

Weekly News Review

Issue 95, March 1 - 7, 2023



Direction of International Aid

Direction of International Aid

Introduction

Yangon-based US Embassy announced in the third week of February, 2023 that the United States is providing an additional \$50 million in humanitarian assistance for emergency food and nutrition assistance in Myanmar, where increased displacements, armed conflict, and growing food insecurity are compounding existing needs.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry announced on 28 February that Japan would give US\$ 60.3 million to Myanmar as additional humanitarian assistance.

The foreign governments which have witnessed the plights of Myanmar people are making approaches using the different forms of encouragement, consolations and sympathy. However,

they cannot assess whether the Myanmar people in need actually receive humanitarian aid.

This week, the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's weekly news review will focus on the direction of international humanitarian aid.

Unbalanced distribution of aid

According to the UNHCR's statement on 6 March, over 1.4 million people (1,428,100) were internally displaced in Myanmar after the military takeover on 1 February, 2021. More than 50,000 people fled to neighbouring countries.

Of over 1.3 million IDPs (1,375,900) in the country, Sagaing Region stood first on the list of IDPs with over 700,000, followed by Magway Region with over 170,000 (172,300). Karen State, Karenni State and Bago Region (East) see an increase in the number of IDPs.

According to the UN's report, a total of 17.6 million people are expected to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023. The humanitarian community has prioritized support for 4.5 million people with severe needs. This population declines by around two million compared with the targeted population in 2022. The UN said this is a practical provision based on the funds and the challenges to the delivery of aid.

Efforts made by the UN and its agencies which are managing humanitarian aid contributed by foreign countries, for the affairs of the country and Myanmar people and the delivery of aid to the Myanmar people who are in need of emergency aid are questionable.

The direction of international aid

The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is providing an additional \$50 million in humanitarian assistance for emergency food and nutrition assistance in Myanmar.

With this new funding, USAID will work with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) to treat and prevent malnutrition in conflict-affected states, helping more than 750,000 people. This assistance includes providing monthly food rations, as well as nutrition commodities for children under five, and pregnant and lactating women.

Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, Tokyo will provide additional humanitarian assistance totalling \$60.3 million to Myanmar. The aid will reach the affected people through international organizations, including UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre).

"Japan will provide food, medical items and shelters as well as water and sanitation infrastructure, nutrition improvement, medical services, access to education, and measures to combat illegal drugs," the ministry said.

In a meeting with the WFP's resident representative to Myanmar in late November, 2022, the German government promised to provide 3.3 million euro for humanitarian aid in Myanmar.

According to the January report released by the Justice For Myanmar, 14 UN agencies including UNICEF, UNHCR and the WFP, ASEAN and USAID are cooperating with the military council. These organizations focus only on the approach to cooperate with the junta for the delivery of international humanitarian aid to the Myanmar people.

The delivery of international aid to Myanmar people who are in need of help is questionable as they cannot avoid the junta's restrictions.

So, the National Unity Government (NUG), the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) and community-based CSOs are urging these organizations to avoid cooperation with the junta in order that the Myanmar people actually get humanitarian aid.

Review



These organizations should earnestly think about the plan to seek the new means for the effective delivery of aid to the Myanmar people who are in need, rather than cooperation with the military council.



Due to the decades-long civil war, there were already some 370,000 IDPs before the 1 February coup. More than 1.4 million people have been displaced in Myanmar due to the wider civil war. It is doubtful that the UN agencies have prioritized their interests rather than the interest of Myanmar people as the UN's plan to reduce aid budget and the number of IDPs without any change to the processes and means for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

In addition to cooperation with the junta, they should seek other means for the delivery of international aid. They should approach the groups and forces which have actually won the public's trust. We need to be aware of the fact that the junta may misuse international aid for the perpetuation of its power.

During the Spring Revolution with the goal to root out the military dictatorship and build up a federal democratic union, the junta's arson destroyed nearly 50,000 houses, schools and churches across the country. The military which is losing ground due to the Spring Revolution's resistance war is conducting airstrikes at any place and time.

Approaches to the delivery of humanitarian aid are fanciful. UN agencies and international organizations which represent governments like the USAID are required to carry out aid delivery processes more practically. These organizations should earnestly think about the plan to seek the new means for the effective delivery of aid to the Myanmar people who are in need, rather than cooperation with the military council.

Weekly HighLight News



Nearly 500 women killed, over 3,000 women remain behind bars during Spring Revolution

9 March 2023

A total of 483 women were reportedly killed by the military council during the Spring Revolution, according to a joint statement issued by the Joint Coordination Committee on Gender Policy formed under the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) and the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs under the National Unity Government (NUG) on the International Women's Day which falls on 8 March.

Among the women engaged in the Spring Revolution, 3,125 women remain behind bars, 11 women are on death row, 15 women get life sentences and 122 women faced the junta soldiers' sexual harassment, the joint statement says.

"Following the coup in Myanmar, we all lose our human rights. We get arrested when we make revolution due to loss of human rights. I faced various kinds of oppressions in jail. I felt



I faced various kinds of oppressions in jail. I felt scared as I myself saw the military council soldiers' sexual harassment.



scared as I myself saw the military council soldiers' sexual harassment. I still feel worried for the jailed women although I can get out of jail," said a woman from Yangon who was freed from jail.

It is evidently found that women play a frontline role in all sectors during the Spring Revolution. We respect and honour those women. All-out efforts shall be made to seek justice for women who experienced the violations of human rights, the joint statement says.

Activists working for women affairs view that violence, oppression and sexual harassment against women is due to a lack of rule of law.

Ma Khin Myint Kyi, a woman affairs activist from Arakan State said: "Young girls face more verbal sexual harassment. Women face insecurity. The main reason is a lack of rule of law. I expect to swiftly seek justice for oppression and insults against women."

On 22 July, 1997, Myanmar ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Myanmar's ratification of the CEDAW is a pledge to abide and respect the provisions of the CEDAW and report on its implementation of convention.

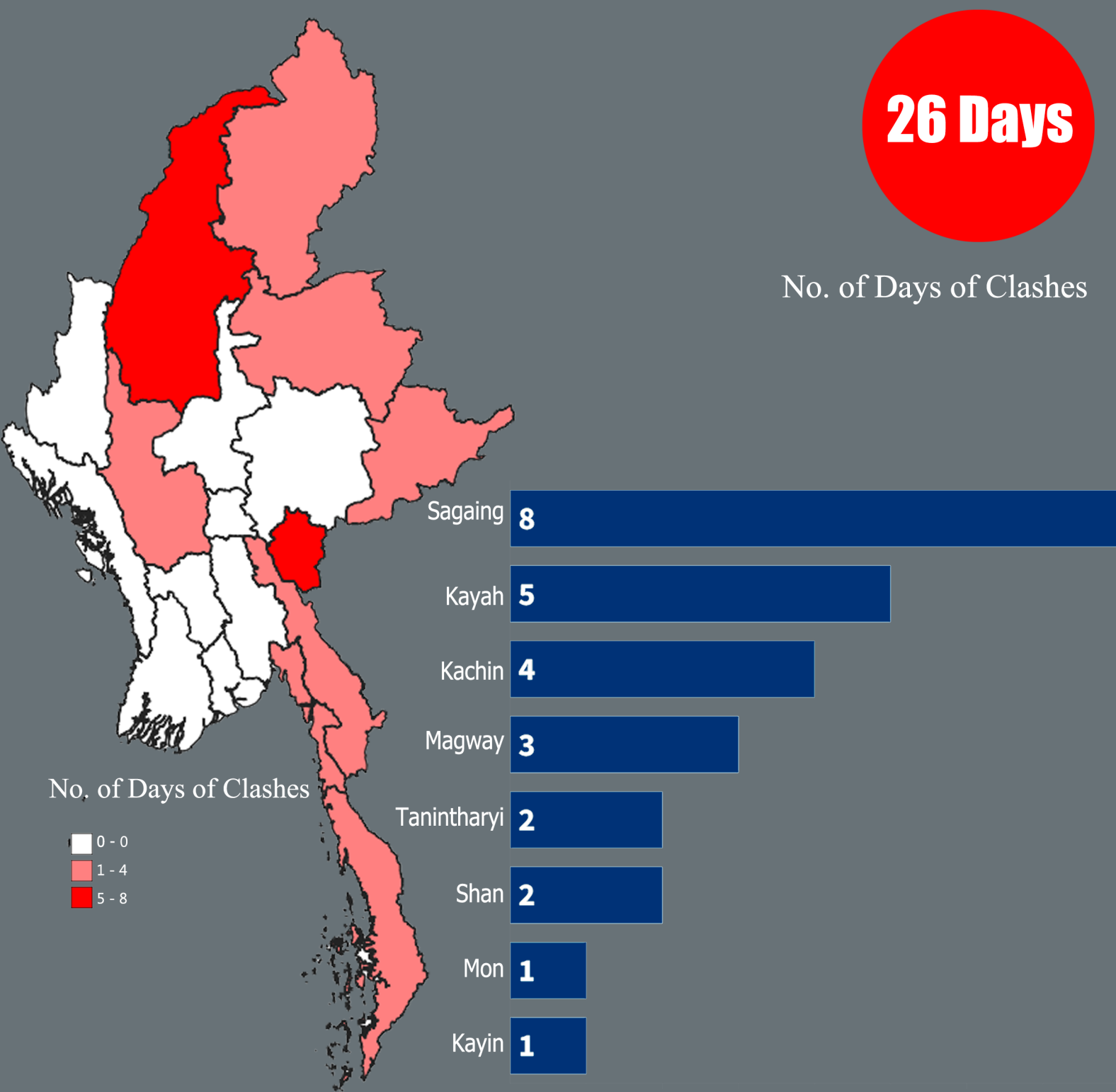
"The public who are living under the military council's administrative mechanism face a lot of difficulties. Among them, we have heard the news about sexual exploitation of women. Women already have weaknesses in mental security. Amid the dysfunctional administrative mechanism of the military council, the violations of women rights is a huge loss, said Ko Maung Myat Aung, Chair of Arakan-based Moesae Arman New Generation Youth Philanthropic Association.

To observe the International Women's Day which falls on 8 March, talks are being held across the country.

Part II

What Happened this Week

According to the record by the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor, 26 days of clashes were recorded between the military council, the People's Defense Force Forces (PDFs)/Local Defense Forces (LDFs) and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) from 1 to 7 March. Breaking down the regions and states, Sagaing Region saw the highest number of clashes, with eight days. The total number of clashes may be higher than that as we record the clashes in townships by days.



Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

Marcg 1 - 7 , 2023



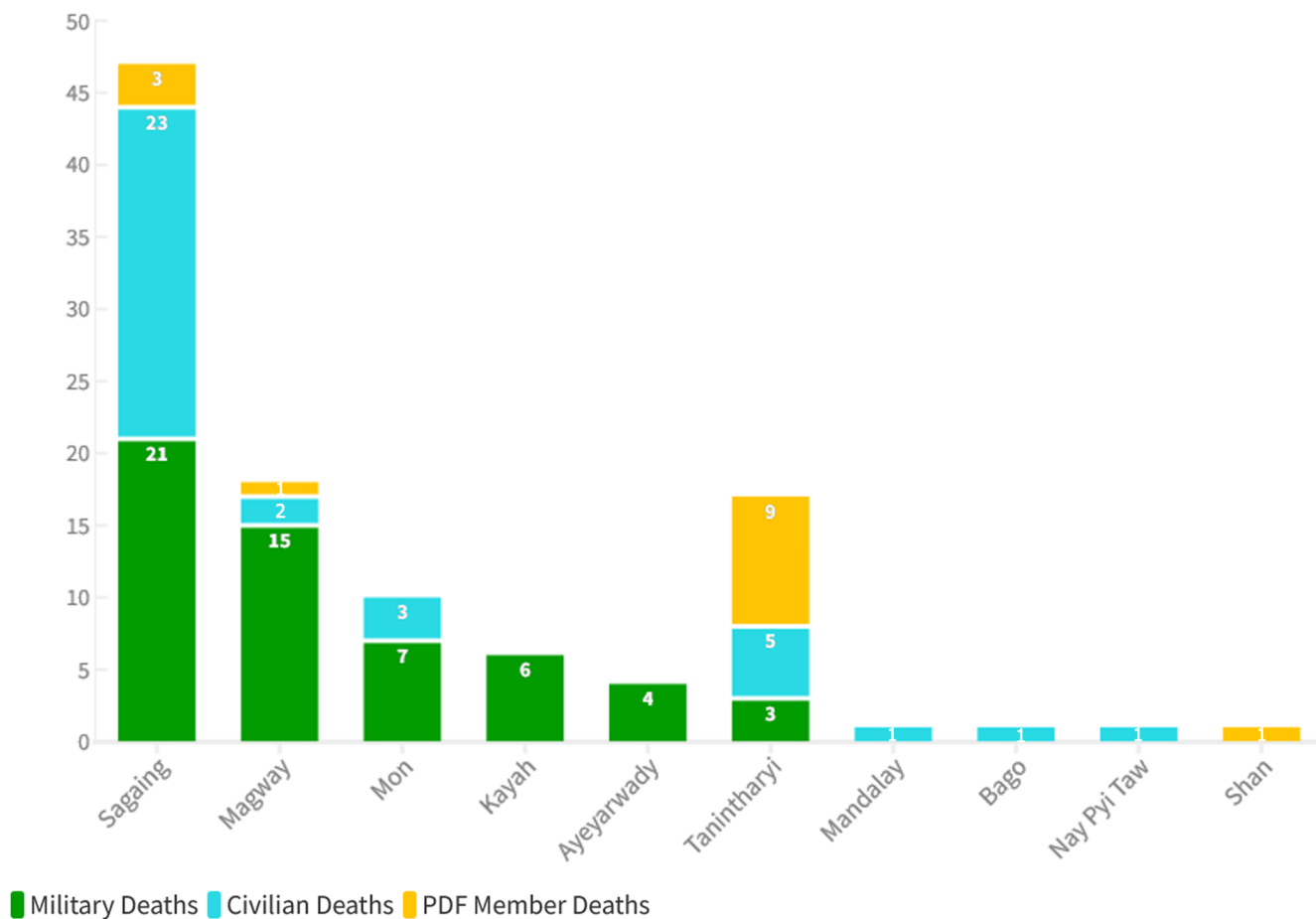
Military Deaths



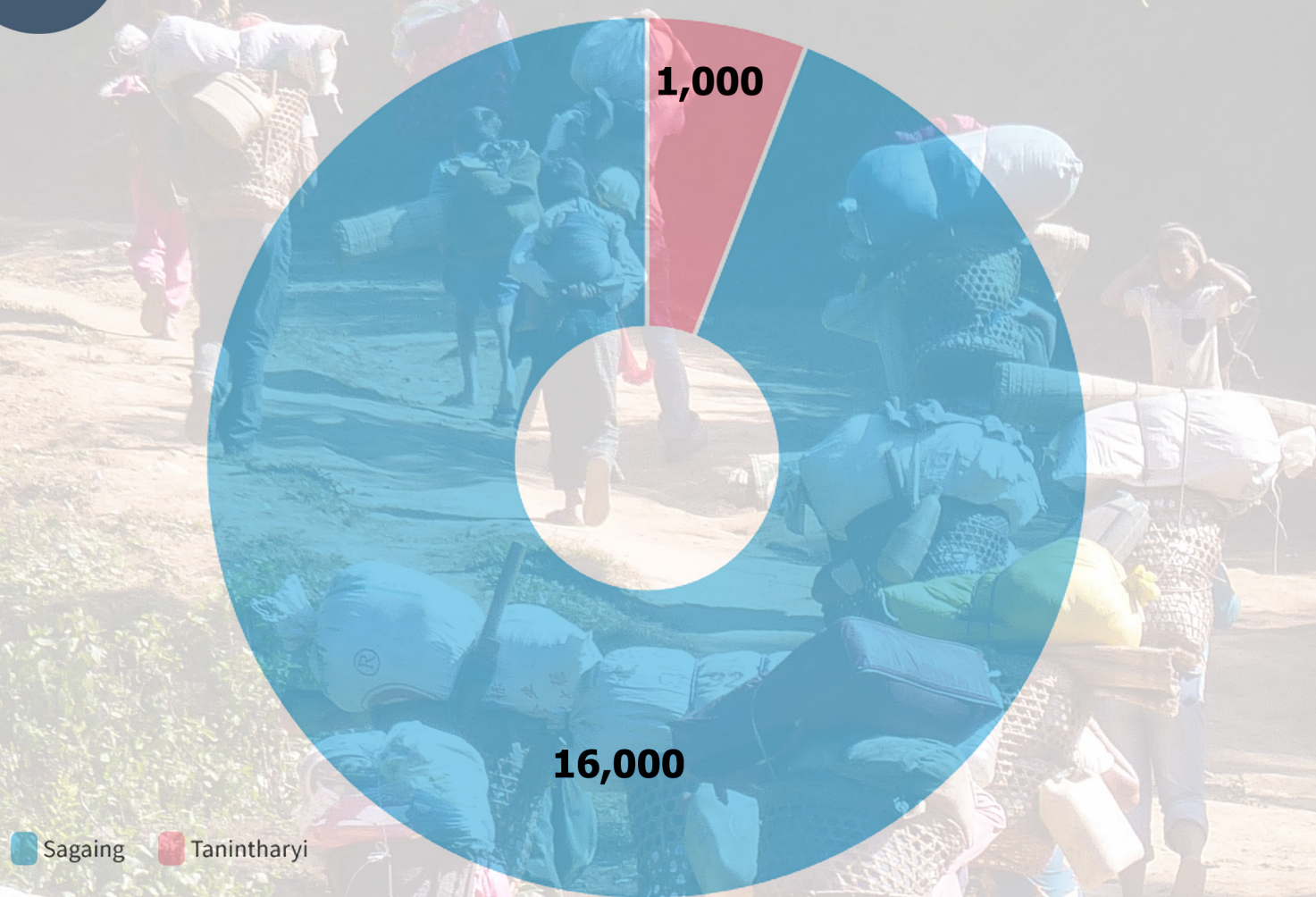
PDF Member Deaths



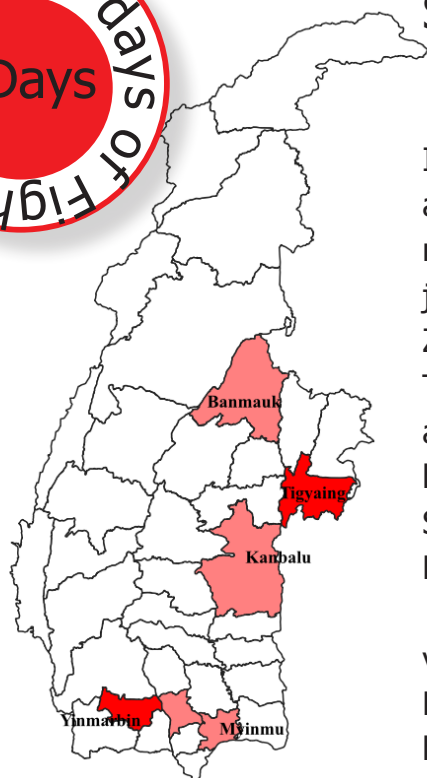
Civilian Deaths



17,000 Total Number of IDPs (March 1 - 7, 2023)



Total no of days of Fighting
8 Days



No. of Days of Clashes

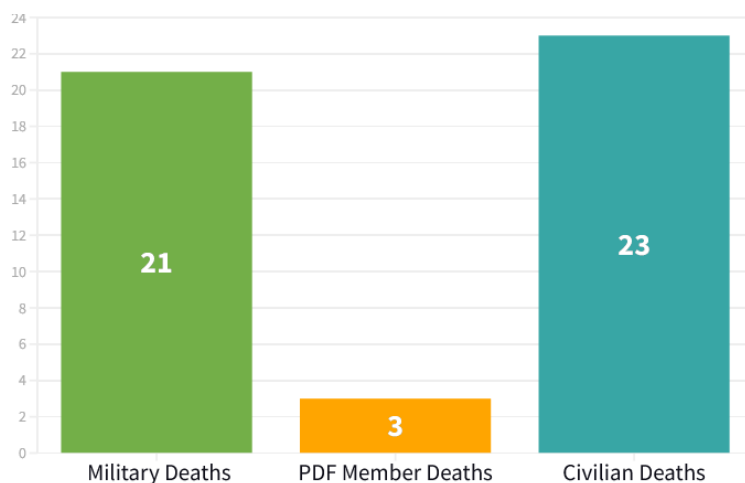


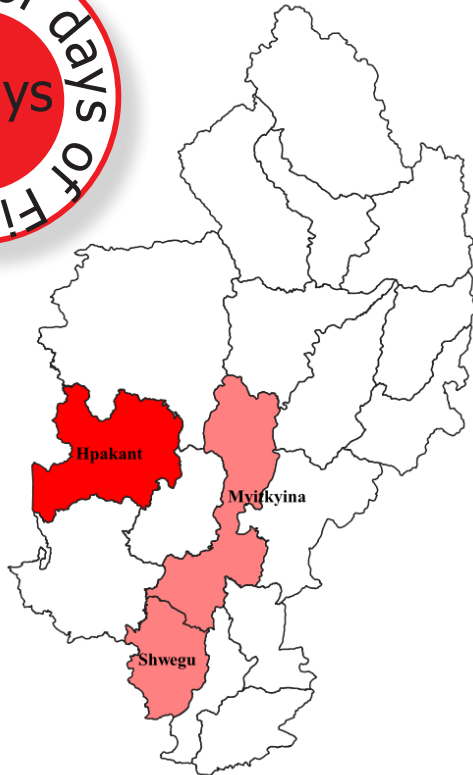
Sagaing Region

On 1 and 2 March, the Myanmar Army's No.99 Light Infantry Division entered Tartaing village in Sagaing Township and brutally murdered 16 civilians and a PDF leader, and also raped and murdered women. The PDF leader murdered by the junta soldiers was identified as Yebaw Michael, aka Ko Kyaw Zaaw. Local residents found his dismembered body on 2 March. The military council troops reportedly abducted the 16 locals as human shields and raped three women. The murdered bodies were later found in three groups in Tartaing village in Sagaing Township, and Nyaungyin village and Nyaungyin islet Myinmu Township.

On 3 March, junta troops torched houses in Myaungnone village in Yinmabin Township, burning down about 100 houses. During the incursion, regime troops also murdered a man in his 50s and shot and burned a man who had been abducted as their guide. The Myanmar Army's military activities in villages of Myaungnone, Koneywar, Paukpanphyu, Zeetaw, Oehpo, Thapyayaye, Nathtaung and Pyanhlae forced approximately 10,000 people to flee to safer locations.

One junta soldier was killed in the battles between the military council troops and the PDFs in Yinmarbin, Myinmu, Monywa, Kanbalu, Banmauk and Htigyaing Townships. On 2 March, three junta soldiers were killed in the PDF's ambush attack on the military council's camp on Monywa-YeU road at the exit of Budalin Township. Seventeen junta soldiers were killed in ambush attacks on the military council troops in KhinU, Wetlet, Shwebo, Monywa and Myinmu Townships. On 1 March, the military council troops raided Tataing village in Sagaing Township and then killed comrade Michael (aka) Ko Kaw Zaw, leader of the PDF by cutting his body into pieces. On 2 March, two members of the urban guerrilla force were killed in an accident when they planted a mine at the junction traffic post in Indaw. Twenty three civilians from Yinmarbin, KinU, Sagaing and Htigyaing Townships were killed in the military council's shootings. Over 16,000 locals from Yinmarbin and KhinU Townships fled for safety due to the military council's offensive and arson.





No.of Days of Clashes



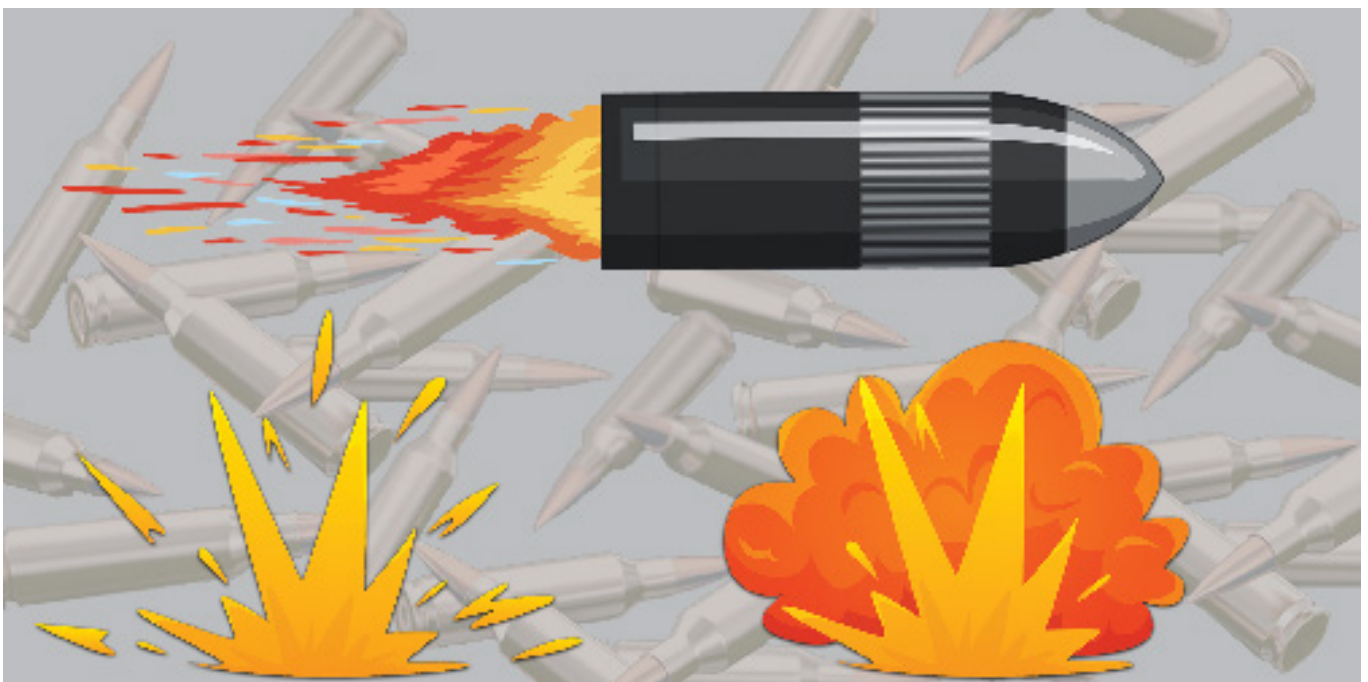
Kachin State

Military council troops torched houses in Kyauk Ta Lone village in Shwegu Township and also arrested four women. About 200 regime troops entered the village on 4 March and arrested 20 local civilians. They subsequently released 16 of them but continued to detain the rest.

On 6 March, junta soldiers arrested NLD party member Daw Mar Mar Aye, 40, of Taze Township in Sagaing Region, while she was hiding in Hparpyin village in Hpakant Township.

Junta soldiers arrested eight people, including the owner, from New Angle café in Hmawwun ward of Hpakant at their homes on 7 March. Those arrested include café owner U Soe Naing, his wife, daughter and employees.

There were battles between the military council troops and a combined force of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the PDFs in Shwegu, Hpakant and Myitkyina Townships.





No. of Days of Clashes



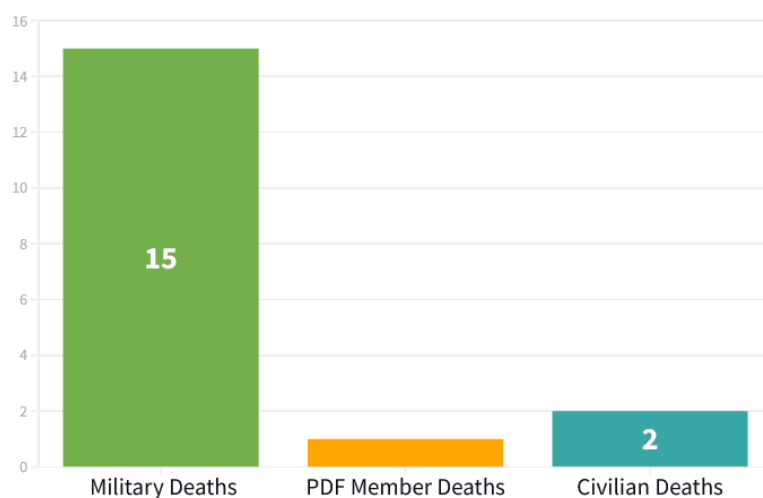
Magway Region

Nearly 1000 IDPs in Yahtwet and Ohnhmin villages are facing problems with drinking water supply. They have been displaced for about four months due to the military activities of the regime forces.

On 4 March, Magway Guerrilla Warfare shot dead a township education officer, who was known to extort money from CDM teachers in Natmauk Township. The guerrilla force said in a statement that they got rid of the education officer because he was worked for the military council, challenged the local PDF, threatened CDM teachers, resorted to bribery, was a loyal supporter of the military council, and participated in election campaigns for the junta.

Nine junta soldiers and one PDF member were killed in the battles between the military council and the PDFs in Yesagyo and Myaing Townships. On 2 March, one of three military vehicles heading to Kharchin Mountain in Minhla Township fell into a ravine. Five junta soldiers were killed in the car accident.

On 7 March, one junta soldier was killed in a drone attack by the combined force of PDF in Falamkai oil field in Pauk Township. The military council's indiscriminate artillery shelling killed a local man in Htanpaukgone village in Pauk Township following the airstrikes. On 4 March, the PDF assassinated township education officer Than Htike who is threatening the teachers who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) in Natmauk Township.





Mandalay Region

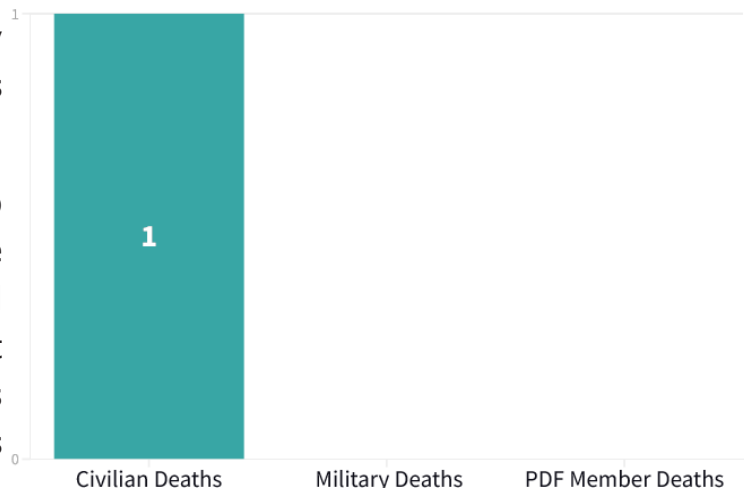
In Patheingyi Township, residents found the headless body of a man in Chaunggyima creek between Shintawkone and Ywaysu villages on 5 March. The body was taken to the morgue at Mandalay General Hospital. The unidentified body was washed away by the current and it was still not known where it came from. Military council troops then questioned some local residents and patrolled along the creek.

On 2 March, Mandalay Independent Association (MIA) - a Mandalay-based guerrilla force - assassinated a former PDF member and university student Maung Aung Myo Myat Aye. The 20-year-old, a second-year law student at Yadanabon University, who lived in Aung Mingalar ward, Patheingyi Township, was shot dead at the corner of 62nd Street and 10th Street near Kuthodaw Pagoda at the foot of Mandalay Hill.

The deceased was mentioned in the military council media as someone who returned to legality with weapons and ammunition in 2022. Of his own free will, he handed over weapons and ammunition entrusted to him by a resistance group, and he also gave the military council information about his fellow resistance members.

On 2 March, the PDF assassinated former PDF member Ko Aung Myo Myat, at the corner of 62nd street X 10th street near Kuthodaw Pagoda at the foot of Mandalay Hill in Aungmyaythazan Township, for his cooperation with the military council.

On 1 March, nine inmates attempted to escape from a prison van by shooting the police on the old Yangon-Mandalay road in Tatkon Township. One inmate was shot dead by the military council. Two inmates were rearrested while six inmates managed to escape.



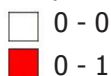


Karen State

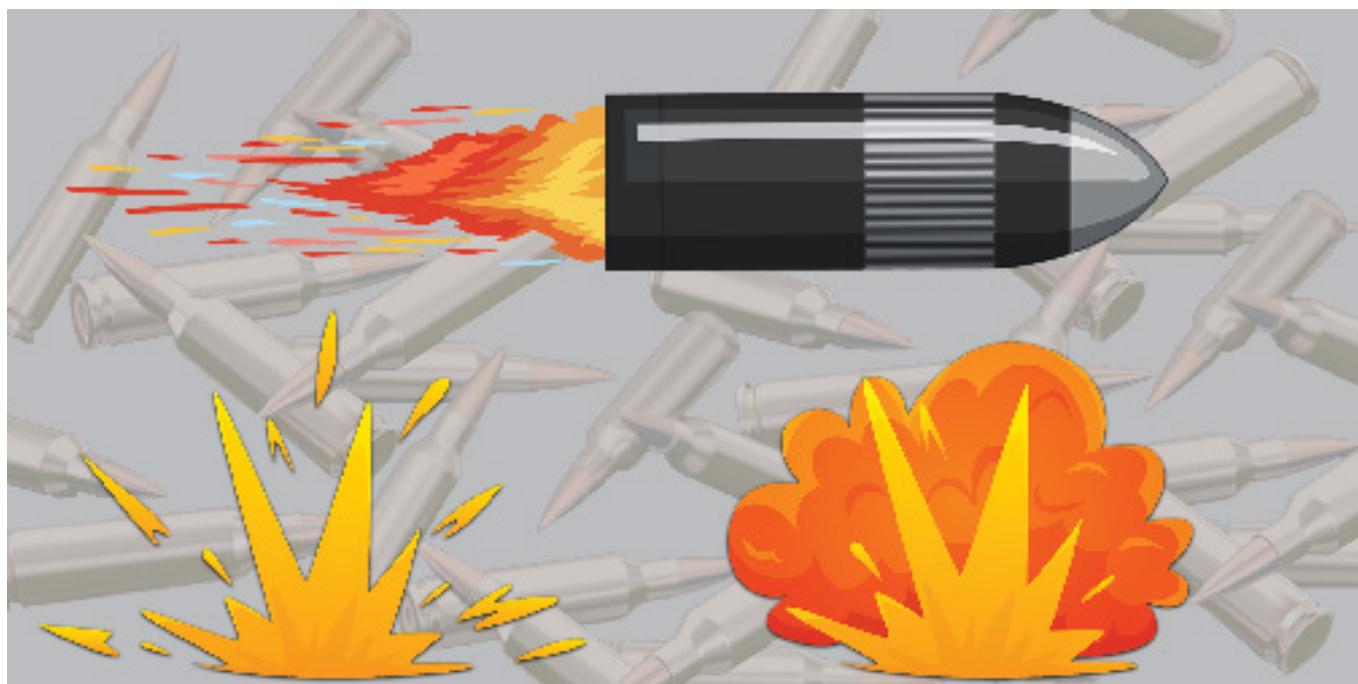
Regime troops set fire to houses in 13 Mile ward (2) of Thandaung town and destroyed three houses, including the house of a school teacher. The clashes and tensions between the regime army and combined forces of KNU in Thandaung Township forced residents of downtown areas and neighbouring villages to flee to safer places. They have been on the run for about two months, and are in need of food.

Also on the morning of 2 March, junta troops shelled Botekone village in Thandaung Township with artillery. They entered the village torched a house and four motorcycles and arrested two people. An 8-year-old child was also wounded by artillery shells.

No. of Days of Clashes



On 5 March, a combined force of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the PDFs captured KaTaiHti police station in Kamamaung Township in Hpapun District and then torched it.



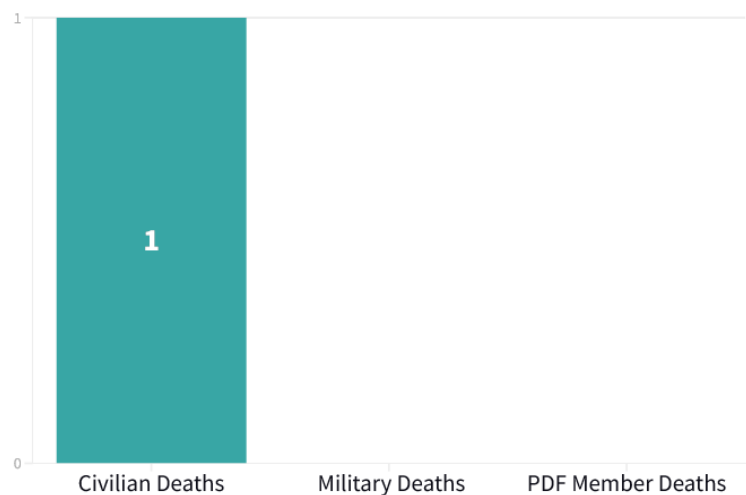


Bago Region

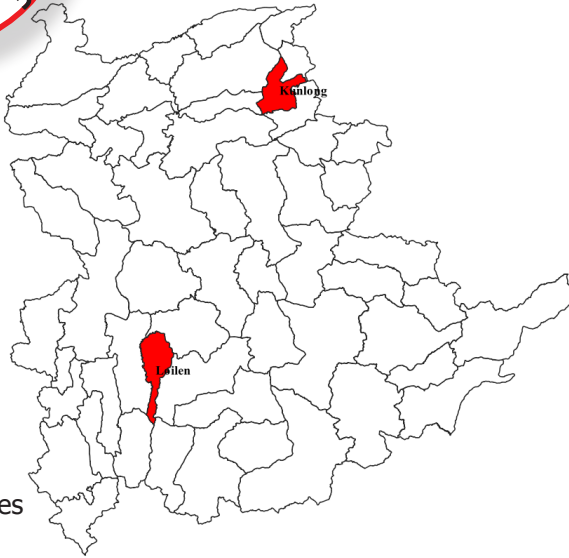
Military council soldiers arrested 13 residents of Phayapyo village, Waw Township, and have yet to release them. The arrest came after members of PDF - Waw fired on junta checkpoint at the entrance to Phayapyo village.

On 4 March, regime troops asked the local families farming on Hnget Pyaw Tabin and Kyun Shwe Wah sandbanks to move their houses so that they could install an artillery system there.

A child was killed and a man wounded when a mine exploded near Tharsi village in Kyaukkyi Township on the evening of 3 March. The explosion killed 12-year-old boy Maung Nay Min Thu, aka Min Min and wounded U Nyo Lone, a man in his 50s, in the chest and calves.



On 3 March, Maung Nay Thu Min (aka) Min Min, 12 died on the spot as he stepped on a landmine near Tharzi village in Kyaukkyi Township.

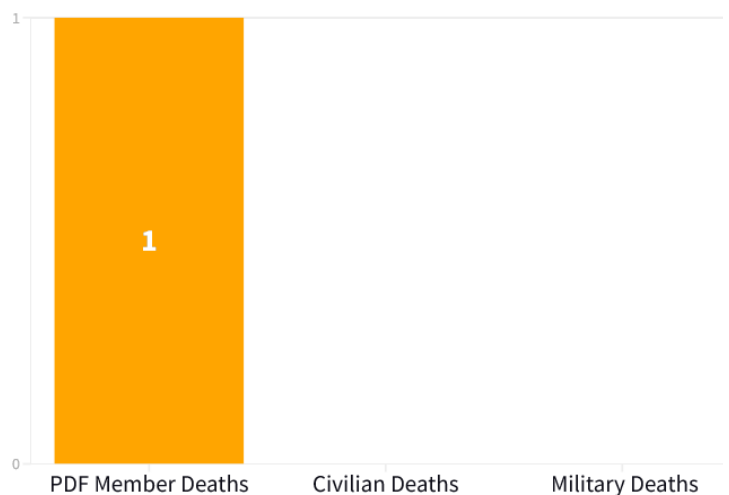


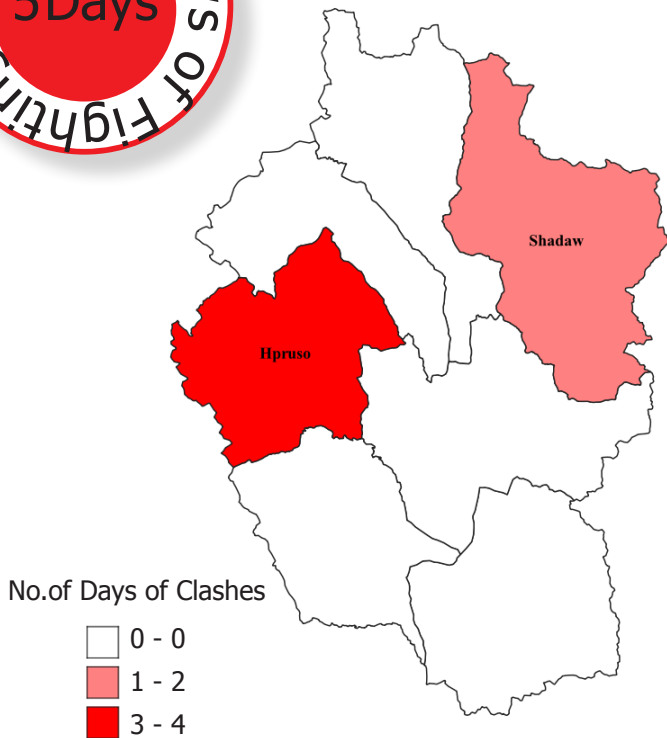
Shan State

About 2000 people, including IDPs, along the Shan-Karenni border are suffering from diarrhoea due to water shortages. They include IDPs seeking shelter in the forests and other people from 15 villages in Pekon Township. Due to transportation difficulties and insufficient donations and medical supplies, children and those suffering from hypertension who cannot receive timely medical care are at risk of losing their lives.

On 1 March, the Myanmar Army's No.68 battalion based in Lashio shelled a site near Panghkoke-Loihlan village in Mongyaw area, where a new village building ceremony was taking place.

On 7 March, there was a battle between the military council troops and a combined force of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the PDF in Kunglong Township, killing one PDF member. Fighting resumed between the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) and the Shan State Progressive Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA), near Namtwat village in Kunhing Township in Loilem District.



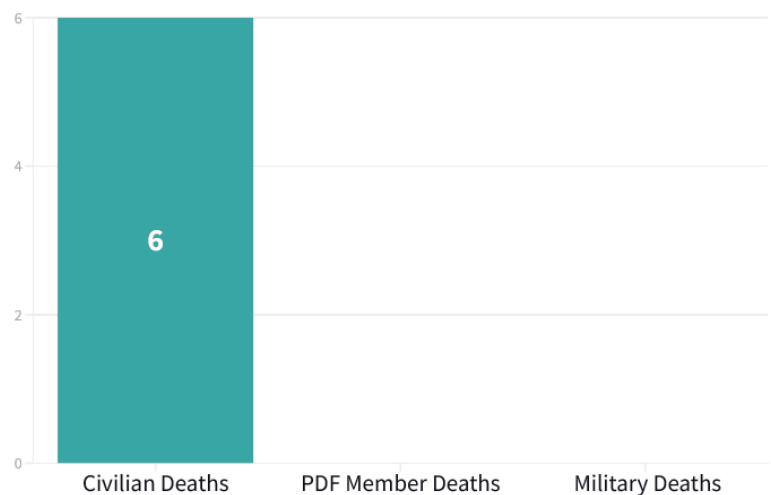


Karenni (Kayah) State

IDP camps in western Demoso are in urgent need of rice and other food rations are urgently needed as they are almost in the short supply. Although aid groups have been providing them with rice adequate for two weeks, the situation could worsen if they do not get donors soon. Currently, some families are starving and their children are at risk of malnutrition. In the western part of Demoso Township, there are 98 IDP camps where 2,1668 people live.

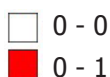
For four consecutive days, military helicopters flew over Hpruso Township, causing residents to flee to safer locations. As the military flew military aircraft from 2 to 5 March, local residents are concerned that fighting may intensify as the military regime deploys more troops in the area.

Six junta soldiers were killed in the battles between the military council troops and a combined force of the Karenni Army (KA) and Karenni defense forces in Shadaw and Phruso Townships.





No. of Days of Clashes

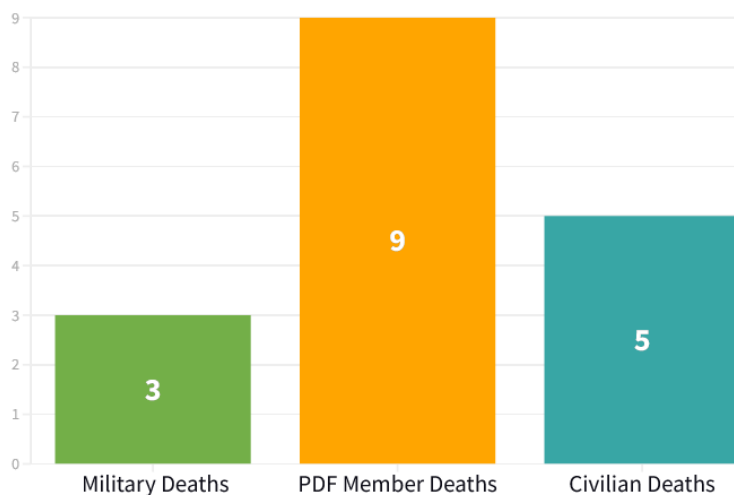


Tanintharyi Region

On 4 March, regime soldiers and members of the Pyu Saw Htee militia arrested six local men in Aukkyaukwut village, killing five of them and seriously wounding one. Those killed were U Naw Aye, 42; Ko Tin Htay and Ko Kayin, 30; Ko Hla Aung, 18; and Ko Than Win, 30.

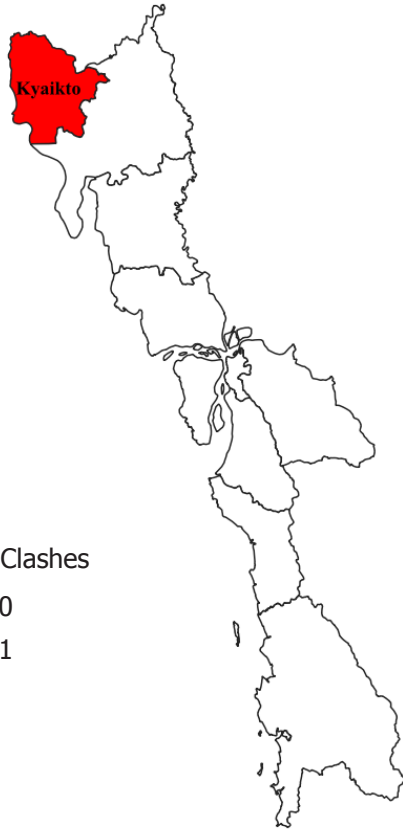
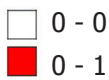
On 5 March, an unidentified group of gunmen fired on a vehicle carrying locals near Mayanchaung village in Yebyu Township, wounding five civilians. The white Hijet car carrying 15 young men who were on their way back to the village from playing football, was attacked by the gunmen between mileposts 49 and 41 at around 7 pm on that day.

There were battles between the military council troops and the PDFs in Launglon and Kawthaung Townships, leaving three junta soldiers and nine PDF members dead. On 4 March, the military council and military-backed Pyu Saw Htee members burned civilian houses and abducted and killed civilians in Lower Kyauk Wat village in Launglon Township. Five local men died while over 1,000 locals fled for safety.





No.of Days of Clashes

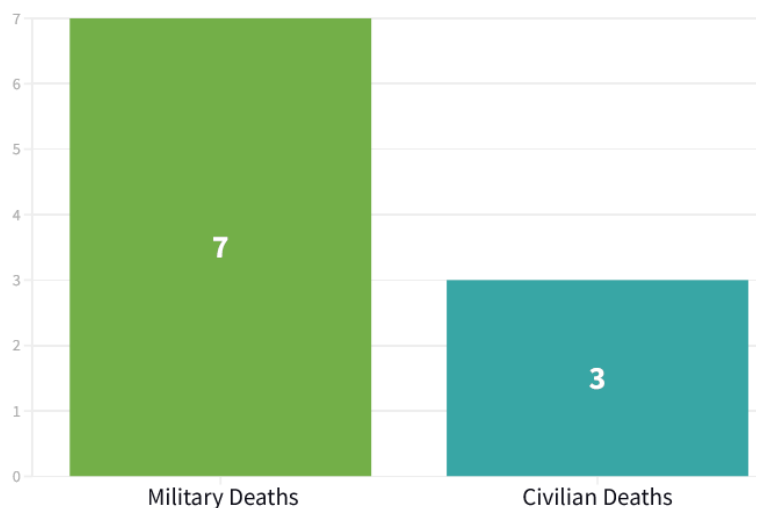


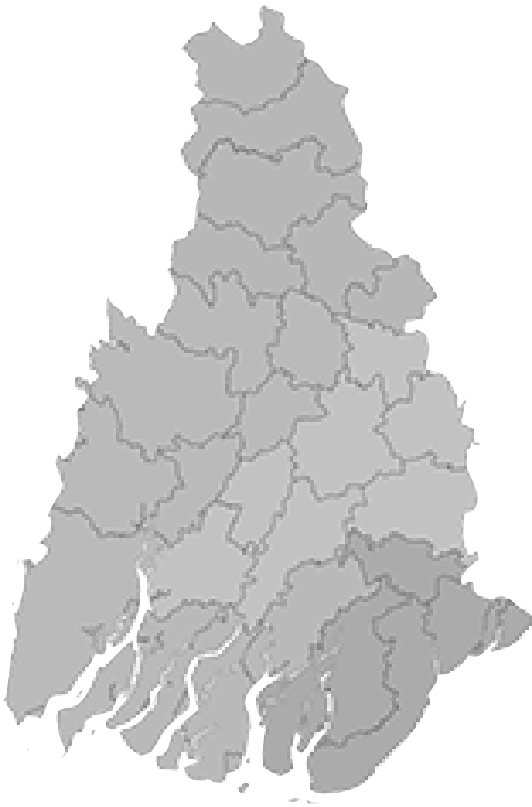
Mon State

Artillery shells fired from No.317 artillery battalion in Ye struck Aungtharyar village in Lamaing Township, injuring a 78-year-old woman so severely she died on the way to Mawlamyine Hospital. In addition, the roof of Aungtharyar monastery was damaged by junta shelling.

In Kyaikto Township, U Soe Than, aka Tayote Soe Than, the owner of Khaing Shwe pomelo plantation near Ingapo village, and his plantation worker Ko Soe Lin were found dead in the plantation on the morning of 5 March. U Soe Than reportedly had close ties to military council soldiers and often hosted junta soldiers on his property and allowed their military equipment into his warehouse. On 4 March, the day before his murder, regime soldiers arrived at the plantation. That same night, regime troops clashed with combined forces of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). Junta troops then shelled villages in the area, forcing residents to flee to safety.

On 3 March, seven junta soldiers were killed in a battle between the military council troops and the KNLA near Feel Restaurant on Yangon-Mawlamyine road at the corner of Daungtaung rubber plantation in Kyaikto Township. On 5 March, the military council's indiscriminate artillery shelling hit and killed an 80-year-old woman from Aungtharyar village in northern part of Ye Township. On 5 March, an unknown armed group assassinated U Soe Than (aka) Tayoke Soe Than, owner of Khaing Shwe Sein pomelo plantation and his plantation worker near Ingabo village in Kyaikto Township.





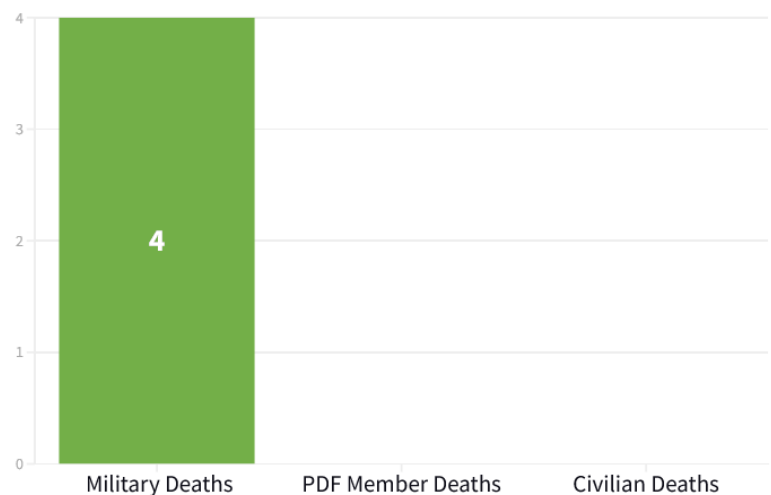
Ayeyarwady Region

On 3 March, the Red Falcon PDF attacked columns of military council soldiers entering the villages of Ingapu and Mezaligon and marching on the Natpadee ridge with mines, killing four junta soldiers, including a captain. The regime side then fired indiscriminately with light weapons for a few minutes.

On the same day, two military helicopters flew over the forests in the Mezaligon area, and regime troops subsequently closed the section of Pathein-Monywa Road between the villages of Bantbwaykone and Kwinkauk in Ingapu Township and checked pedestrians.

On 3 and 5 March, Setyar Waday Mingyi Strike Committee led a anti-dictatorship march in downtown Kyangin, holding a banner that read "Till the end of the world. Our time will come".

Four junta soldiers including a captain were killed in a mine attack on the military council troop in Maezaligone in Ingapu Township on 2 March.





Yangon Region

Street vendors at Meekhwet Market in Hlaing Thar Yar Township are facing difficulties as the contracts for the market spaces held by thugs. The thugs prohibit vendors from selling goods around the market and have dumped garbage in the squares to prevent them from selling. They also prohibit people from selling in front of their houses and bully shopkeepers.

Illegal groups of loan sharks have spread into neighbourhoods in North Okkalapa Township since the military coup, and people who cannot repay their loans are physically attacked by henchmen of the moneylenders. The moneylenders have two employees who collect money in neighbourhoods No. 2, Kyaukyaytwin, Tatargyi and Paywetseikkone, at an interest rate of up to 35 percent.



Arakan State

In Rathedaung Township, a 38-year-old man named U San Aung Htay from Ywarthit ward of Zedipyin village was struck by a landmine on 1 March while on his way to cut bamboos on Mayu Hill, severing his left leg.

On 3 March, the military council's chief minister returned 532 people from Yay Phyu Kan IDP camp in Ponnagyuan Township, saying that the military would clear the mines near their villages. Reportedly, the IDPs agreed to the junta's plan because they were in distress in the camps.



Chin State

On 1 March, a man was seriously injured when he stepped on a landmine near the Independence Monument in Myothit Ward in Hakha. The man named Slawm Bu, 34, was wounded in the leg when a mine exploded on his way to his plantation. Reportedly, the regime plans to ban religious activities, including Sunday prayer services, for Christian residents of Chin State. The regime has ordered the population not to go out between 6 pm and 6 am and not to gather more than five people, and also ask churchgoers, including priests, for their names and phone numbers.

International



Amnesty International and Global Witness revealed on 1 March that while the military council continues to commit war crimes, the export and sale of jet fuel to Myanmar continues. They also revealed the companies involved in the aviation fuel supply chain, and called for an immediate halt to exports, stating that the sale of jet fuel constitutes aiding and abetting war crimes. They're also following new shipments of jet fuel to Myanmar as the military regime continues to carry out airstrikes.

Shipping data obtained by Justice for Myanmar reveals that Yantra India Limited, an Indian military arms manufacturer, shipped 20 122mm cannons to Myanmar in October 2022. The recipient of these cannons, valued at 330,000 US dollars, was identified as Innovative Industrial Technologies Company Limited,



The UK will work for an arms embargo and international sanctions to stop the military council's terrorist attacks.



based in the commercial city of Yangon.

Chinese companies and the Department of Electric Power, which is under the military council, signed an agreement on 1 March to produce Myanmar's first wind power in Ann, Thandwe and Gwa Townships in Arakan State.

The ongoing conflicts in Myanmar are impacting the regional security and stability, and in order to bring peace to the country, it is imperative that the coup leader find new ways to cooperate with ASEAN, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on 1 March in a meeting with Philippine's President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in Manila. The Malaysian PM went on to say that the Myanmar issue has implications for Malaysia and more than 200,000 people have fled Myanmar and sought refuge.

Rita French, the UK Ambassador for International Human Rights, speaking at the the 52nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on 6 March, condemned Myanmar military council's use of brutal methods such as airstrikes, sexual violence and house burnings. She reiterated that the United Kingdom will work for an arms embargo and international sanctions to stop the military council's terrorist attacks, adding that the culture of impunity for the Myanmar military can only be ended if the perpetrators can be brought to justice.

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.