

Weekly News Review

Issue 103, 3 - 9 May 2023



The attack on humanitarian convoy, a lesson to be taken

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Introduction

Due to the wider civil war caused by the military coup, millions of Myanmar people have already fled their homes. There is a huge demand for humanitarian aid for those who were really hurt and those whose lives were truly destroyed during the competition between the military council and the Spring Revolution forces.

However, international humanitarian aid is far from being available to the people of Myanmar who really need it. In the past few days, a convoy of the ASEAN Humanitarian Coordination Center (AHA Center) was attacked.

Our BNI – Myanmar Peace Monitor's weekly news review for this week highlights the recent attack on a convoy of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and other related matters.

Incident

On 7 May, the convoy of AHA Centre was shot while travelling to the liaison office of the Pa-O National Liberation Army (PNLO) based on Hsihseng-Sikekhaung road in Hsihseng Township of southern Shan State, to provide aid to the Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

The convoy, carrying diplomats from Indonesia and Singapore and officials from the AHA Center, came under fire. The military council, military-backed Pa-O National Organization/Pa-O National Army (PNO/PNA) and the PNLO which signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) claimed no responsibility for the shooting. They themselves are making accusations of shooting each other.

According to the statement by the PNLO on 11 May, this is the process led by the PNLO through coordination between the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST) delegation, the Office of the ASEAN Special Representative for Myanmar and the AHA Center. It condemns any individual or any organization which commits



such violence. The shooting, which took place 200 meters north of Nanaw village in Hsihseng Township, was carried out by five terrorists who were waiting, a military official of the military-backed PNO told the Radio Free Asia (RFA).

"The incident took place in the PNO-active area. They invaded and shot it. There was no problem. I don't know why they fired."¹



Related News

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is finalizing a "comprehensive" needs assessment in Myanmar as it continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the crisis-hit country. ASEAN hopes this assessment can be completed when leaders from the group meet in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia during their annual summit from 9 to 11 May. ASEAN's needs assessment will include the number of people who need assistance, which locations such help is needed at, and what aid is required, said Secretary-General of ASEAN Kao Kim Hourn.

"There are people who because of the violence on the ground, have to move. People who really are not able to get access to

¹ Convoy carrying diplomats was attacked in Hsihseng Township.

<http://rb.gy/b7jqd>

the things that they need to survive. And I think those are the people we will focus on," said Kao Kim Hourn. ²

Regarding the attack on the convoy of AHA Centre, Indonesian President Joko Widodo who arrived in East Nusa Tenggara of Indonesia to attend the ASEAN Summit, said at a press conference on 8 May that it is disappointing that such an attack occurred when ASEAN's aid work was about to begin in Myanmar. ³

Indonesian President Joko Widodo also said the "shootout" would not deter efforts by Indonesia and ASEAN to push for peace in Myanmar. ⁴

Regarding the attack on the convoy of the AHA Center, the United States Department of State announced that we are deeply concerned by reports that unknown assailants in Myanmar shot at an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) convoy under military escort. These attacks in Shan State come as the regime's violence and disregard for the rule of law have led to greater instability on the ground, all while the regime has continued to neglect its commitments under the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus.

The United States Department of State also warned that the military regime must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including rules on the protection of diplomatic personnel and civilians. ⁵

Review

The recent attack on a military convoy carrying the officials from the AHA Center and diplomats from Singapore and Indonesia in the area controlled by the military council, military-backed PNO

2 ASEAN finalising comprehensive humanitarian needs assessment in Myanmar <http://rb.gy/5v55i>

3 International condemns ASEAN diplomatic convoy. <http://rb.gy/3z1kc>

4 Indonesia's Jokowi calls for end to violence in Myanmar after attack on ASEAN convoy <http://rb.gy/5q2pj>

5 The Attack on AHA Centre Convoy <http://rb.gy/6jspd>



During the two years of the military coup, the areas that they can actually rule have gradually narrowed.



and the PNLO which signed the NCA is a lesson which should be taken by the ASEAN, UN agencies and INGOs, which are making management of international humanitarian aid.

The military council and its allies are no longer in a position to guarantee even their own security. They are facing the resistances by the Spring Revolution forces all over the country. During the two years of the military coup, the areas that they can actually rule have gradually narrowed. It will be a long time before international humanitarian aid reaches the people of Myanmar who are really in need if international organizations are making approaches based on their interest by making cooperation and affiliation only with the junta and obtaining the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the existence of organizations and employees' residence permit,

Now, there are 1.8 million people who have been displaced by the war in all parts of Myanmar. Among them, there are more than 1.2 million refugees in Sagaing and Magway Regions. The time has come to find new methods and approaches in order that international humanitarian aid may reach to the Myanmar people in real need from Karenni (Kayah) State, Mon State and Tanintharyi Region along the Thai-Myanmar border, India-Myanmar border in Chin State and Sagaing Region and Magway Region.

Instead of muttering incessantly the impractical words "the cessation of violence and seeking solution through dialogues", the ASEAN and UN member countries should continue working with various groups that are in the closest situation to the public. It is viewed that efforts should be made to reach humanitarian aid to the war-affected people in the areas controlled by the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (ERO) and the National Unity Government (NUG).

International community is required to urgently seek a solution to the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Myanmar people who are in real need by taking a lesson from the attack on the convoy of the AHA Center in Hsihseng Township of Shan State.

Weekly HighLight News



Artillery shelling wounds three children in Dawei

5 May 2023

Three children were wounded by the military council's artillery shelling in Kadwonshaung village in Dawei Township of Tanintharyi Region, locals told the Than Lwin Times.

At around 6 pm on 2 May, the artillery force stationed on Zahar mountain fired two rounds of heavy shells into Kadwonshaung village although there were no battles.

Ma Phyu Phyu Thin, 6, Maung Aung Myo Min, 8 and Ma Nyein Tha Zin, 10, got wounds to their heads and legs.

Social organizations sent three wounded children to Dawei 100-bedded military hospital.

The military council's artillery force fired heavy shells into the village as it got the news that the PDFs were present in the village, according to locals.

Since the coup, the military council's shelling killed at least 20 locals in Dawei Township, according to the figures released by local research teams.

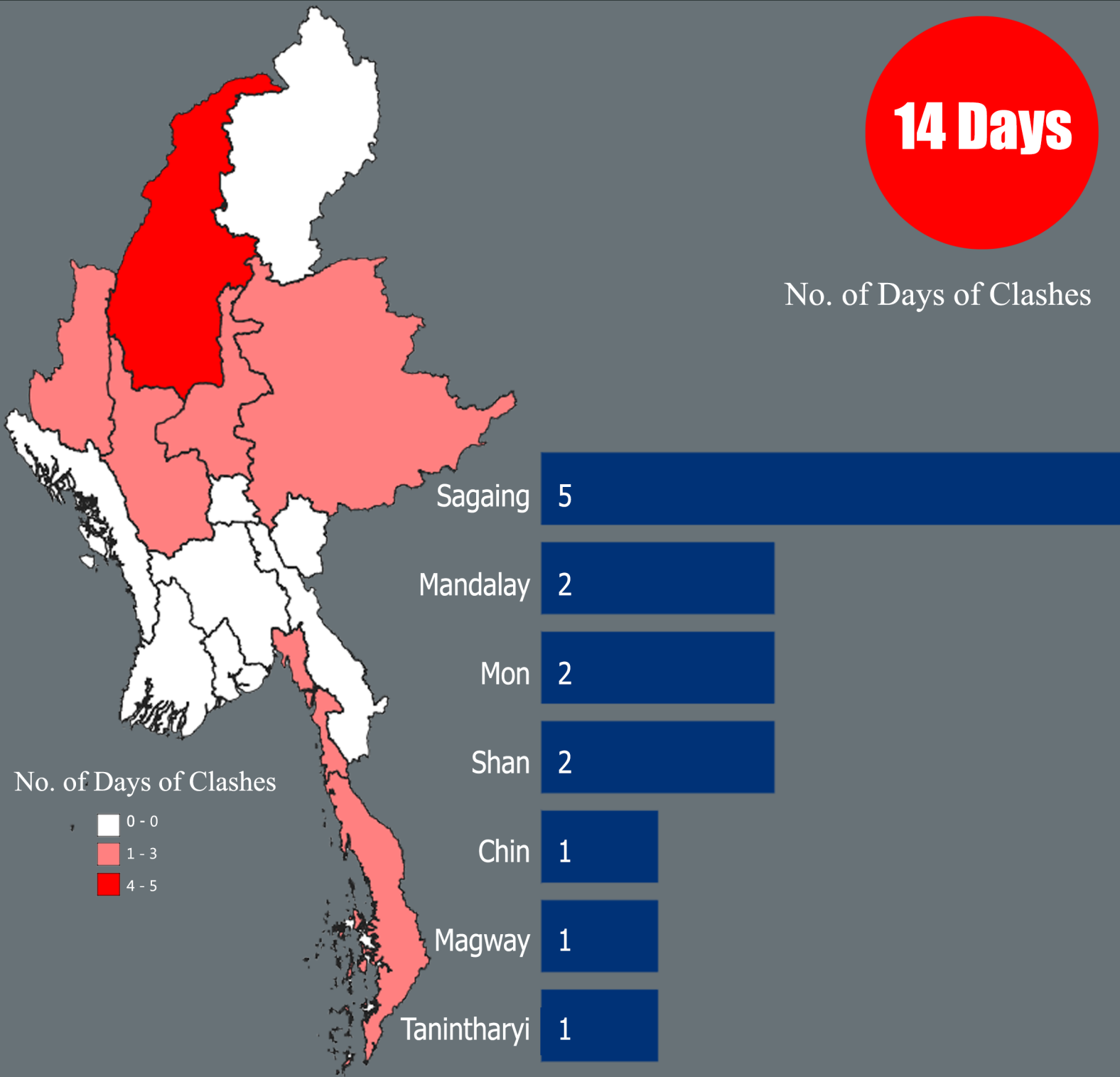
Part II

What Happened this Week

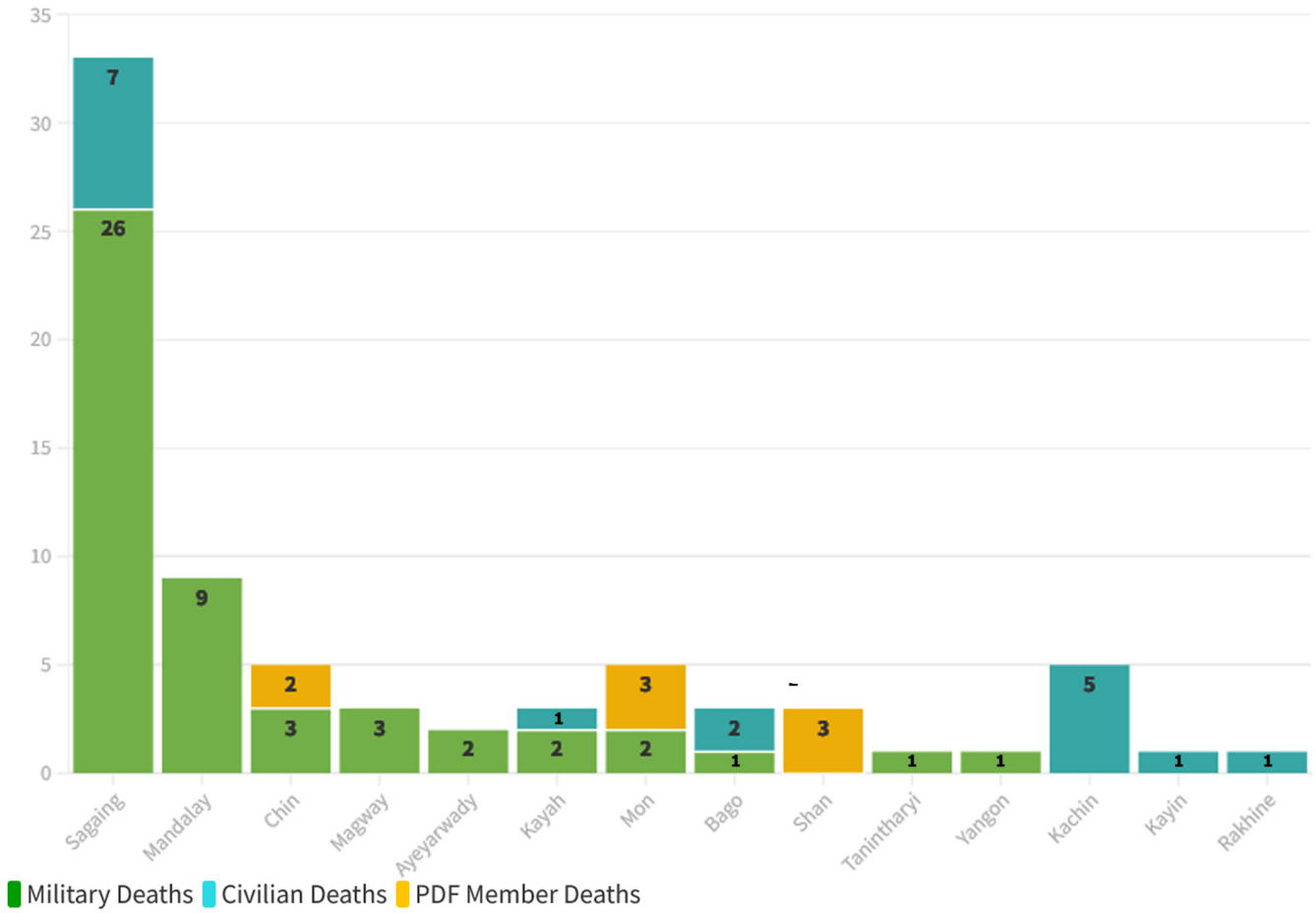
According to the record from the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor, there were 14 days of clashes between the military council, the People's Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) and the Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) from May 3 to 9. Take a look at the regions and states, Sagaing Region stood first on the list of clashes, with five days. The number of clashes may be higher than that as the clashes in townships are recorded by day.

14 Days

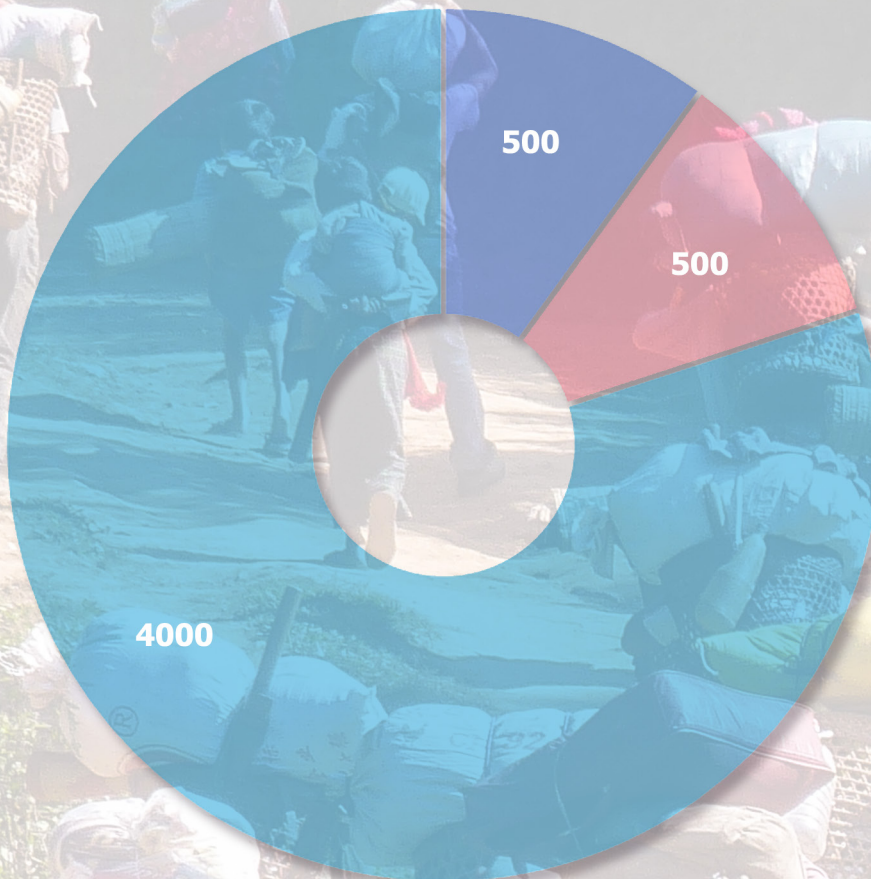
No. of Days of Clashes



Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths
3 - 9 May 2023



5000 Total Number of IDPs (3 - 9 May 2023)

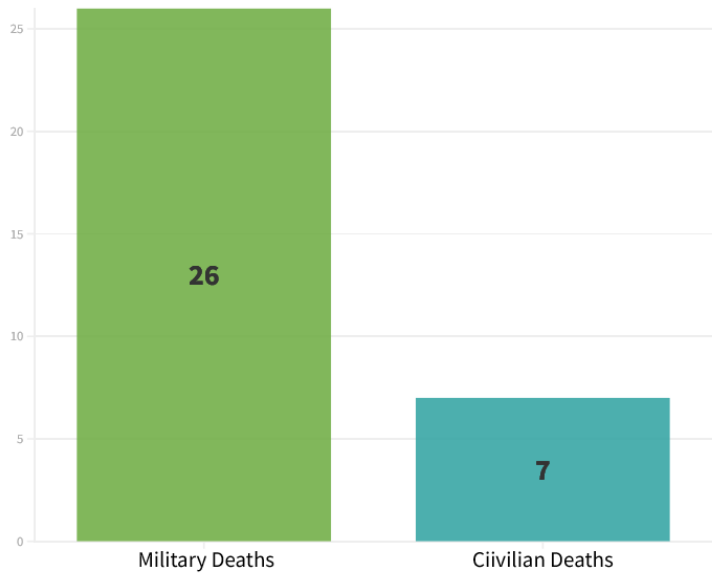


■ Sagaing ■ Mon ■ Shan



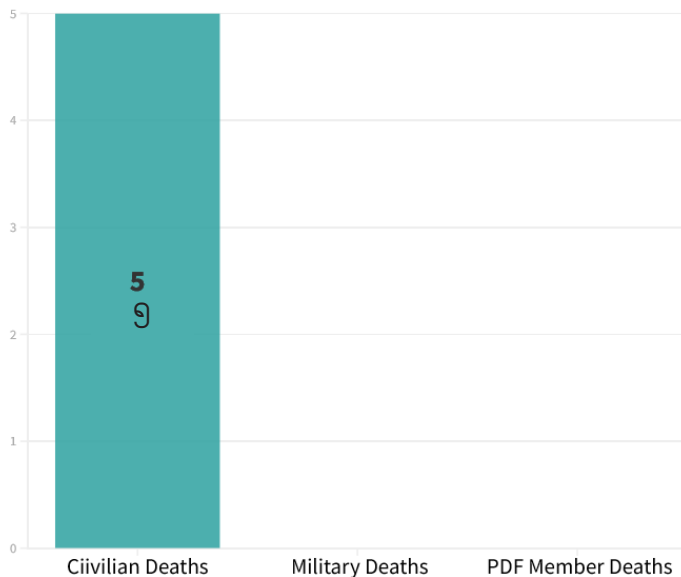
No. of Days of Clashes

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Sagaing Region

Sixteen military council soldiers were killed in the battles between the military council and the PDFs in Shwebo, Monywa, Myaung and Myinmu Townships. The military council’s bombings killed ten junta soldiers in Ayardaw, Sagaing and Wetlet Townships. On 4 May, seven civilians including three children were killed in the military council’s bombing in Pakekhayar village in Minkin Township. Over 4,000 locals from KhinU and Htigyaing Townships have fled to safer places as the military council is carrying out an offensive by torching civilian houses.



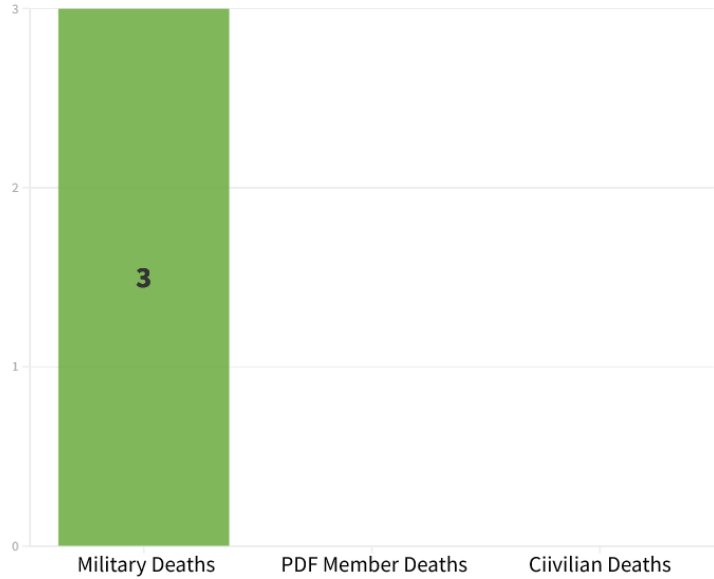
Kachin State

On 6 May, the bodies of two men who died of gunshot wounds were found on the main road going to Hpkant-Lonekhin at the entrance of Hmawsisar village in Lonekhin village-tract of Hpakant Township. On 8 May, three people—two civilians from the gate and a vendor, were killed in a shooting on the toll gate near a waterfall at the entrance of Sadon town in Waingmaw Township, by a combined force of the military council and people’s militia force headed by U Shwe Min.



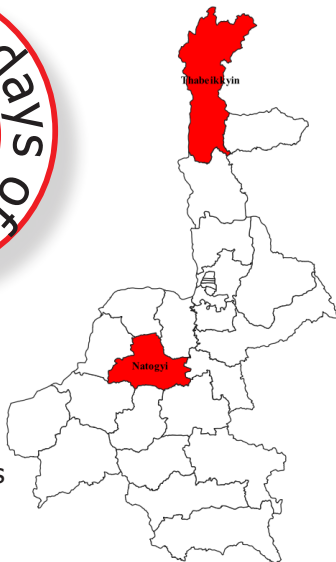
No.of Days of Clashes

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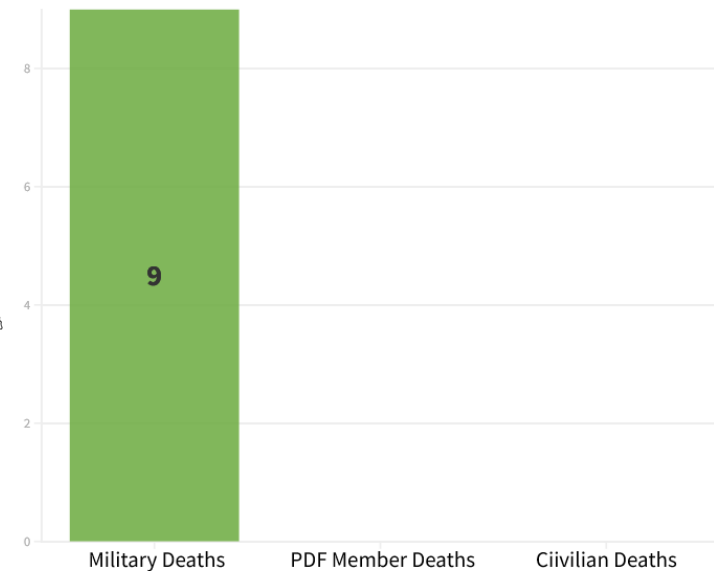
Magway Region

On 4 May, one military council soldier was killed in an attack on an assembly office at No.2 Development Affairs ward in Yesagyo Township. On 4 May, two Pyu Saw Htee members were killed in an ambush attack between Thayetkan village and Soskantike village in Myaing Township.



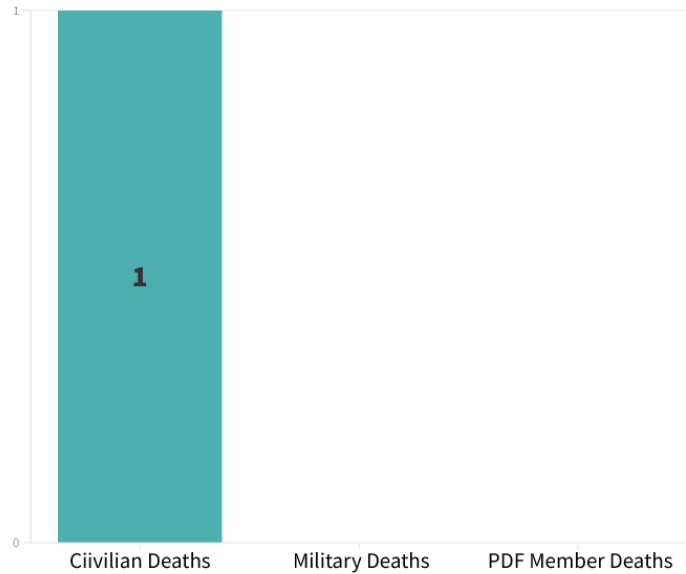
No.of Days of Clashes

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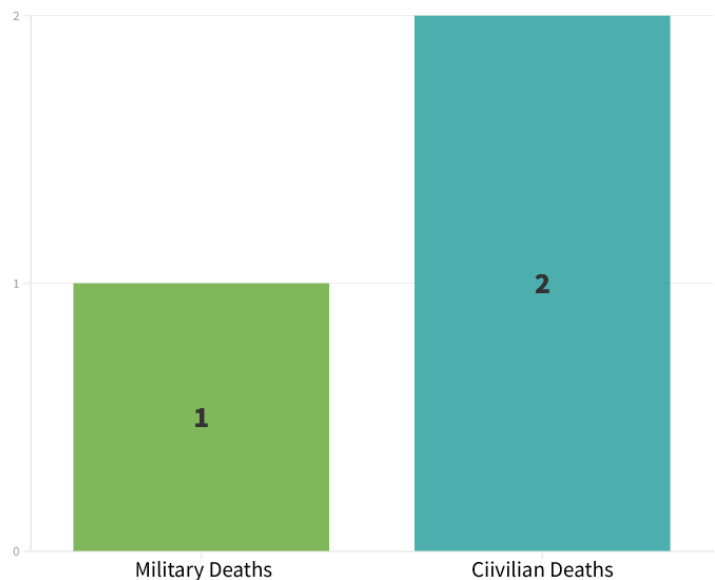
Mandalay Region

Two military council soldiers were killed in the battles between the military council and the PDF in Thabeikkyin and Natogyi Townships. Seven military council soldiers were killed in drone attacks in Ngazun and Natogyi Townships.



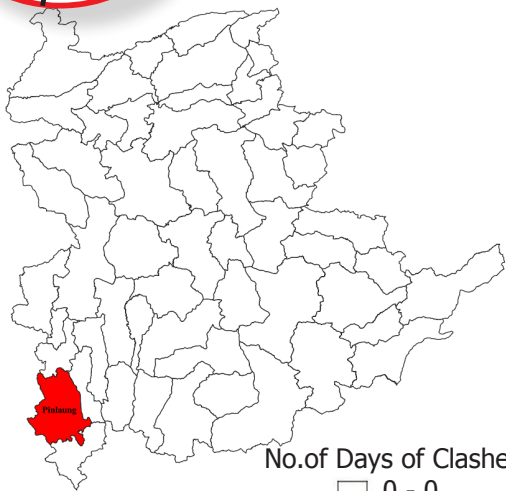
Karen State

On 6 May, a vehicle loaded with members of Karen Border Guard Force (BGF) hit and killed a civilian on motorcycle near a monastery in new Thingunyinaung village in Myawaddy Township.



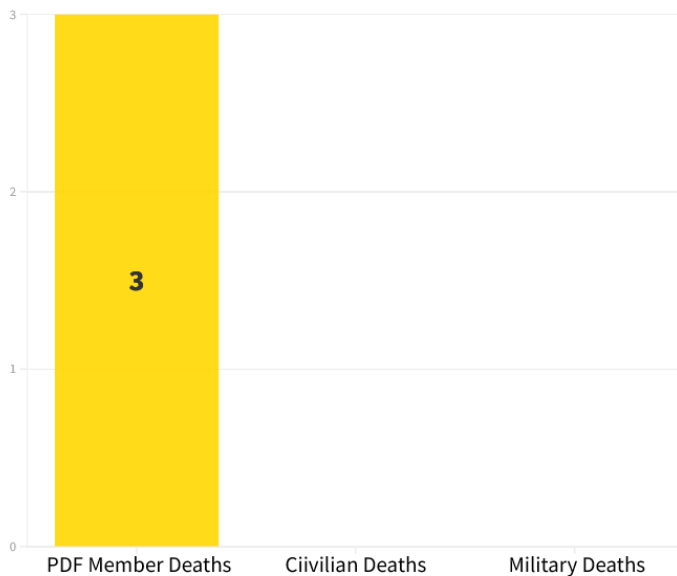
Bago Region

On 3 May, a 20-year-old boy was shot dead by the military council in Natthankwin village in Kyaukkyi Township for no apparent reason. On 4 May, Ko Bo Bo from Oukphyat ward in Phyu Township got arrested as he went to the market without a motorcycle license. He died in Phyu Myoma police station. On 8 May, one military council soldier was killed in a mine attack on the soldiers who came to repair the damaged Bonethayaw bridge near Natthankwin village in Kyaukkyi Township.



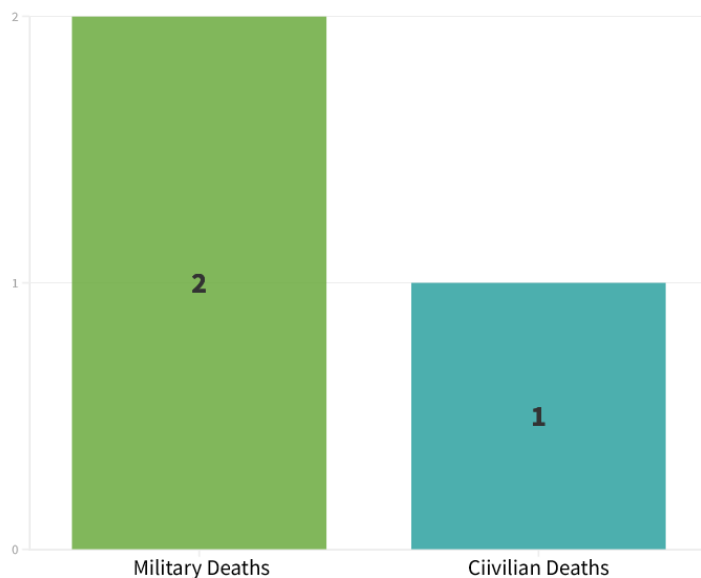
No. of Days of Clashes

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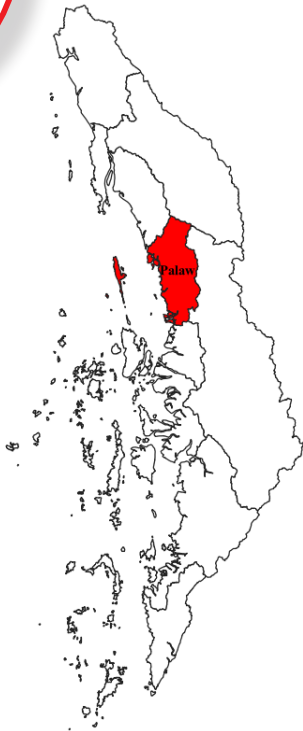
Shan State

On 3 and 8 May, three PDF members were killed in the battle between the military council and the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) in Pinlaung Township. Due to the ground offensive and airstrikes since 4 May, nearly 500 locals have fled to safer places in Ywangan Township.



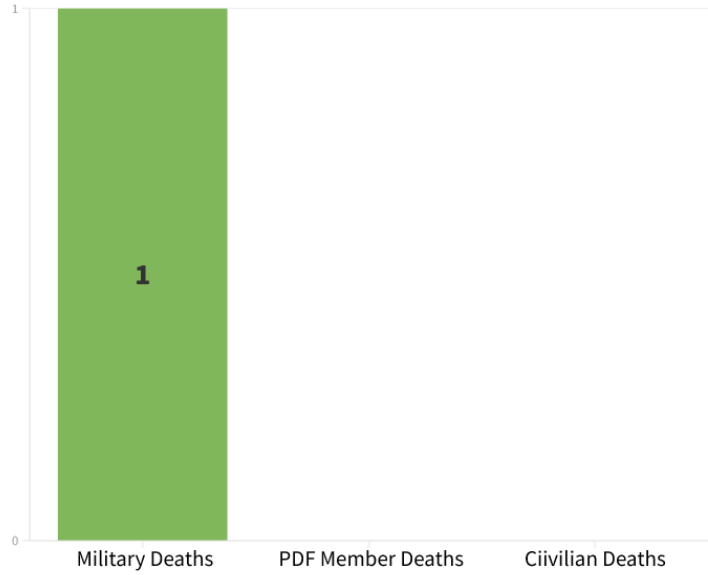
Karenni (Kayah) State

On 4 May, Lt-Col Myat Min Thu from Hteesaeckhar checkpoint near Light Infantry Battalion-530 in Loilimlay in Loikaw Township beat a soldier who was drinking alcohol. Lt-Col Myat Min Thu was shot dead by that soldier. The soldier shot himself dead after shooting the battalion commander dead. The body of a 40-year-old displaced man who went missing in the eastern part of Demoso at night on 26 April was discovered by his father on 8 May.



No. of Days of Clashes

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- 0 - 1



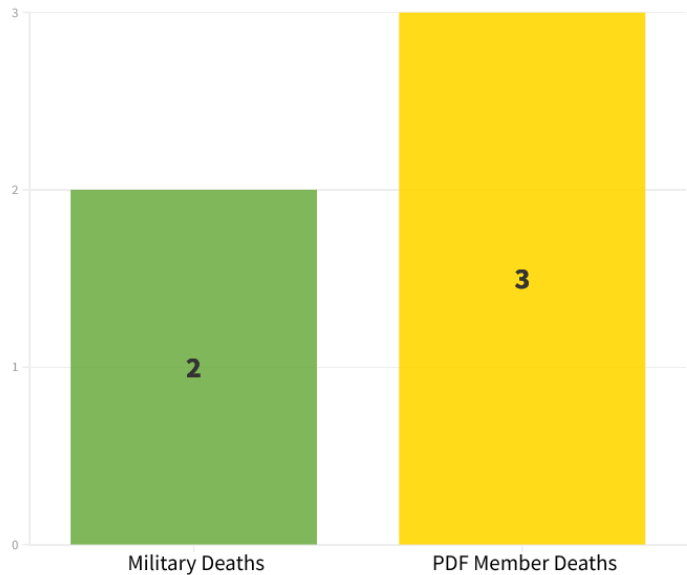
Tanintharyi Region

On 3 May, fighting took place between the military council and the PDF in Htaminmasar village in Palaw Township. On 7 May, captain Myo Lin Oo from No.302 Artillery Unit based in Zahar village in Dawei Township was shot dead by an unnamed armed group.



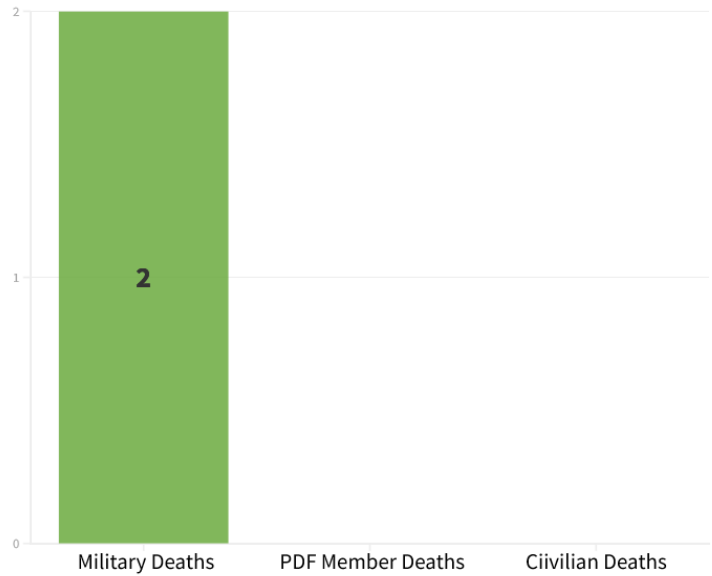
No. of Days of Clashes

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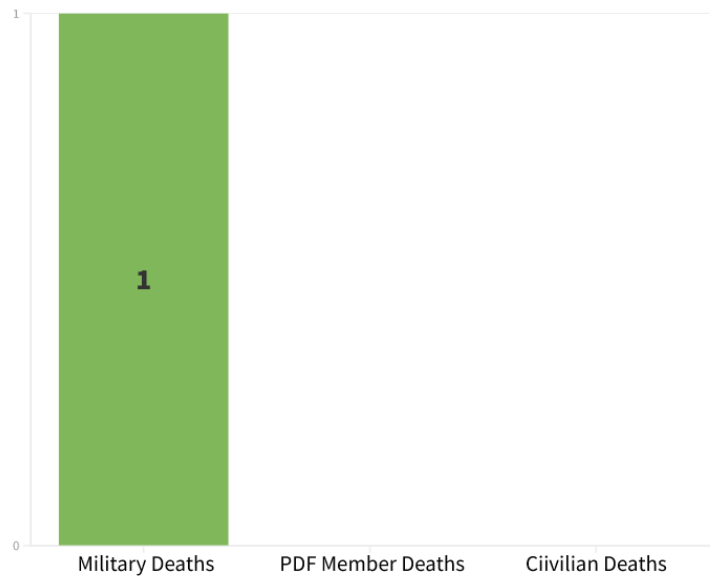
Mon State

Two military council soldiers were killed in a battle between the military council and a combined force of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the PDF in Bilin and Kyaikto Townships. On 6 and 7 May, three PDF members were killed in two-day bombings by the military council's air force in northern Ye Township. Over 500 locals from Wapathae, Baelamu, Htapataw and Chaunghnakhwa villages fled to safer places due to the two-day bombings.



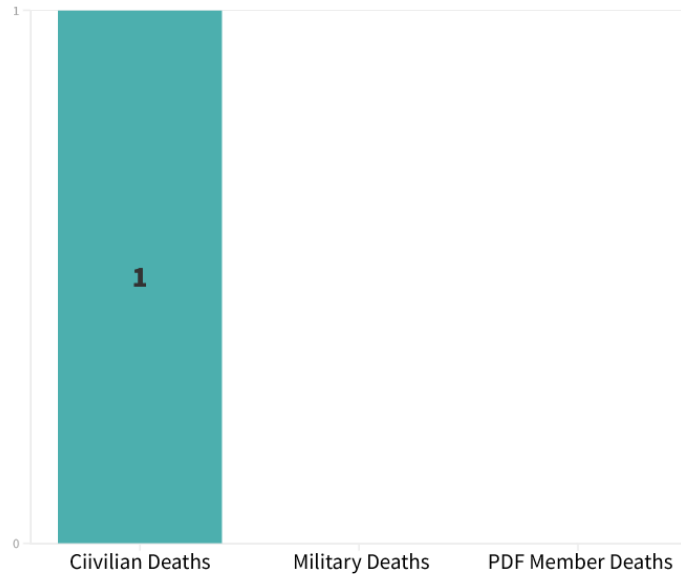
Ayeyarwady Region

On 4 May, a military council soldier who stood guard in Padaekaw village in Bogale Township was shot dead by an unknown armed group. On 5 May, U Aung Htike (aka) Ye Yint, a sergeant from the military intelligence was shot dead by the PDF on Natmaw road in Kangyikone village in Hinthada Township.



Yangon Region

One military council soldier was killed in a remote mine attack by the PDF on an inspection gate in Koelonekwin village in Hmawbi Township on 4 May.



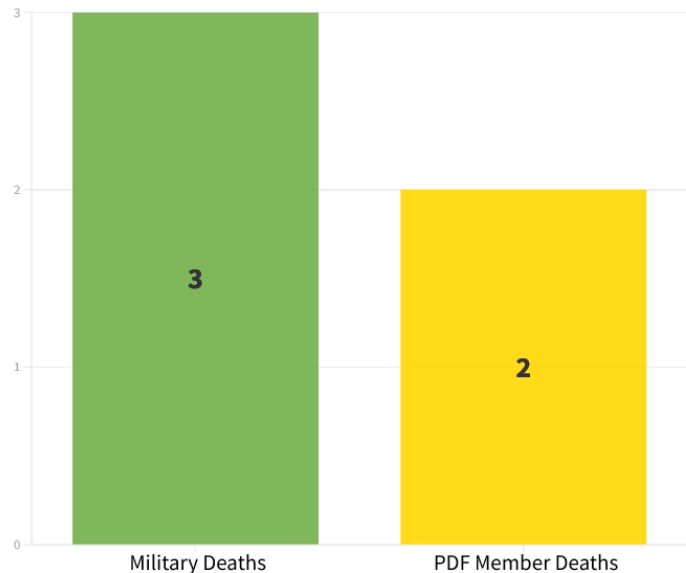
Arakan State

On 3 May, a four-year-old child died on the spot due to the explosion of war remnants in Wetkyein (Myo) village in northern Maungdaw Township on 3 May.



No. of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1



Chin State

On 5 May, three junta soldiers were killed in an attack by the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) on the strategic headquarters based on Matupi-Hakha road in Matupi Township. On 8 May, two CDF members were killed and three others wounded by the military council's airstrikes on two places in Hakha Township of Chin State.



Members of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) on 3 May called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to go beyond the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) to resolve the crisis in Myanmar. The Forum sent an open letter to ASEAN leaders ahead of the ASEAN Summit on 9 May. The letter was signed by 25 human rights organizations from Asia.

The forum also called on ASEAN to immediately organize a constructive and inclusive dialog with all relevant stakeholders and parties, including the Myanmar National Unity Government (NUG) as the democratically elected government, representatives of Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs), and Myanmar civil society groups. It also called on ASEAN to work closely with the United Nations, particularly the Security Council and the Secretary-General, in efforts to resolve the crisis in Myanmar.

Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan said on 9 May that the lack of progress in implementing ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus was due to the military council. The ASEAN member said any attack on civilians is reprehensible and cannot be tolerated. It went on to criticize the ongoing violence as being contrary to the Five-Point Consensus that Senior General Min Aung Hlaing himself had accepted.

The 42nd ASEAN Summit will be held 9-11 May in Labuan Bajo by Indonesia, which holds the rotating chairmanship of the regional bloc. During the summit, issues related to Myanmar are likely to be discussed, although Myanmar representatives will not



Although no details of the talks with the various key players have been released, Indonesian diplomats are said to have held more than 60 engagements with all parties involved.



be present. At a press conference ahead of the ASEAN summit on 8 May, Indonesian President Joko Widodo spoke about curbing violence in Myanmar.

On the other hand, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi revealed that Indonesia has been quietly engaging for months with the military council and ethnic minority armed groups, including the pro-democracy NUG in exile, to initiate a peace process in the country where violence is escalating.

Although no details of the talks with the various key players have been released, Indonesian diplomats are said to have held more than 60 engagements with all parties involved.

National Unity Government Presidential Office spokesman U Kyaw Zaw also confirmed that the rotating ASEAN chair has held engagements with armed ethnic groups, including the NUG. Amid such developments, a humanitarian convoy carrying ASEAN representatives came under fire from an unknown armed group in Hsihseng Township in southern Shan State. Singapore and Indonesia condemned the armed attack on the humanitarian convoy.

At the same time, the Indonesian president called for an end to violence in conflict-torn Myanmar and said the attack would not hinder ongoing ASEAN and Indonesian efforts to bring peace to Myanmar.

In an 8 May statement, the NUG Ministry of Foreign Affairs also strongly condemned the attack on the convoy carrying the regional diplomats. It stated that such attacks contradict the NUG's revolutionary principles, that it will act in accordance with the rules of law and international principles, including the Geneva Conventions, that the NUG and its partners did not order the attack, and that the incident will not be ignored.

On 5 May, about 20 Rohingya refugees along with Bangladeshi officials visited two model villages in Maungdaw Township built for the repatriation trial project. However, the visiting Rohingya group told the media that they would not agree to voluntarily return to Myanmar.

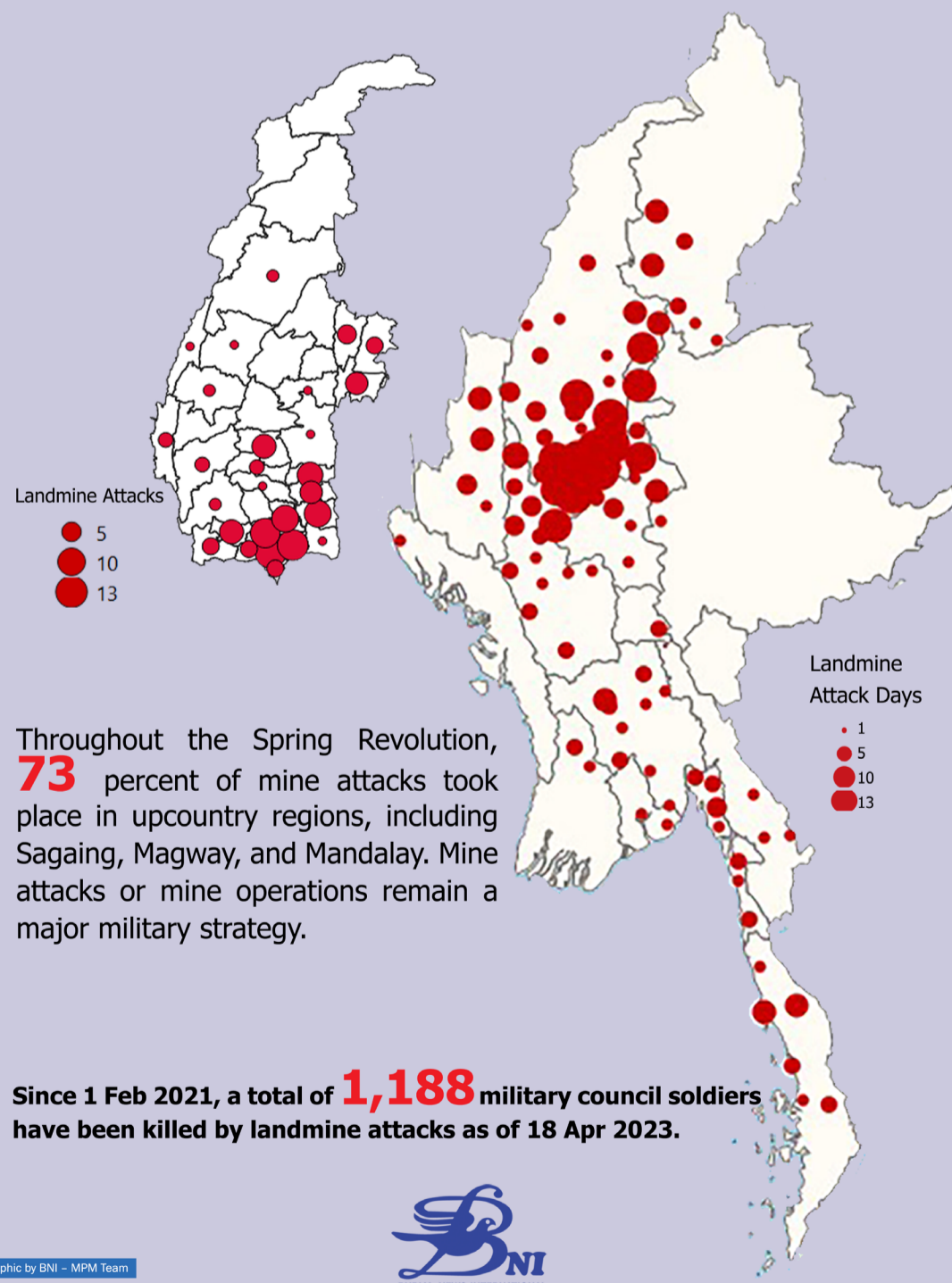
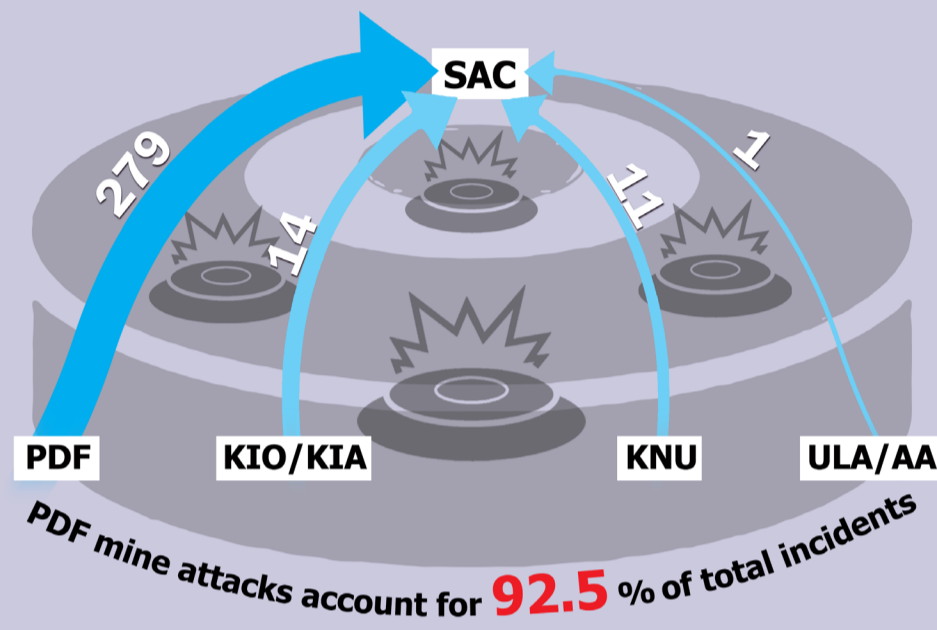
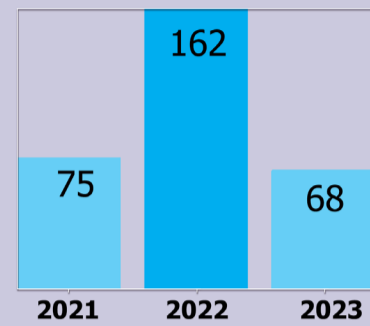
Mine attacks on Myanmar junta troops

1 Feb 2021 - 18 April 2023

305

Days of mine attacks

Mine attacks by year



Infographic by BNI - MPM Team

A record of resistance mine attacks on military council troops.

8 May 2023

According to the record by the Burma News International (BNI)-Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM), the military council troops experienced 305 days of mine attacks by the resistance forces till 18 April, 2023 since the coup on 1 February, 2021. The number of mine attacks will be higher than that as our BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor records mine attacks in townships by day.

Compared the mine attacks by year and month, December, 2021 topped the list of mine attacks with 44 days. May, 2022 stood first on the list of mine attacks with 34 days. March, 2023 saw the highest number of mine attacks, with 37 days. Taking a look at the yearly mine attack, 75 days of mine attacks were recorded in 2021, 162 days in 2022 and 68 days till 18 April, 2023.

People's Defense Forces/ Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) carried out mine attacks on the military council troops across the country for 279 days. It accounts for over 91 per cent of the total mine attacks.

The Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EOs) like the Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA) carried out mine attacks for days, the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA) for 11 days and the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) for one day.

Taking a look at the mine attacks in regions and states, Sagaing Region in which some areas are being controlled by the PDFs, topped the list of mine attacks with 139 days, followed by Magway Region with 51 days, Mandalay Region with 30 days. Sagaing Region, Magway Region and Mandalay Region in the upper Myanmar accounted for over 73 per cent of mine attacks on the military council throughout the Spring Revolution. It can be said that mine attack strategy (or) mine operation is said to be a major military strategy in the resistance which has spread across the upper Myanmar.

A total of 1,188 military council soldiers were killed by the mine attacks till 18 April, 2023 since 1 February, 2021.

BNI - MPM

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.