

Weekly News Review

Issue 87, January 4 - 10 , 2023

An aerial photograph of a mountainous region. The foreground shows some green and brown foliage. In the middle ground, a valley is visible with a small village and a prominent plume of white smoke rising from it. The background consists of large, forested mountains under a clear sky.

**Military council's
increased airstrikes**

Military council's increased airstrikes

Introduction

On 31 December, 2022, the military council released a statement on the “ceasefire and eternal peace” in the country. The suspension of military operations will be extended from 1 January to 31 December, 2023 except for the acts that could harm the security and administrative mechanism of the country in addition to defending the union and administrative affairs. It is found that fighting has been taking place in Karen State, Kachin State, Chin State, Sagaing Region, Magway Region, Mon State, Tanintharyi, southern Shan State and even Yangon as from January 1, 2023, shortly after the military council's ceasefire announcement. We come to notice the fact that the military council conducts an offensive with heavy reliance on air power.

Our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's weekly news review for this week focuses on the military council's airstrikes.

Air strikes during ten days of 2023

From 31 December, 2022 to 3 January, 2023, fighting took place between the Battalion-16 of the Karen National Union/ Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA) and the military council troops which were stationed in the compound of a monastery in Taungzun village in Winyay Township (Kyarinseikgyi Township) in Dupalaryar District in Karen State. Following the clash, the military council conducted more than 20 airstrikes per day there. Many houses and some religious buildings from Taungzun village were burned down by the airstrikes, the Karen Information Center (KIC) reported.



The military council's 22nd statement on "ceasefire and eternal peace" deceives the entire Myanmar people and international community.



At 11 am on January 4 (Independence Day), the military council dropped bombs on a rubber plantation near Kyarinseikgyi. Two female rubber plantation workers were wounded by shrapnel. On January 4, around ten civilians from Kyarinseikgyi Township were wounded by the military council's airstrikes. More than 4,000 locals from Thanpayar, Taungzun, Winkhana, Anankwain, Khonekhan, Kyaukbalu, Koyaung and Sinpyay villages have

fled to safer places. At 10 am on January 7, the military council's airstrikes wounded a civilian and destroyed a house and a vehicle in Debuno village in Hpapun Township in the Brigade-5-controlled territory of the KNU.

At around 6 pm on January 9, three jet fighters of the military council dropped bombs at least three times in Khamti on Kachin-Sagaing border and Hukaung valley in Tani Township in Brigade-2 and Brigade-9 of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

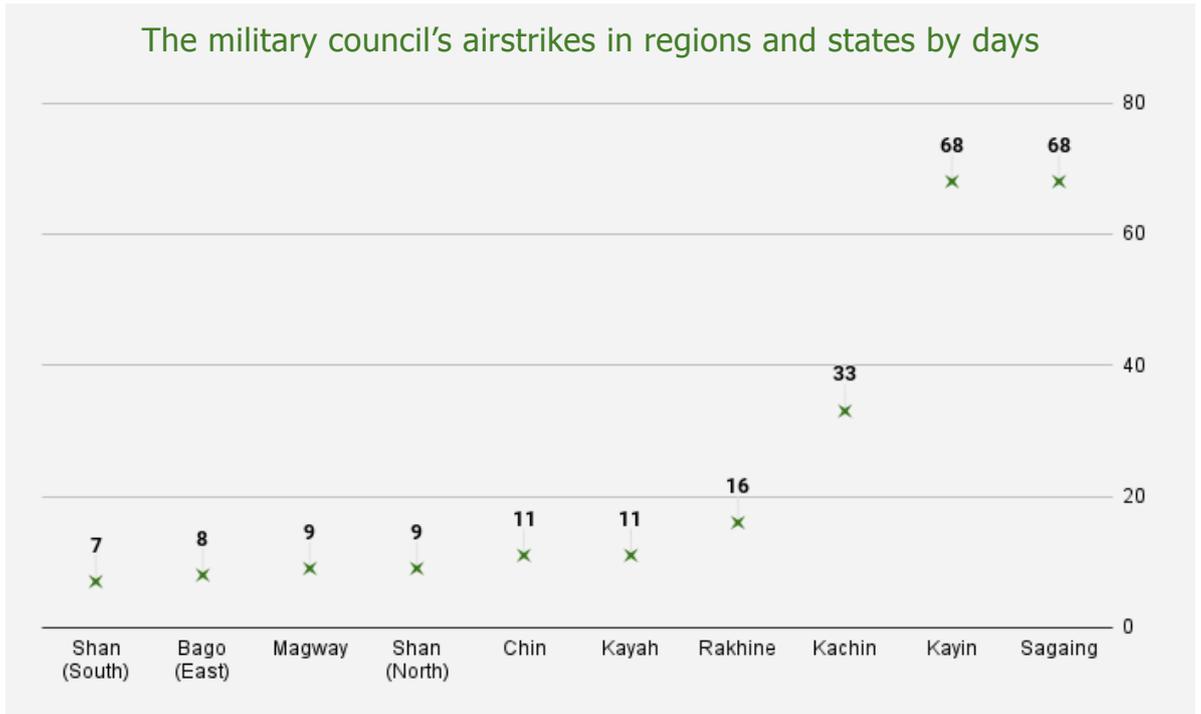
Some staff from the KIO and the KIA were wounded and killed in the attack, according to the Kachin News Group (KNG). At around 4 pm on the same day, one jet fighter dropped bombs on the Battalion-26 of the Brigade-9 under the KIA in Salzin of Hpakant Township three times.

At night on January 10, five members of the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) were killed by the military council's airstrikes on the headquarters of the CNF and the family housing on the India-Myanmar border. Five jet fighters dropped bombs there. On the evening of January 11, two jet fighters of the military council dropped bombs near the CNF headquarters. Bombings burned down some houses and destroyed a medical ward.

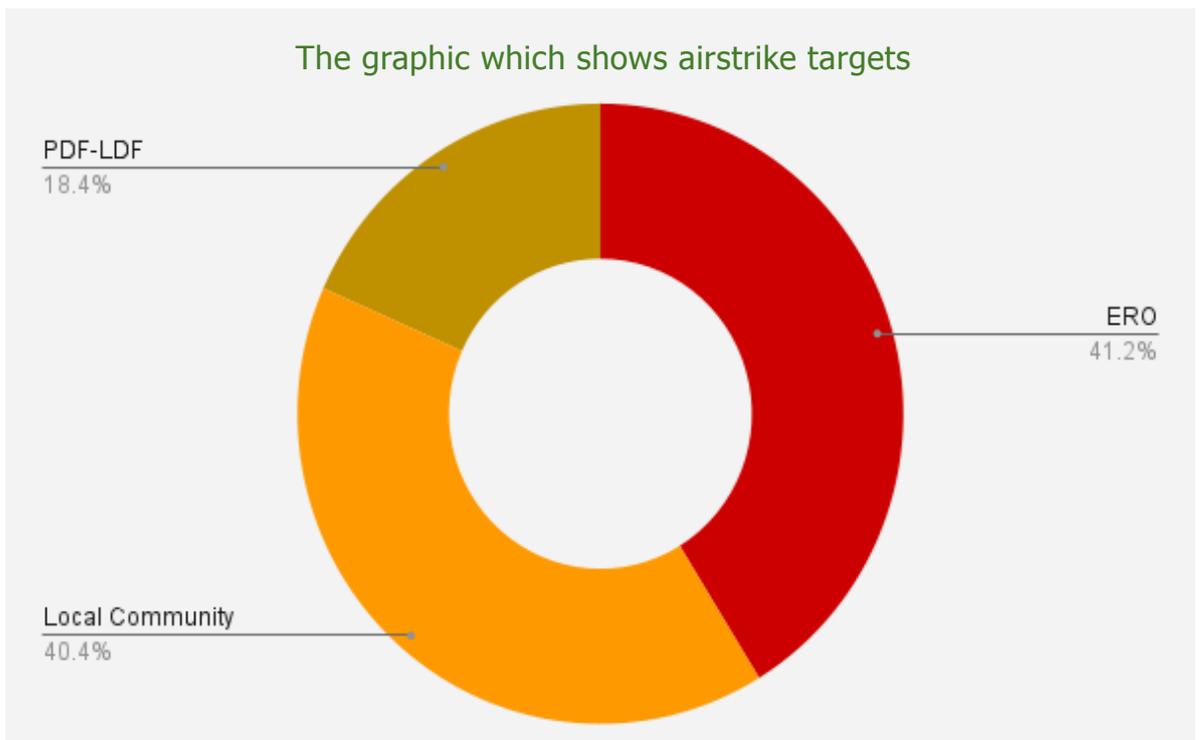
The recent airstrikes have borne witness to the fact that the military council's 22nd statement on "ceasefire and eternal peace" deceives the entire Myanmar people and international community.

Airstrikes figures

According to our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's record, 245 days of airstrikes were recorded from 1 February , 2021 to 10 January, 2023. It can be said that the military council conducted thousands of air strikes. Sagaing Region which has seen strong resistance during the Spring Revolution and Karen State where the KNU-controlled territories are located experienced airstrikes most.

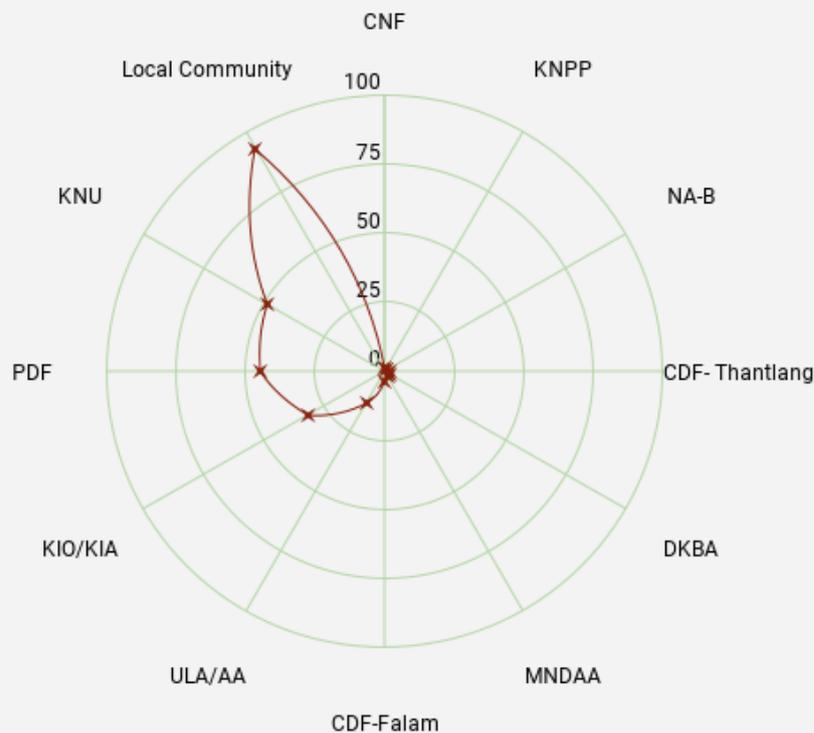


It is found that the military council's airstrikes have mostly targeted the EROs-controlled territories. Then, the second target is the villages where the civilians are living. The third target is the PDFs and the LDFs.



The KNU/KNLA topped the list of the EROs which experienced the military council's airstrikes during the coup period, with 49 days, followed by the KIO/KIA with 32 days. The Arakan Army (AA) which has made a temporary ceasefire with the military council, at the end of 2022, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA)-Kokang, the Northern Alliance-Burma (NA)-B, the Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army (KNPP/KA), the CNF/CNA and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) also faced the military council's airstrikes.

The military council's targeted airstrikes on local communities, EROs, PDFs and LDFs.



Taking a look at the military council's airstrikes by year and month, the military council conducted air strikes most in May and December, 2021. November, 2022 topped the list of airstrikes, followed by January and February.



Since March, 2021, the military council has started its airstrikes. In 2022, the military council conducted airstrikes every month. During the first ten days of 2023, the military council conducted 11 airstrikes.

Review

The military council is attempting to polish the landscape of the for-show peace talk through the declaration of one-year ceasefire for 2023. However, it can be said that the military council's plan did not work as it lost the trust of the EROs which are participating in the Spring Revolution. So, it is questionable whether the military council is putting pressure for a for-show peace with the heavy reliance on airstrikes.

The stamina of the Spring Revolution forces which are walking on the pathway to root out the dictators including the military dictatorship and to build the federal democratic union is said to be getting stronger. The collective unity and the balancing act of the Spring Revolution forces including the EROs which are making resistance by taking up arms can enfeeble the



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military council a lot. However, we need to be aware of the danger of air power which is the last resort of the military council.

It is reviewed that the military council's increased airstrikes which started in the early 2023 may have a certain impact on the determinant of the Spring Revolution.

So, the international community which is supporting and encouraging the Spring Revolution is required to take account of it. Likewise, the forces of the Spring Revolution are required to seek the solution to the military council's increased airstrikes.

Part II

What Happened this Week

According to the BNI - Myanmar Peace Monitor's record, there were 27 days of clashes between the military council troops, the People's Defense Forces (PDFs) and the Local Defense Forces (LDFs) and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) from January 4 to 10. Sagaing Region topped the list of clashes in regions and states, with 12 days. The number of clashes may be higher than that as the clashes in townships are recorded by days.

27 Days

No. of Days of Clashes

Sagaing **12**

Tanintharyi **4**

Kayin **3**

Mon **2**

Shan **2**

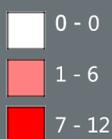
Chin **1**

Kachin **1**

Magway **1**

Yangon **1**

No. of Days of Clashes

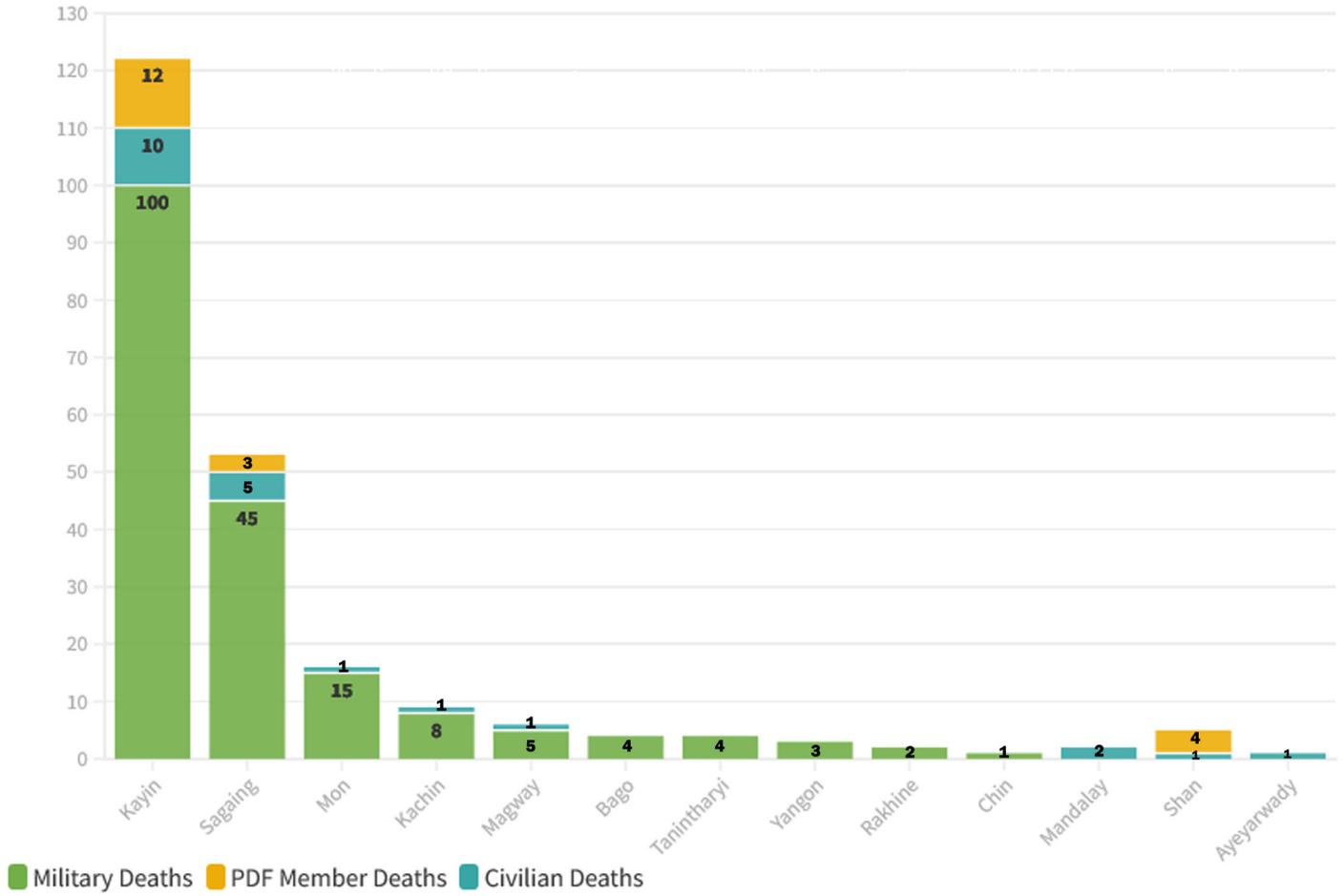


Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths
4 - 10 January, 2023

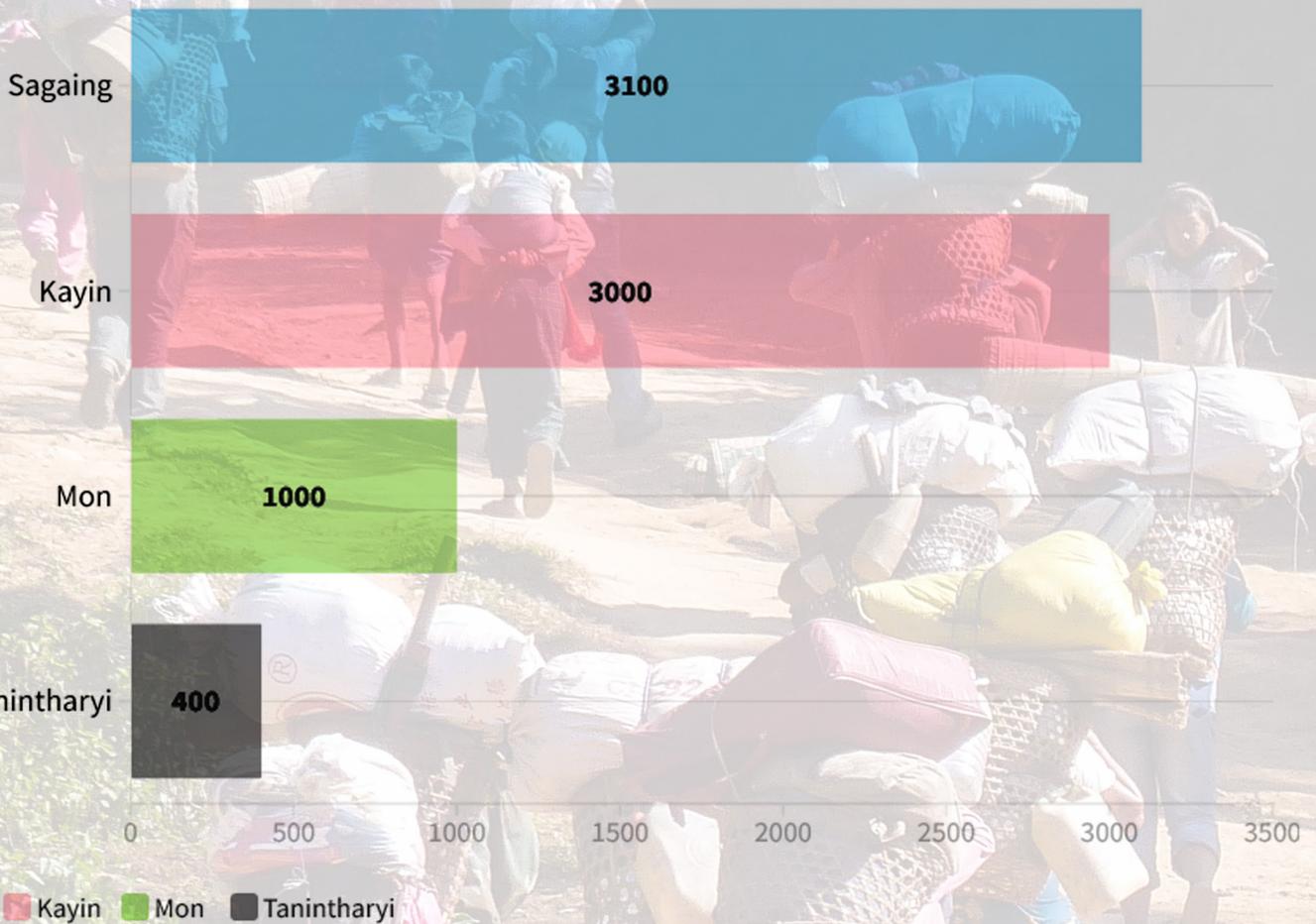
187
Military Deaths

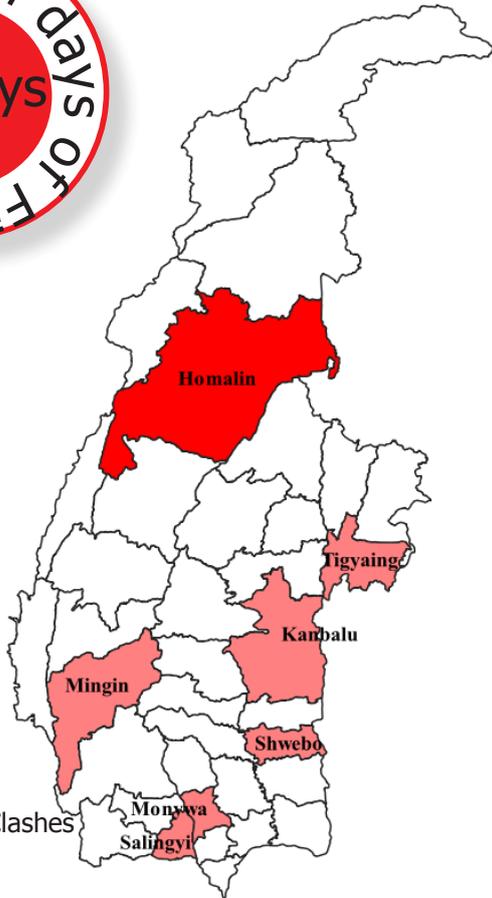
19
PDF Member Deaths

22
Civilian Deaths



7,500 Total Number of IDPs (4 - 10 January, 2023)





No. of Days of Clashes

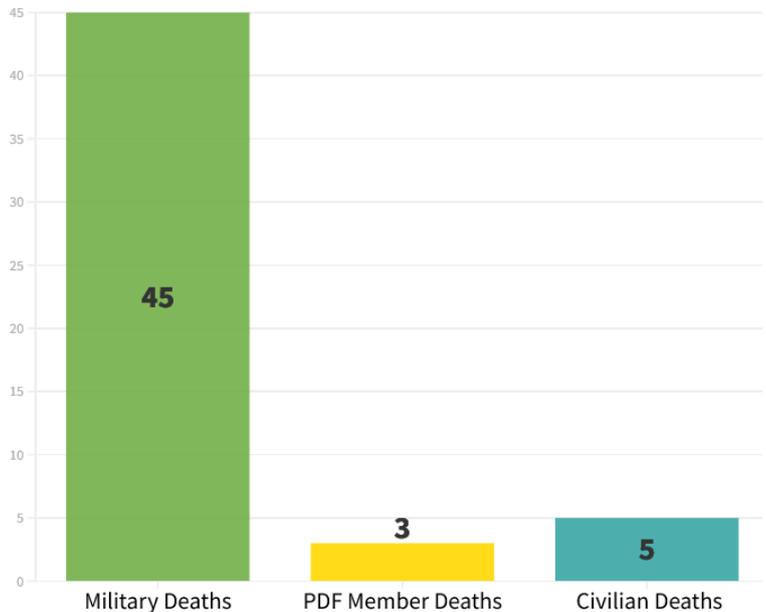
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- 3 - 4

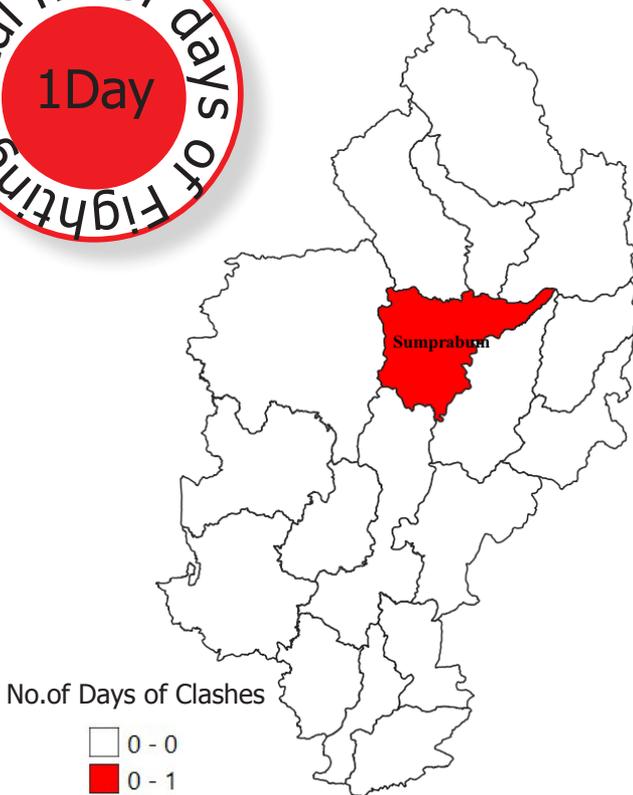
Sagaing Region

Military council troops and members of the Pyu Saw Htee militia who entered Tapayinkwe village in Sagaing Township assassinated Sayadaw Gandatharya, a member of the Sitagu Nayaka Committee who was on a brief visit to the village. The regime soldiers fired small and heavy weapons at the village. They entered Shwegugyi Monastery and shot the monk who was hiding in the building. They also shot one of the women who was hiding in the monastery. In addition, the military council soldiers also killed Yebaw Hpoe Tote from Battalion 8 of Sagaing District and a local resident named Ko Myo Tun.

On January 7, two female PDF members were killed when they carried out a suicide bombing as regime troops attempted to stop and check the improvised mines they were transporting on Kawlin-Okekan Road in Okekan Township. The two female soldiers who carried out the suicide bombing on the military council soldiers are Ma Su Su Yi and Ma Hninsi Hlaing, both of whom died in the incident.

Twenty-four military council soldiers and one PDF member were killed in the fighting between the military council troops and the PDFs in Minkin, Shwebo, Salingyi, Kanbalu, Monywa, Htigyaing and Homalin Townships. Twenty-one military council soldiers were killed in ambush attacks in Indaw, Myinmu and Kalay Townships. Two female PDF members were killed as they intentionally detonated explosives following their encounter with the military council soldiers on Kawlin-Okkan Road in Kawlin Township while carrying hand-made mines. Five civilians from Sagaing and Htigyaing Townships were killed by the military council's shootings. More than 3,100 locals fled to safer places due to the military council's ground offensive and arson in Salingyi and Kyunhla Townships.



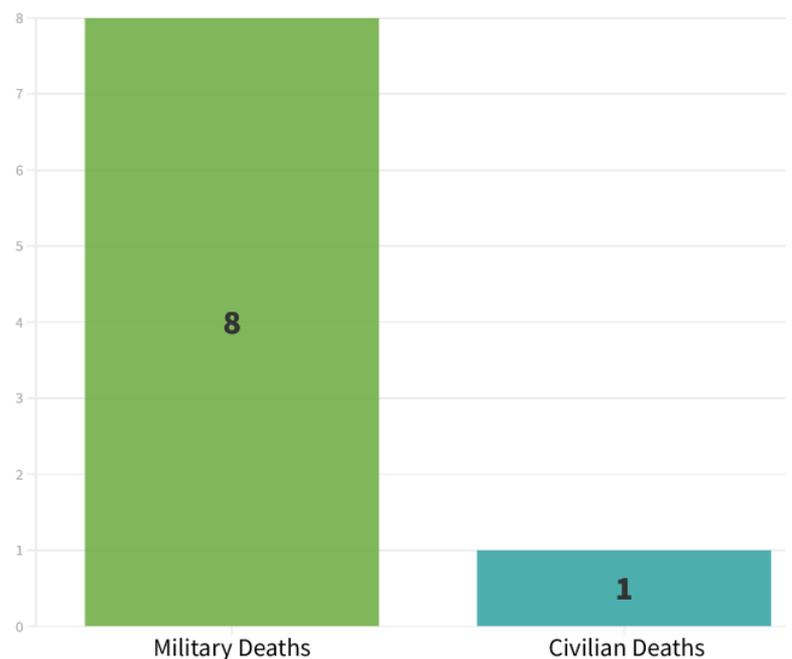


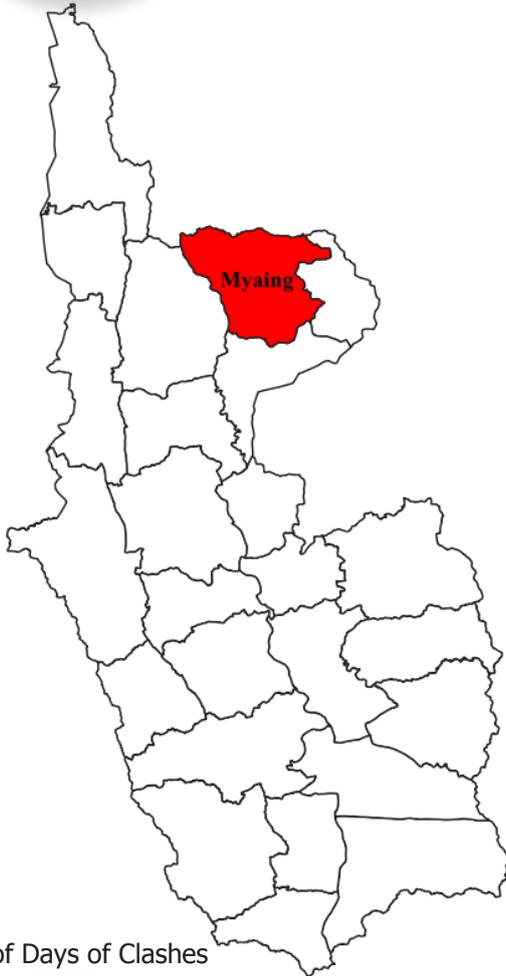
Kachin State

About 2,000 internally displaced people from Sezin area in Hpakan Township are in need of urgent medical supplies. The people were displaced from villages in Hpakan Township after their homes were burned down by Myanmar military air strikes. They are currently suffering from seasonal flu, malaria, diarrhea, runny nose, cough and asthma and are in need of medication.

On January 10, one child was killed and two others wounded when an artillery shell exploded in Wuyang village, Waingmaw Township. The shell was a remnant of last year's armed clashes between military council troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and exploded when the children found it and played with it.

On January 6, seven military council soldiers were killed in the clash between the military council troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) near Maswanzwat Mountain in Swanparabwan Township. In addition, a combined force of the KIA and the PDF attacked the General Administration Office in Hmawwan ward in Hpakan Township with eight 40-mm launchers. One police member was killed in the attack. On January 10, a child who was playing with an unexploded heavy shell was killed in a blast in Wuyan village in Waingmaw Township.





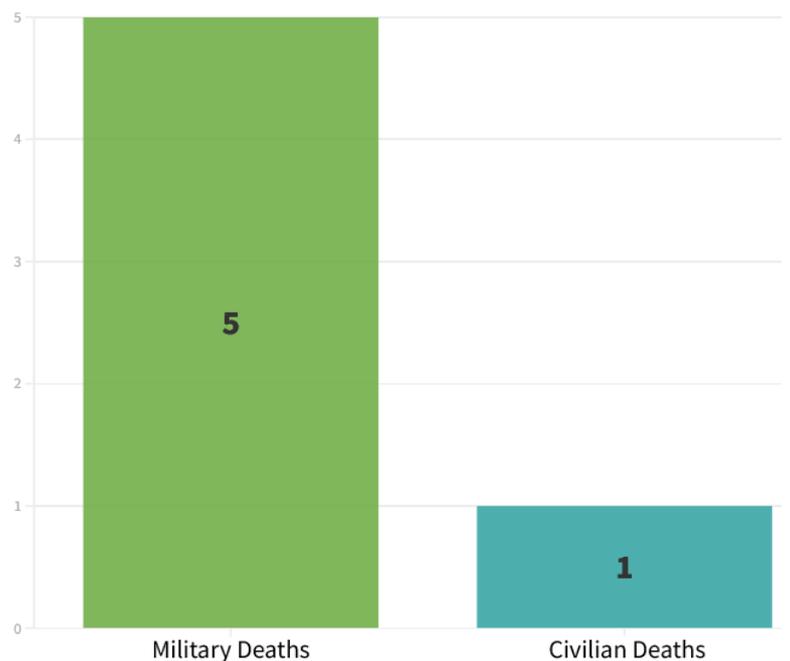
No. of Days of Clashes
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Magway Region

Military council troops entered the village of Shadaw in Pwintbyu Township and arrested two NLD party MPs and ten of their family members on January 8. One of the MPs died from beatings during interrogation. Those arrested are the family of U Tun, the family of Minbu Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Win Win, who had fled to Pwintbyu Township for security reasons.

On January 9, regime soldiers abducted two civilians named Ko Myo Ko Oo, also known as Hmine Wai, and Ko Aung Naing from Htalin village in Htilin Township and accused them of being PDF members and took them to Htilin Myoma Police Station for interrogation. Military council soldiers in the township allegedly arrested residents either as human shields or as PDF members.

On January 6, five military council soldiers were killed in a clash between the military council troops and the PDF in Myaing Township. On January 8, the military council abducted ten people including the MPs of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and their family members in Pwintbyu Township. One detainee died at the interrogation center.

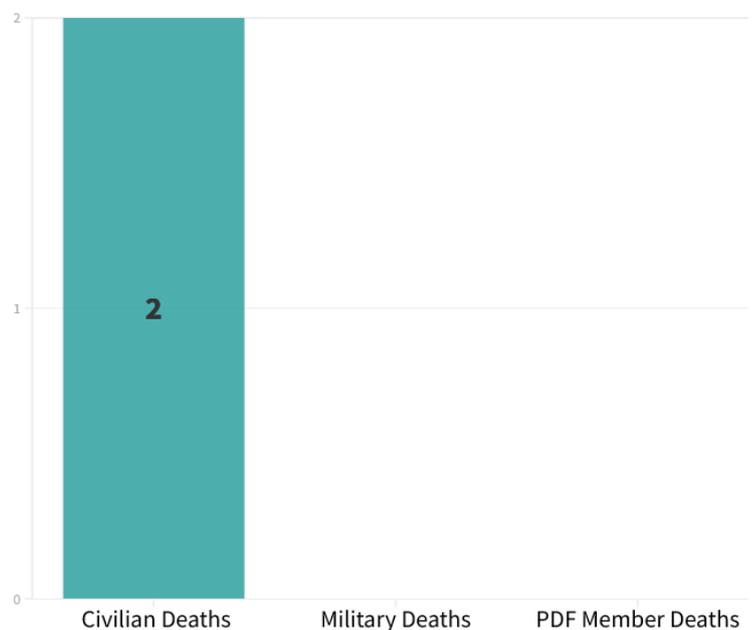




Mandalay Region

The residents of model village of Minywa, who were abducted by military council soldiers on January 4, were found as abandoned corpses at the Gwaypinyoe road junction. The murdered are U Nyein (45 years old), Ko Zaw Htwe (25 years old) and Ko Thaung Tan (27 years old). Traces of torture were found on the bodies.

On January 5, U Soe Naing, the administrator of Thanbo village in Nganzun township, and his wife Daw Aye Mya were shot and killed. Local PDF groups said the village administrator was notorious and had tried to form a Pyu Saw Htee militia, and some villagers had been arrested on his tips.



On January 5, Thanbo village administrator U Soe Naing and his wife Daw Aye Mya from Ngazun Township were shot dead by the PDF.

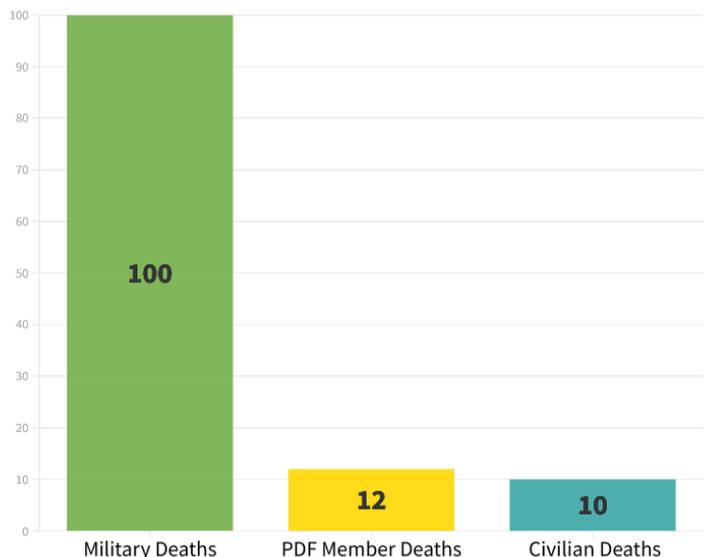


Karen State

Military council troops forced the patients and medical staff of Kyainseikgyi Township Hospital to leave. Residents were no longer allowed to receive medical treatment due to junta soldiers stationed at the hospital. On January 5, regime soldiers entered the hospital and forced dozens of patients and medical staff to leave overnight. Fighting is currently taking place in the town between military council troops and the Karen National Union (KNU). Regime troops, who have reportedly suffered a severe setback, have not only taken up positions at Kyainseikgyi Hospital, but have also cut off medical services to civilians at Taungkalay Hospital.

On January 7, six innocent civilians were killed when the military regime conducted airstrikes in the Lehtoopho area of Methu village, Dweloe township, Mutraw District, which is administered by the KNU. The junta's air force carried out the airstrikes with seven jet fighters, which also killed women. In addition, a clinic and seven other buildings were damaged in the bombing.

A total of 100 military council soldiers and 12 PDF members were killed in a clash between the military council troops and a combined force of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and defense forces in Kyarinseikgyi Township. The military council's airstrikes killed four locals and displaced more than 3,000 locals in Kyarinseikgyi. On January 7, the military council's airstrikes killed six locals in Laehtoopho village in Maethu village-tract in Hpapun Township.



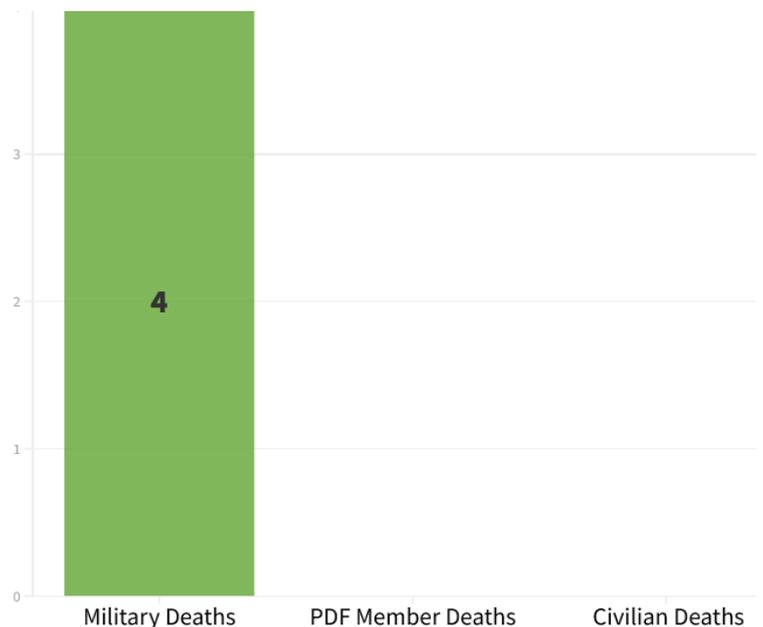
Bago Region

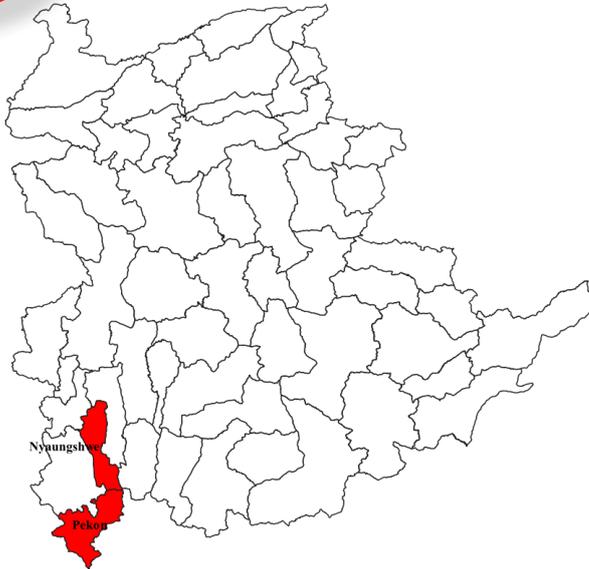
A man named U Min Aung, leader of Pyu Saw Htee militia in Tawkyweinn (Aung Myin) town in Kyauktaga Township, was killed by PDF - Kyauktaga and Bo Kyauk Khe urban guerrillas on January 7. The resistance fighters also attacked the junta soldiers who came to investigate the incident with mines and injured two regime police officers.

On January 7, three military council soldiers were killed and six others seriously injured when a landmine targeting a junta convoy on the Natthankwin-Kyaukkyi road between Theakone and Nyaungkone villages in Kyaukkyi Township exploded.

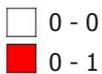


On January 7, Pyu Saw Htee leader Min Aung was shot dead by the PDF in Tawkywein (Aungmyin) in Kyauktaga Township. Moreover, three military council soldiers were killed while clearing a landmine planted on the road between Thae Kone village and Nyaung Kone village in Kyaukkyi Township.





No.of Days of Clashes

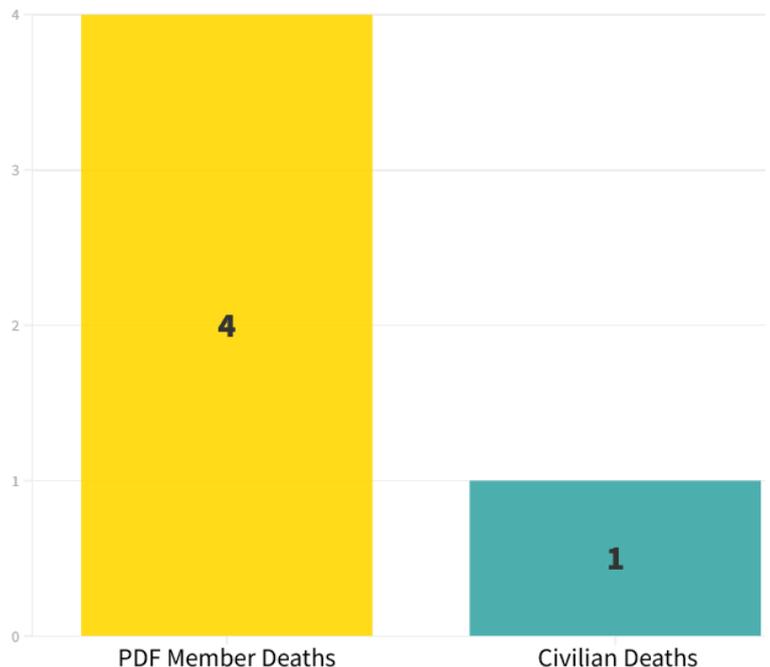


Shan State

Clashes broke out between military council troops and the Inlay People's Defense Force (IPDF) near the villages of Hpayarni and Thanhtaung west of Inlay in Nyaungshwe Township, killing four members of the resistance, including the commander of Battalion 1009 of the IPDF, and injuring three other members of the resistance. Following the clash, the regime's army said on January 8 that it had arrested 12 people, including PDF supporters, informants, and the PDF leader.

On January 8, a 66-year-old man named U Sho Pan from the No. 1 Pwegone ward of Moebye town was killed by artillery shells fired indiscriminately by military council troops. Military council troops stationed in Warisuplai village fired artillery at residential areas without any fighting between the two sides.

Four PDF members were killed in the clashes between the military council troops and the PDFs in Nyaungshwe and Pekon Townships in southern Shan State. On January 8, the military council's indiscriminate artillery shelling hit and killed a man from Pwekone-1 ward in Moebye Township.

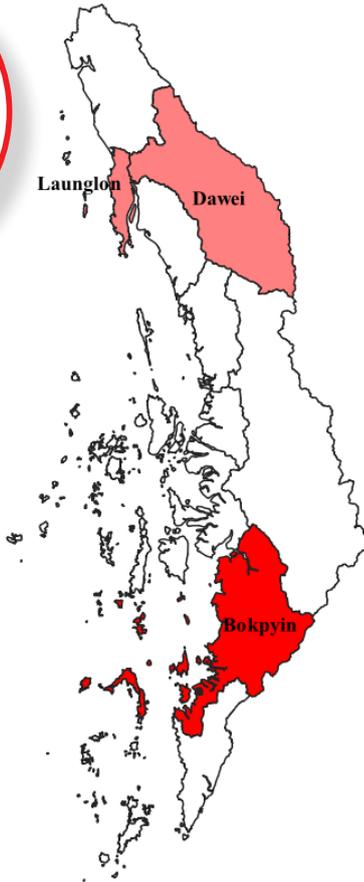




Karenni (Kayah) State

Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) and Air KBZ temporarily suspended their operations from Jan. 4 for security reasons after Loikaw Airport was fired upon with unguided rockets. In addition, the military council increased security in Loikaw town, conducted strict inspections, and made continuous arrests.

In Karenni (Kayah) State, 341 clashes occurred between military council troops and the Karenni Army (KA) and People's Defense Forces (PDF), killing 797 and injuring 93 on the military council side and 65 on the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) side, according to the ethnic army's statement on January 6.



Tanintharyi Region

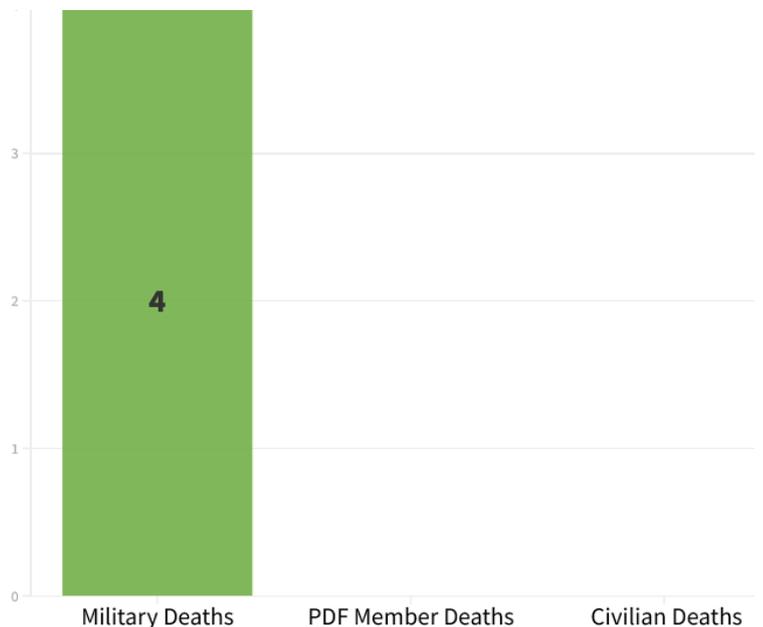
Military council troops entered and set fire to Wakone village in Dawei Township on January 8. In the process, they burned 15 houses and forced nearly 400 residents to flee to safety.

The military council re-arrested Ko Min Htet Paing, an assistant doctor at Myeik General Hospital, who was released from Myeik prison on January 4. A total of 82 prisoners, including 20 male and 11 female political prisoners, were released that day.

No.of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1
- 1 - 2

Three junta soldiers were killed in the clashes between the military council troops and the PDFs in Launglon, Bokepyin and Dawei Townships. On January 9, a junta soldier who guarded the voter list collection team near a primary school in Kamyawkin village in Launglon Township was shot dead. On January 8, more than 400 locals from Wakone village in Dawei Township fled for safety due to the military council's arson attacks.



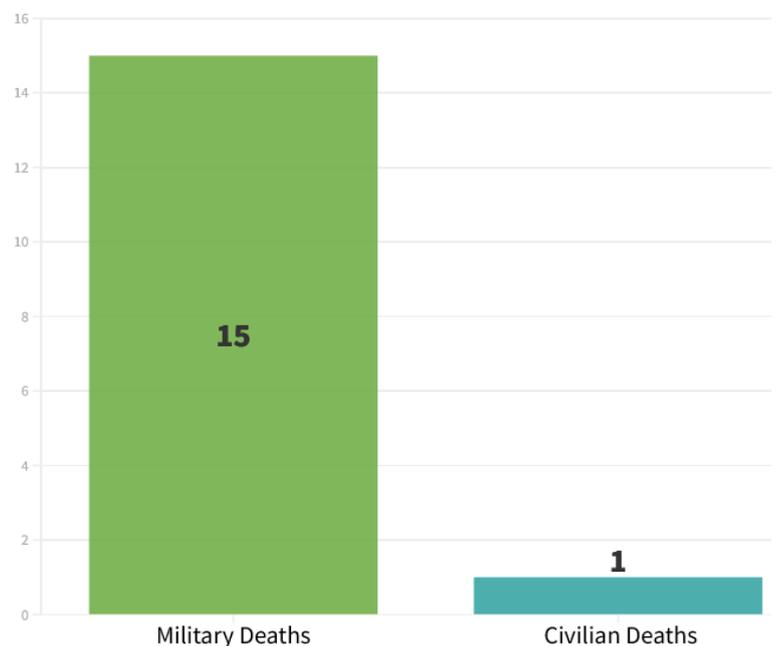


Mon State

On January 7, an artillery shell fired indiscriminately by military council troops struck Thonegwa village in Kyaikto township, injuring six members of a local family and killing one. In addition, artillery shells fired by regime troops struck Hlelanku village, injuring two people.

Also, in Kyaikmaraw township, continued unprovoked artillery fire by regime forces forced nearly 1,000 people to flee from the villages of Chaunghnitkhwa, Thayetkone and Yaepu Kawtsat.

Fourteen military council soldiers were killed in the clashes between the military council troops and the KNLA in Kyaikto and Bilin Townships. On January 9, police inspector Nyi Nyi Win from the Special Branch (SB) was shot dead by the PDF in Lamaing in Ye Township. On January 7, the heavy shell fired by the military council landed on Thonegwa village in Kyaikto Township, wounding six family members and killing one person. In addition, more than 1,000 locals from Chaunghnakhwa, Thayatkone and Yappukawsat villages in Kyaikmayaw Township due to the military council's persistent artillery shelling without any clashes.

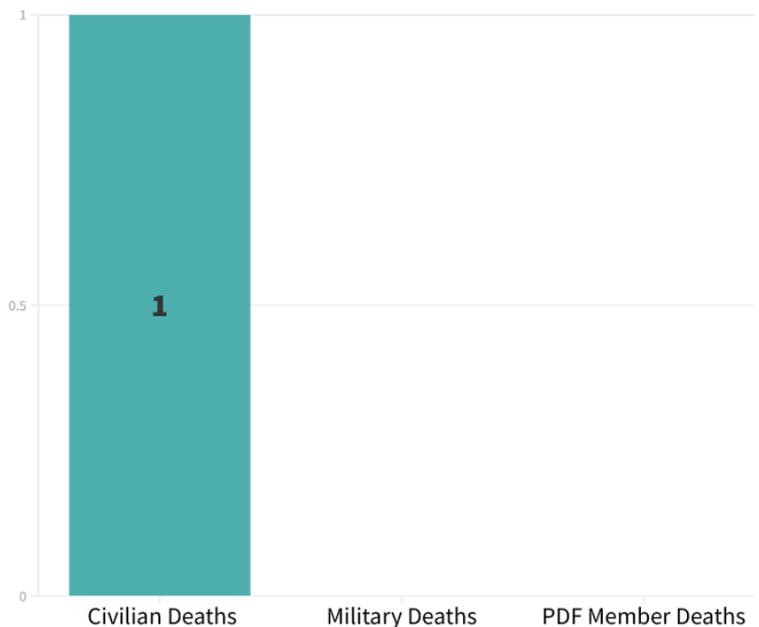




Ayeyarwady Region

One political prisoner was killed and nine others seriously injured when the staff of Pathein prison beat and shot the political prisoners who were protesting the construction of a gallows in the prison for a CDM school teacher from Myanaung town who had been sentenced to death by the military council. In the incident on the night of January 5, a 33-year-old man named Ko Wai Yan Phyo was killed and the injured received emergency medical treatment at Pathein Hospital. In addition, Ko Win Min Htet, also known as Ko Me Gyi, one of the detained protesters, went missing and the remaining seven were taken into solitary confinement on January 7.

On January 9, the military council arrested a total of 13 NLD party members and supporters in Kyaunggon Township, including the township's NLD party chairman, U Thein Han, and Pyithu Hluttaw representative, Dr. Hla Win. Among those arrested were those who had supported the NLD party in its campaigns in the 2020 election period.



On January 6, a political prisoner from Pathein prison died due to beating by the military council soldiers and police.



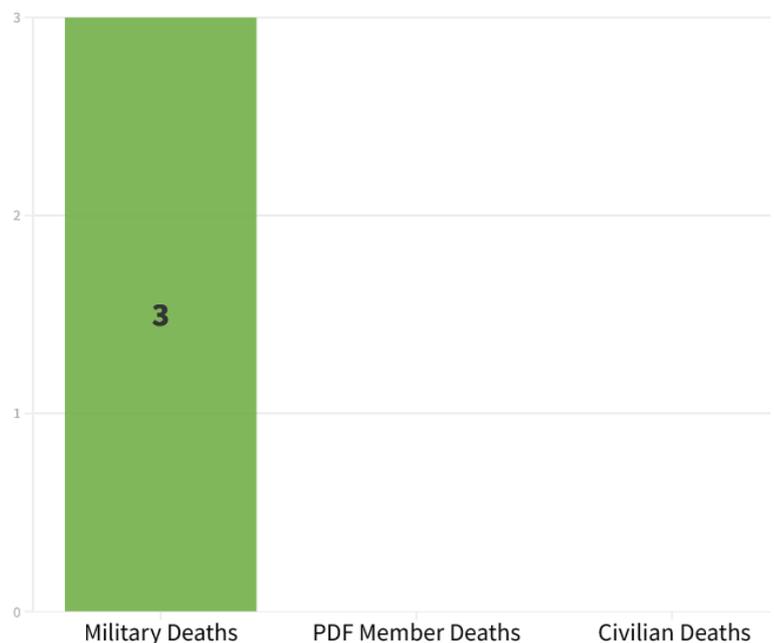
No. of Days of Clashes



Yangon Region

An urban guerrilla group stormed the Kadonepaw police station in Thongwa Township on January 8 and engaged in a gun battle with military council soldiers. The raid was reportedly carried out as part of Operation Nan Htike Aung by the Fire Dragon unit of the Yangon Region PDF (Southern District - Zone 2). The resistance fighters burned down the police station and seized a G3 rifle. Three junta soldiers were killed in the firefight. On January 10, the military council sentenced 45 men and 32 women out of 147 Rohingya people it arrested to two years in prison each under Section 6(3) of the Immigration Act. They were arrested in North Dagon, Mayangone, and Shwepyitha Townships.

On January 8, three police members were killed in a raid on Kadonepaw police station in Thongwa Township by the urban guerrilla force.



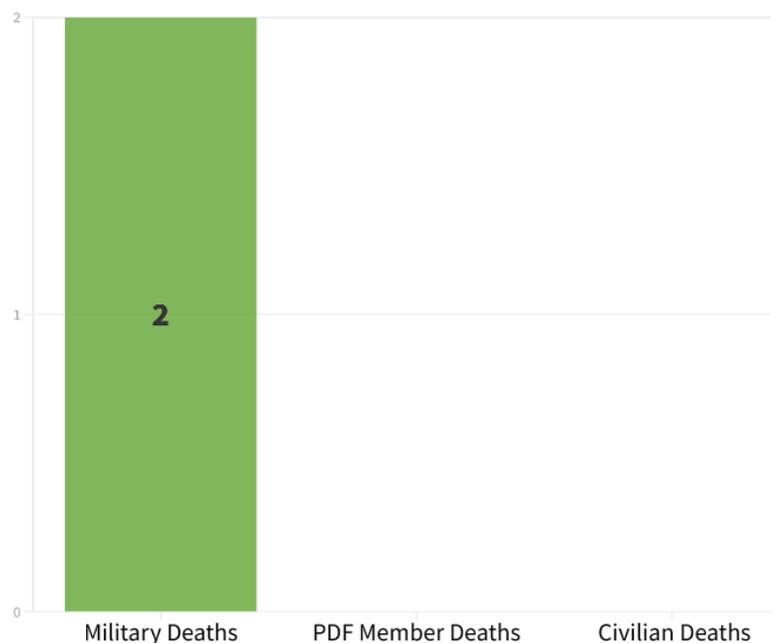


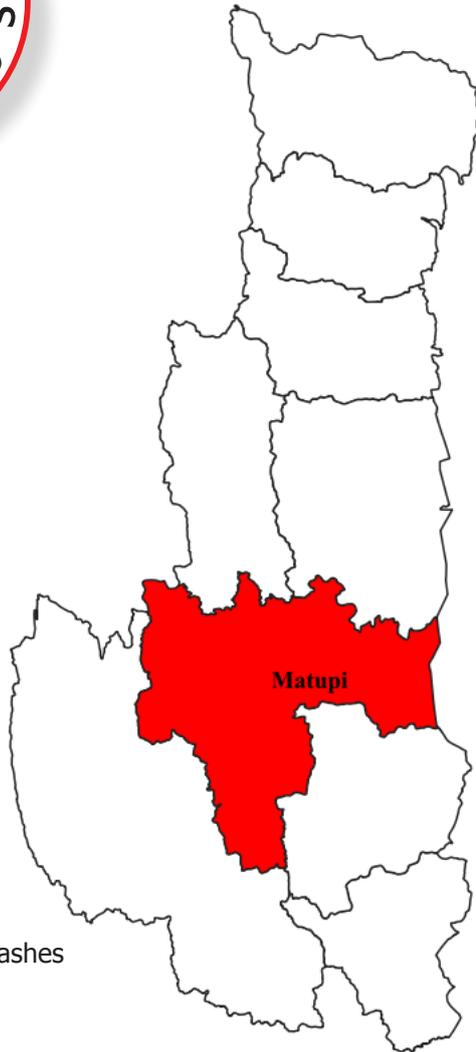
Arakan State

On January 4, the commander-in-chief of the Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) and two other officers were shot dead in Sittwe. Those killed were ALP military chief Khaing Saw Mra (53 years old), battalion commander Khaing Kyaw Soe (34 years old) and captain Kyaw Min Soe, also known as Khaing Thu Rinda (31 years old). They were shot dead on their way back from an Independence Day event organized by the military council. It is not yet known which group carried out the assassination.

None of the political prisoners from Arakan State were among the 317 prisoners released as part of the amnesty to celebrate Independence Day on January 4.

Two military council soldiers were killed as a sergeant threw a hand grenade into a quarrel between members of Border Guard Force (BGF) while playing cards, at the BGF military camp in northern Maungdaw Township.

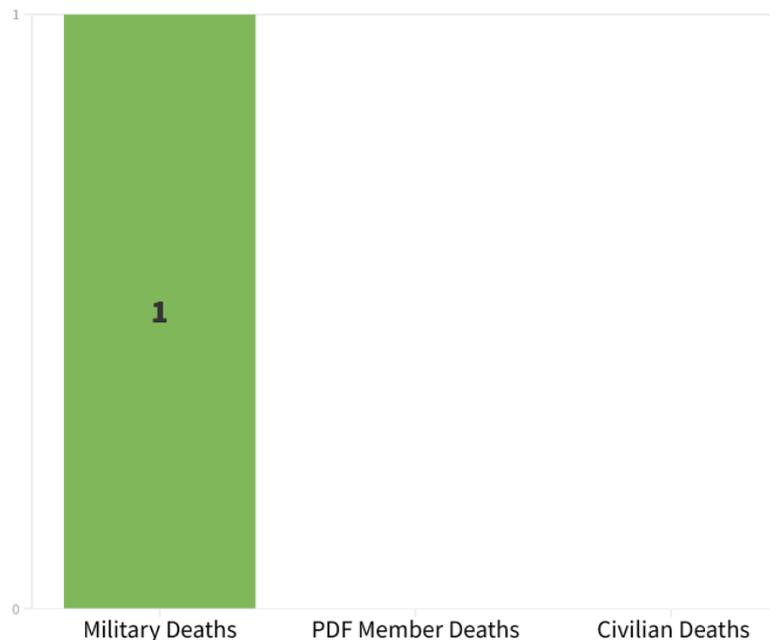




Chin State

The military junta aerially bombed Camp Victoria, the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) headquarters on the India-Myanmar border in Thantlang Township, Chin State, on January 10, killing five people, including two female CNA police officers. Some of the bombs dropped by the military regime's jet fighters also landed on the Indian side of Mizoram.

On January 9, regime soldiers forcibly took five people from each of the five IDP camps in Paletwa town to transport rice and other rations. The area where the IDPs were forced to transport the military rations is a site of fierce fighting. According to reports, the junta soldiers forced the civilians to do so because the area is contaminated with unexploded mines and artillery shells.



On January 4, the Chinland Defense Force attacked the terrorist military council's Light Infantry Battalion-304 gate on Matupi-Paletwa road. One junta soldier was killed in the attack.

International



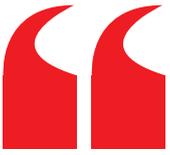
Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, who holds the rotating chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said the office of the ASEAN Special Envoy has been opened to resolve the crisis in Myanmar and that he will head it himself. He also promised that during his tenure as ASEAN Special Envoy, he would seek dialogue with all stakeholders in Myanmar and that Indonesia would do its best to help Myanmar out of the political crisis.

On Jan. 9, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim met in Bogor, Indonesia, and urged the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus with ASEAN to bring about peace in Myanmar. During the meeting, both countries agreed on the importance of implementing the Five-Point Consensus regarding Myanmar and urged that it be implemented.

On January 6, Malaysian Immigration officials and police arrested and interrogated 544 Myanmar (Chin people) citizens living in the Jalan Imbi neighbourhood of Kuala Lumpur. The Malaysian Immigration Department (JIM) said those arrested ranged in age from one year to 68 years and were arrested for immigration offences related to expired travel documents, misuse of social identification cards, and missing travel documents.

The United Nations human rights office called on the military council to release all political prisoners being held in jails throughout Myanmar. The Jan. 6 statement said that resolving the conflict in Myanmar will only be successful if the public can freely participate in politics without being arrested.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated his call for the immediate release of 78-year-old State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated his call for the immediate release of 78-year-old State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is being held in Nay Pyi Taw prison.



Kyi, who is being held in Nay Pyi Taw prison. Aung San Suu Kyi was imprisoned on corruption charges by the military council for a total of 33 years.

On Myanmar's 75th Independence Day, which falls on January 4, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken issued a statement saying that the United States will stand with the people of Myanmar as they seek to build an inclusive democracy.

The Thai government announced Jan. 7 that Thai authorities will strictly control migrant

workers in Thailand. The statement said migrant workers will be screened to see if they are engaged in activities banned by Thai authorities and that harsh penalties will be imposed if they are found guilty. Following the announcement, Thai authorities arrested 71 Myanmar and Rohingya individuals who were hiding in a sugarcane plantation near a cemetery. Among those arrested are women, youth between 18 and 30 years old, and children between 5 and 10 years old.

Remark:

References and news sources for the 'What Happened This Week' section are from local and foreign news agencies as well as 15 media organizations of Burma News International - BNI.