshot injuries on her thigh.⁵⁶ At the same area, junta soldiers also fired shots at two men riding a motorbike. One of them, a 20 years old man, died from gunshot wounds on the spot and the other one was tortured and arrested shortly after. The junta regime's spokesperson told RFA that the victims were shot for refusing to stop and receive security checks.⁵⁷ The local sources stated that there were no junta security checkpoints at the scene of the incident and the shots were fired by junta soldiers in a vehicle passing on the road.

Attacks targeting alleged members of pro-regime militias and military informants

Dawei District

Dawei Township

- A former candidate of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) was shot and killed in Dawei town on 7 November 2022. He ran as a candidate for the USDP in the 2020 General Elections. He was allegedly supporting the members of the pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group in return for the profits he gained from selling off the junta-seized property. No organizations have claimed responsibility for the incident.⁵⁸

Myeik District

Kawthoung Township

- It was reported on 1 November 2022 that a junta-appointed local administrator was shot and killed in a ward in Kha Mauk Gyi, Kawthoung District on 30 October 2022.⁵⁹

Arbitrary Arrests and Detention

To curtail support to the local PDFs and their access to supplies, junta forces have increasingly and directly targeted civilians with violence and draconian restrictions. Arrests and detention remained to be one of the many tactics of the junta regime to crush civilian support as the major resource in the armed resistance. The arrests and detention occurred throughout the region on a daily basis.

There were several accounts of civilians arrested and detained by the junta regime during and following the armed clashes between the junta forces and the local PDFs. More than 20 male villagers and 4 Buddhist monks from To, Pi Tat and Mya Daung villages in Palaw Township were arrested by junta forces during the time the clash erupted in Pi Tat village on 7 November 2022.⁶⁰ Furthermore, more than 70 civilians were arrested to be "human shields" when the junta forces withdrew their forces from

⁵⁶ People's Spring. 20 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/103536671835794/posts/517053403817450>

⁵⁷ RFA Burmese. 21 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/39218993127/posts/10162250393238128>

⁵⁸ Dawei Watch. 7 November 2022. <http://www.daweivatch.com/2022/11/07/news/46028/>

⁵⁹ The Tanintharyi Times. 1 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/6074494662585388>

⁶⁰ The Tanintharyi Times. 7 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100072232759534/posts/208310064920084>

Ah Nyar Hpyar area in Dawei Township. Many of them were released on the same day and at least two of the civilians remained in detention.⁶¹

In addition, across Tanintharyi Region, civilians are continued to be targeted in killings, arrests and detentions by the junta regime for being perceived opponents, on suspicion of having ties to or support to the local PDFs. Two men were arrested during a night raid in Kyet Sar Pyin village in Dawei Township on 8 November 2022. One of them was the father of a member of a local PDF, who was found dead in a ward in Dawei town. The other one was released from detention on 10 November 2022. He sustained multiple injuries due to torture in custody and are currently undergoing medical treatment.⁶² A civilian, who was identified to be a staff of a local palm oil company in Bokpyin Township, was also witnessed by local sources on 5 November and found dead four days later. Local media reported that the junta regime circulated propaganda in which they framed the local PDFs of killing the civilians.⁶³ Furthermore, an abbot and two students were arrested by a large group of junta soldiers in Got Inn village on suspicions of providing support to the local PDFs.⁶⁴ Furthermore, following a remote violence incident in which a house of the junta-appointed local administrator of a ward in Pala Town was attacked on 24 November 2022, junta regime arrested more than 14 local residents during a two-day raid in the town. The detainees were reportedly taken to Myeik prison.⁶⁵

The arrests and detention are not unique to the rural villages in Tanintharyi Region; Dawei town has also continued to see arrests and detention of at least 7 men and 3 women during 1-17 November 2022. A total of 6 civilians (4 men and 2 women) were arrested during junta forces' night household inspections under the pretext of checking overnight guest registration. The remaining were arrested during security checks at the junta checkpoints. There were additional accounts of civilians arrested by the junta regime at the checkpoints for transporting rations to the locales in an attempt to curtail the flow of supplies to the local PDFs. Dawei-based aid workers stated that a senior member of the Dawei District-level Red Cross was arrested on 27 November 2022 and the reason for the arrest has not yet been known. Local sources acknowledged that local aid workers have been often summoned to the junta-controlled administrative offices and demanded to provide detailed accounts of their daily activities and updated personal particulars and contact information. Other draconian restrictions that included "motorbike ban" have also been enforced by the junta regime, leading to fatal gunshots and arrests of at least 3 young men in Dawei town and fines of both small and large sums.

Burning civilian houses

Junta forces burned down more than 15 civilian houses in a total of 5 villages in Palaw and Tanintharyi townships in Tanintharyi Region in the month of November 2022. Southern Monitor's field monitor confirmed that on 7 November 2022, junta forces set ablaze 2 civilian houses in Nyaung Pin Kwin village, where the majority of the local villagers fled their homes a week prior. More than 10 houses in the village have also been damaged due to junta forces' artillery shelling.⁶⁶ Another field monitor based in Palaw township also reported that junta forces burned down at least 10 civilian houses in a total of four villages in Palaw Township, namely Ta Po, To, Tan Shin and Thin Gan Taw villages. Additional number of civilians' houses were burned down by the junta forces in Nan Taung and Pi Tat villages in Palaw Township.⁶⁷ The exact number of the houses burned down remained to be verified. Such crimes had reportedly been committed by the junta forces following the local PDFs' ambush against the junta forces or the exchange of fire between the local PDFs and the junta forces. In previous months of

⁶¹ The Tanintharyi Times. 8 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100072232759534/posts/208531508231273>

⁶² Local Source. 15 November 2022.

⁶³ Dawei Information Center. 12 November 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/100066523820714/posts/477406801153443>

⁶⁴ Dawei Watch. 14 November 2022. <http://www.daweivatch.com/2022/11/14/news/dawei/46398/>

⁶⁵ BBC Burmese. 30 November 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/articles/c99gy7qdp0ro>

⁶⁶ Local source. 8 November 2022.

⁶⁷ Local source. 10 November 2022.

September and October 2022, local populations in the villages affected by the active armed clashes and increased presence of junta troops remained in their houses amidst the fear and insecurity in order to prevent their houses from being burned down from the local forces. However, intensified clashes and junta forces' indiscriminate shooting with the use of heavy artillery forced the local populations to flee their homes for safety. Junta forces continued to station in and near the affected villages, raising concerns among the displaced populations over the likelihood of more houses being burned down.

IMPACTS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

Current Situation of Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

Due to intensified armed clashes and fortified presence of junta troops in November 2022, the figures of displacement in Tanintharyi Region were estimated to be more than 12,000 people. Among the displaced populations, more than 3,000 people are seeking refuge in camp-like settings in Palaw and Thayetchaung Townships.⁶⁸ The remaining IDP populations sought shelter in plantations and their relatives' homes in other villages and towns which are considered (relatively) safer. Numbers of displacement may fluctuate due to uncertain situations and difficulties in accessing precise figures.

Tanintharyi Township of Tanintharyi Region saw a drastic increase in the figures of displacement as armed clashes between the local PDFs and junta forces erupted in several villages in the township.

- In early November 2022, armed clashes between the local PDFs and junta forces were reported in Tanintharyi Township, causing displacement of local populations from a total of 8 villages in the township. Clashes and artillery shelling were reported in many villages including Tone Byaw village, which to the common knowledge of the local sources, have been one of the footholds of the members of pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee and the junta forces. Although the majority of the villagers in the affected villages (including Ban Law, Baw Di Kan, Moke Seik Kwin, Hton Taw, Kywe Htein Kwin) remained in their houses amidst the instability during October 2022, the intensified clashes, heightened offensives by the junta forces along with their increased presence and use of heavy artillery forced the estimated local populations of more than 3,000 local villagers to seek refuge in their relatives' home in other villages, plantation and nearby jungle.

In addition, junta forces burned down the civilian houses in the villages. Since the displacement occurs during the harvest season, the local populations are worried that they would not be able to harvest crops and that will further risk the food security of them and local populations in the coming months.⁶⁹ The displaced populations' needs for adequate food and shelter are looming large. In the current post-monsoon season, local populations are also bearing the brunt of heavy rain and colder climate and are in need of adequate shelter and warm clothing.

At the time of the clashes and during the first and second week of November 2022, nearly all the village populations from the abovementioned villages fled their homes for safety. Given the relative stability and temporary absence of active conflict in most of the villages towards the end of November 2022, some had reportedly returned to their homes and villages to be able to harvest crops and earn incomes for their families. Another reason for the return amidst fear and insecurity was to protect their homes from being burned down by the junta forces.⁷⁰ Although

⁶⁸ FE5 Tanintharyi. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/wj0ivsf2qw0es74/FE5%20Sep%20report.pdf?dl=0>

⁶⁹ Local source. 8 November 2022.

⁷⁰ Local source. 30 November 2022.

many chose to return to their homes, they remained in fear that deployment of junta troops would trigger clashes anytime.

- Due to deployment of 100 junta soldiers and members of pro-regime militia, Pyu Saw Htee group to Lel Thit village, more than 400 households were forcibly displaced. The villagers of Lel Thit had returned to their homes just two months ago and became displaced again this month.
- As of 8 November 2022, due to the increased presence of junta soldiers despite the absence of active armed conflict in Wa Kone village in Dawei Township, more than 500 villagers fled their homes to safer villages or plantation. Due to the concurrence of the heavy rain and armed clashes, the displaced populations are facing a humanitarian crisis. Elderly people and young children are in dire need of medical care, as well as food and shelter.
- More than 2000 internally displaced persons have been in camp-like settings in Palaw Township and they have continuously been denied adequate food and medicines. Due to junta forces' bid to curtail the transport of supplies, the populations have been deprived of the necessary support for the past five months.⁷¹

Socio-economic impacts of the 2021 coup in Tanintharyi Region

As the armed clashes intensified and insecurity heightened more so than ever across Tanintharyi Region, the access to education and healthcare have been deteriorating. Conflict-torn areas were identified to be spreading across Tanintharyi Region as a result of increased junta troop reinforcements and offensives with the use of heavy weaponry. Since the junta forces continued to commit some of the most visceral and obscene acts towards children, children are suffering through horrific situations where the security of them is not guaranteed and their basic rights are being denied. Also, due to forced displacement, children, who are supposed to be in school in those areas, have been kept away from classrooms and also lack access to alternatives to formal schooling. Although the National Unity Government focused on online platforms for learning, more than 20 months since the coup, the zoom classes and downloadable lessons worked only for the students in urban settings with access to electricity, electronic devices and some financial resources. There remained the need for remote-area learning and support to CDM teachers and local civil society networks to implement. There are current challenges to implementing the pathway to integrate children to classrooms; that included inadequate funds and learning resources, as well as difficulties related to displacement site locations: some children live outside camp-like settings and in plantations.

Junta's restrictions on medical supplies have significantly strained access to healthcare services in Tanintharyi Region. Aid workers face severe shortages of medical supplies they urgently need to provide treatment to local populations and internally displaced populations in camp-like settings. Junta forces sought to arrest individuals who they suspect to be providing medical treatment and supplies to the local PDFs. The restrictions on transport and retail of anti-malarial medicines and other medical items used to treat soldiers such as gauze, bandages and anticoagulant drugs have been strictly enforced, leading to inspections of local pharmacies, arrests and confiscations of the bulk of such items.

The forced displacement in the harvest season has prevented the local farmers from harvesting their crops and engaging in any livelihoods in their villages. Many paddy fields were left abandoned amidst the intensified clashes and ongoing instability in the affected villages in the region. Locals expressed concerns that the yields of locally produced rice, which the majority of the local populations choose to

⁷¹ Local source. 30 November 2022.

consume due to relatively cheaper prices, will become much lower this year. That will lead to further food security issues in the region in the upcoming year. In addition, rubber plantation workers are able to commute to rubber plantations and collect latex from rubber trees only within the time allowed by the local authorities, leading to low rubber yield. Tanintharyi Region is currently witnessing labor shortages due to lack of workers for rubber plantations and the migration of workers to neighboring Thailand and other countries.

ANALYSIS

To date, Tanintharyi Region's anti-coup resistance has featured a co-existence of sustained non-violent movements and armed struggle. Despite junta forces' use of ramped up violence to crush any forms of dissent and garner effective control of the region, continuing trends suggest that many townships in Dawei and Myeik District of the region have been the hotbeds for battles and atrocities committed by the junta regime; this has only fueled people's urge to revolt. Students and women have continued to be at the forefront of the anti-coup protests, staging demonstrations and other forms of non-violent movements across the region in November 2022. The presence of established strike committees and women-led movements have enabled Dawei District to be a stronghold for non-violent actions. This status, however, has come at a high price. In the 20 months since the military seized power in Myanmar, Dawei District has specifically been targeted by junta forces' search and arrest operations to stifle the anti-coup movements in the region.

This month, November 2022, saw a drastic increase in both armed clashes and remote violence across Tanintharyi Region. In order to attempt to gain a greater momentum in armed resistance, the local PDFs have increased use of tactics including remote violence and skirmishes on junta outposts and checkpoints. The response by the junta forces, however, have been disproportionate in terms of manpower and the use of heavy weaponry. Incessant artillery shelling towards the villages in the conflict-torn areas were reported even when there was no active conflict. The indiscriminate shooting demonstrated that junta forces had not only caused "collateral damage" but also treated the civilians as their perceived opponents in the battlefield. In addition, dozens of civilians were also arrested and often used as "human shields" during and following the armed clashes, or whenever the junta soldiers felt the need to prevent themselves from attacks of the local PDFs.

Against the backdrop of frequent clashes and general instability in Tanintharyi Region, junta forces' attempts to purport an image of Tanintharyi Region as a stable and prosperous region have become more apparent recently. In this month of November 2022, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing paid a visit to Dawei town and designated areas for a deep-sea port in Yebyu Township of Dawei District and pushed for the revival of the Dawei Special Economic Zone (Dawei SEZ) plan, which the junta-controlled state newspaper mentioned as "beneficial to the State and contributing to the international community". While the prospects for a thriving special economic zone are uncertain, the potential for intensified conflict is looming large in the region. The local resistance groups responded to the visit with intensified attacks with the use of remote-detonated explosive devices and armed clashes occurred throughout the length and breadth of Tanintharyi Region with no signs of abating. Furthermore, the deployment of junta forces to fortify security measures ahead of and during the coup leader's visit also led to an increased number of violent incidents, causing civilian casualties and injuries. If anything, the increased troop reinforcements have only caused the junta regime's attempts to restore regional stability to be in a tailspin.

The junta troops' strong presence, as well as the intensified clashes across the region, have increased displacement of local populations in November 2022. Also, the junta's widespread ban on the transport of relief items across all townships in the region, to curtail all the local PDFs' access to supplies, have

deprived displaced populations of adequate food, medicines and shelter. Since local communities have been on the run for their safety, they were unable to harvest their crops and engage in any livelihood activities to meet their basic needs. As a result, internally displaced communities have faced not only short-term difficulties to secure adequate food, but also strained food security for their host communities. As the weather has become colder, people are currently in need of adequate shelter and warm clothing.

In conclusion, the current conflict trajectory suggests that only urban settings in certain townships such as Myeik and Kawthoung may be only nominally secure enough to conduct polls in the designated constituencies, during the upcoming junta-controlled general elections. Still, the locations of armed clashes were identified to be closer to urban settings across the region in November 2022. This has heightened uncertainty about whether voting can in fact take place in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

State Administrative Council (SAC)

- The State Administrative Council (SAC) must cease attacks on civilians and must also allow unfettered humanitarian access to displaced populations.

National Unity Government (NUG)

- The NUG should ensure that local resistance groups are following its military Code of Conduct (COC).

Local resistance groups (PDFs, Local PDFs, and ethnic armed organizations)

- PDFs and other local resistance groups should refrain from committing human rights abuses, including killing of detainees, and attacks on civilians and civilian property. They must also refrain from targeting schools and medical facilities.

International Community

- The international community should advocate for the removal of the military's restrictions on the flow of trade and freedom of movement. These restrictions affect not only areas where armed clashes occur, but also surrounding areas. As a result, local communities suffer from significantly increased prices of food and essential medicines.

United Nations

- In collaboration with local organizations, humanitarian partners should provide critical life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people in conflict affected villages, despite challenges accessing these areas, and limited funding.
- Humanitarian partners should implement programs facilitating the delivery of cross-border aid to reach displaced populations in the region.
- Humanitarian partners should coordinate with ethnic armed organizations' respective departments to ensure the swift and effective provision of humanitarian assistance.
- International organizations should strengthen the capacity of local community-based organizations and civil society organizations in aid delivery, including data collection and monitoring.

Local Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs)

- Local non-governmental organizations and international organizations should support the implementation of activities regarding mine risk reduction education, as well as first-aid training, and supplies to local communities.
- Local non-governmental organizations and international organizations should support implementation of activities regarding safe migration knowledge and practices to local communities, especially targeting young people.

Local Media

- Local media should be aware of the local context and minimize the impact of rumors and misinformation, to mitigate triggers of violence in the region.

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