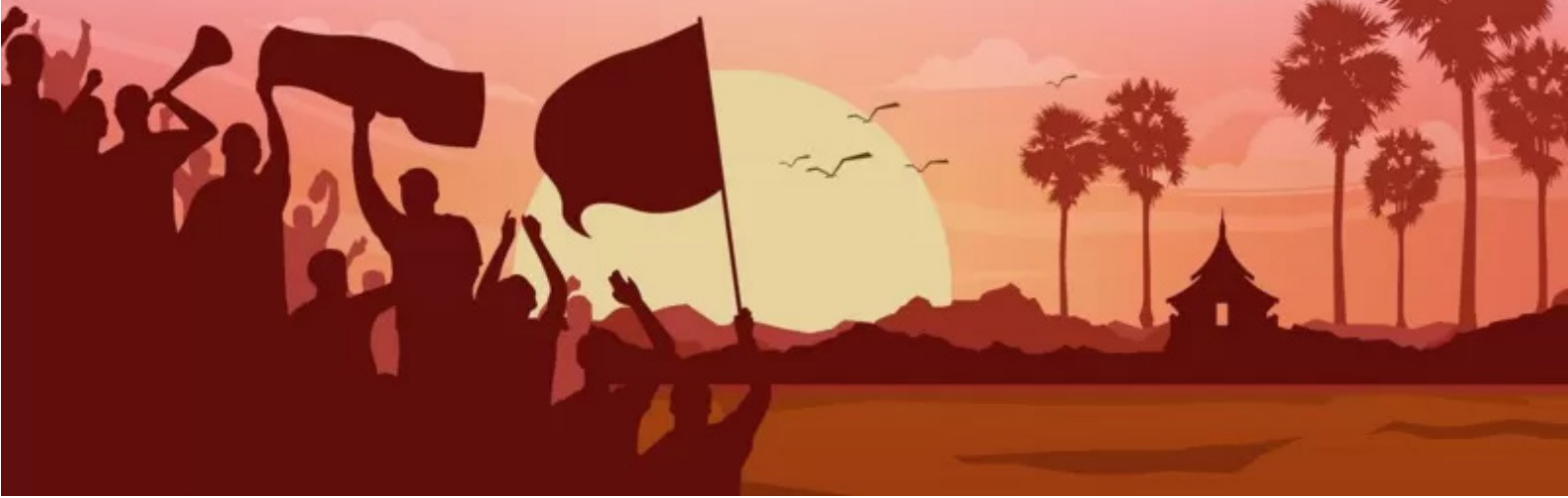


# Weekly News Review

Issue 106, 24 - 30 May 2023

## The Sagaing Forum: Delving into New Military-Political Landscapes





# The Sagaing Forum: Delving into New Military-Political Landscapes

## Introduction

Sagaing has been the strongest resistance stronghold during the Spring Revolution in Myanmar. The region hosts the largest number of People's Defense Forces-Local Defense Forces (PDFs-LDFs) leading an armed revolution against the Myanmar's military regime. The civil war has also produced the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sagaing. At the same time, the region has seen the worst destruction at the hands of Myanmar army troops, coupled with all forms of brutality.

On the one hand, there have always been disputes between PDFs-LDFs, all of whom have the common goal of eliminating the military dictatorship. Nevertheless, Sagaing's defensive war against the military regime continues unabated. This is also the region where unarmed, nonviolent strikes still occur on the ground. On the last two days of May, the "Sagaing Forum" was convened and the military and administrative affairs of the region were discussed.

This issue of Burma News International (BNI) - Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM) Weekly News Review examines the new military and political landscapes at the Sagaing Forum based on relevant news and data.

## The Sagaing Forum

The 1st Sagaing Forum, held on 30-31 May 2023, saw the participation of a total of 173 resistance groups from 28 townships, along with 31 observers. The forum encompassed four distinct sections: political, military, administrative, and miscellaneous. The miscellaneous section dealt with issues related to strike movements, the civil disobedience movement (CDM), natural resources, and aid to the displaced, according to the 1 June forum statement.

The Sagaing Forum agreed on a common goal for the Sagaing Region: an end to all forms of tyranny, including military dictatorship, the achievement of self-determination, and the creation of a federal democratic union through a regional consultative council that can coordinate discussions and negotiations among political and revolutionary groups participating in the revolution against military dictatorship in the Sagaing Region. Furthermore, during the forum, participants put forth several important proposals. These included advocating for the immediate implementation of transitional measures at the regional level, the establishment of a self-determination policy at the regional level, the maintenance of checks and balances, and the consolidation of military and administrative groups in alignment with the principles outlined in the Federal Democracy Charter.

The Karen National Union (KNU) sent a message urging that the region be organized under the Sagaing Forum as a federal unit in the process of creating a new federal democratic union.



The respective forces of the Spring Revolution-the National Unity Government (NUG), the Chin National Front (CNF), the Burmese Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Yaw Defence Forces (YDF), Yaw People's Defence Force (YPDF), People's Revolutionary Army (PRA), Women's Warriors (Myaung), Bamar People's Liberation Army (BPLA), 96 SOLDIERS - PDF (Upper Myanmar), Myaung Township Defence Force and Security Force, General Strike Coordination Body (GSCB), People's Goal, University Students' Unions Alumni Force, Yadanabon University Students' Union, General Strike Committee of Nationalities (GSCN), Democratic Party for a New Society (HQ), Karenni State Consultative Council (KSCC), Ta'ang Political Consultative Committee (TPCC), Mon State Federal Council (MSFC), Ayeyarwady State Federal Council (AYYSFC), and National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) - also sent formal messages to the forum.

## Facts and Figures | News Events

According to data collected by the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor, there are no less than 86 PDFs-LDFs in Sagaing Region, although there may be other groups that are not listed.<sup>1</sup> Of the 86 groups waging the defensive war against the military council, as many as 15 are in Pale Township, followed by nine in Monwya, eight in Shwebo, seven in Ayadaw, and five in Wetlet.

Broken down by state and region, fighting remains fiercest in Sagaing Region. According to the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor's armed conflict dashboard ( as of 16 May 2023), more than 35 percent (665 days) of the fighting between Myanmar army troops and the People's Defence Forces-Local Defence Forces took place in Sagaing Region. Broken down by township, Pale Township recorded up to 60 days of clashes, followed by 42 days in Mingin,

---

1 People's Defense Force Dashboard <http://rb.gy/nmvp8>

38 days in Kani, and more than 20 days in Ayadaw, Budalin, Indaw, Katha, and Khin-U Townships. <sup>2</sup>

With the further expansion of the civil war as a result of the military coup, the number of internally displaced people has now increased to 1.6 million, of whom nearly 700,000 (more than 43 percent) are in Sagaing Region, out of reach of humanitarian assistance from UN agencies. Broken down by township, Khin-U tops the list with about 1.2 million, followed by more than 60,000 in Kanbalu and nearly 70,000 in Salingyi.<sup>3</sup>

In Sagaing Region in particular, the military council has found itself in a situation where it is struggling to maintain its territorial dominance as the defensive war continues to intensify. According to Data for Myanmar's data (as of 28 February 2023), Sagaing is the region where the military regime has committed the most arson attacks on civilian property, with 47,778 houses burned.



<sup>2</sup> People's Defense Force Dashboard <http://rb.gy/nmvp8>

<sup>3</sup> Internally Displaced Persons Situation in Myanmar <http://rb.gy/dudnu>



Furthermore, if we consider the airstrikes that can lead to massacres, such as the junta's airstrike on Pazigy village in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region is the most affected by the military regime's airstrikes. The military's airstrikes on the school in Let Yet Kone village in Depayin Township show the blatant inhumanity of the regime in Sagaing Region.

Unarmed and peaceful strikes remain active in Sagaing Region, while armed resistance continues to grow. As the military regime loses territorial control over the region, political and military analysts have even indicated that Sagaing will likely be the first region to be liberated during the Spring Revolution.





Despite the many people who have lost their lives fighting the brutality of the Myanmar's military regime, the resistance of the people in the Sagaing Region remains alive in various forms.



## Review

Examining the aforementioned facts and figures, it becomes evident that several People's Defence Forces-Local Defence Forces groups have shown immense courage in spearheading the armed revolution against the military regime. However, the degree of unity and coordination among these groups remains questionable.

Despite the many people who have lost their lives fighting the brutality of the Myanmar's military regime, the resistance of the people in the Sagaing Region remains alive in various forms. Bordering not only the Naga region and the Indian State of Manipur, but also the Kachin, northern Shan, Mandalay, Magway, and Chin, Sagaing-the second largest region after Shan State-can be considered a crucial political and military front of the Spring Revolution.

Given the circumstances, it has become crucial for the Sagaing Region, which is home to over five million people residing in 37 townships, to advance the revolution with a focus on political unity, military consolidation, and the implementation of robust and systematic administrative measures. The objectives set forth by the Sagaing Forum and its political process have the potential to pave the way for the liberation of the Sagaing Region.

It is worth noting that the Sagaing Forum holds the potential to usher in new military and pragmatic political landscapes, driven by the strength of coordination and mutual trust among the forces involved in the Spring Revolution, which are moving toward the elimination of military dictatorship and the creation of a federal democratic union.

# Weekly HighLight Quote



Being women, there can be times when we feel disheartened, no matter how strong we're physically. If you feel that way, just pull yourself together and remember that we can do it and keep up the fight. We're proud of all women comrades.



**Kyar Khin Sein**

The leader of  
T.G.R Women  
Drone Force – Myaung

(From "An interview  
with Kyar Khin Sein,  
leader of T.G.R Women  
Drone Force – Myaung"  
of BNI-MPM)





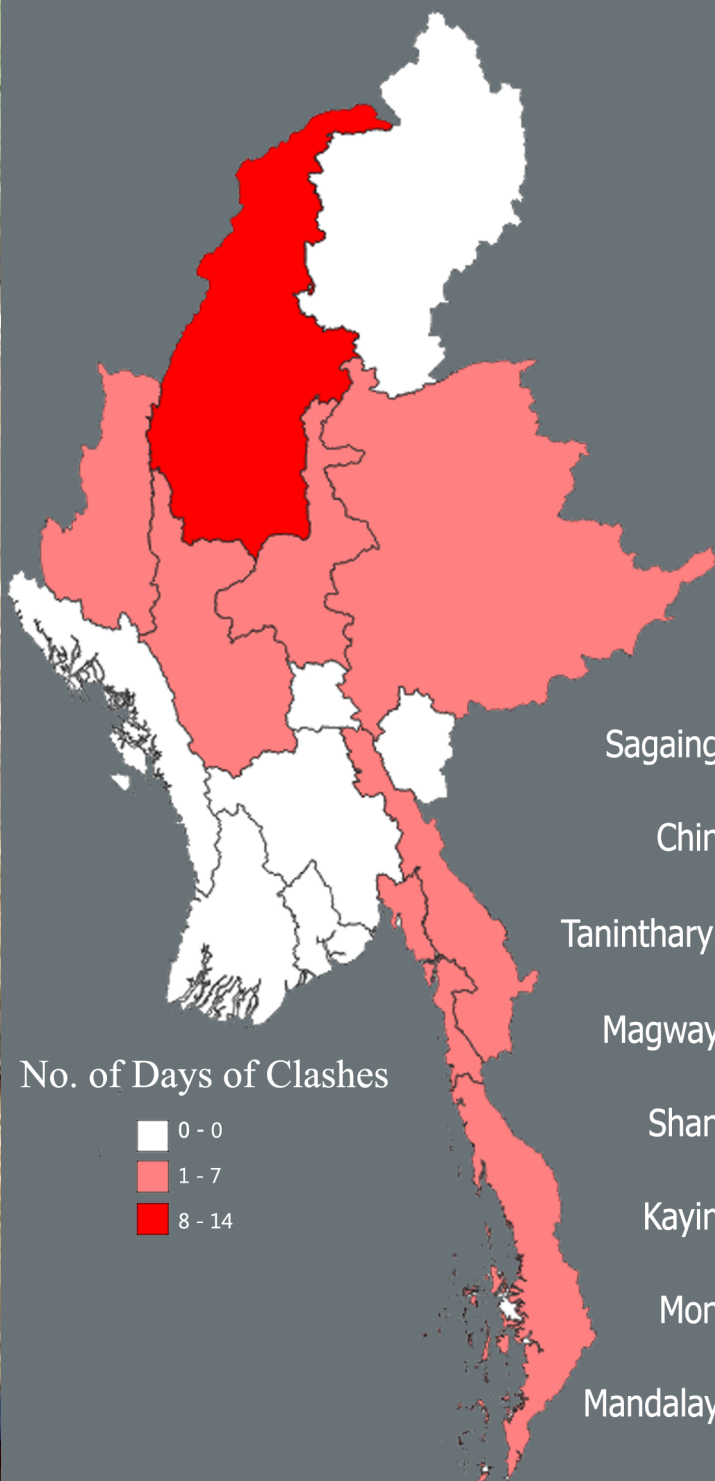
# Part II

## What Happened This Week

According to the Burma News International (BNI) - Myanmar Peace Monitor's record, 32 days of clashes were reported between the military council and the People's Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs) from 24 and 30 May. Sagaing Region topped the list of battles in regions and states, with 14 days. The total number of battles may be higher than that as the battles in townships are recorded by day.

**32 Days**

No. of Days of Clashes



Sagaing 14

Chin 4

Tanintharyi 3

Magway 3

Shan 3

Kayin 2

Mon 2

Mandalay 1

# Military, PDF Member and Civilian Deaths

24 - 30 May 2023



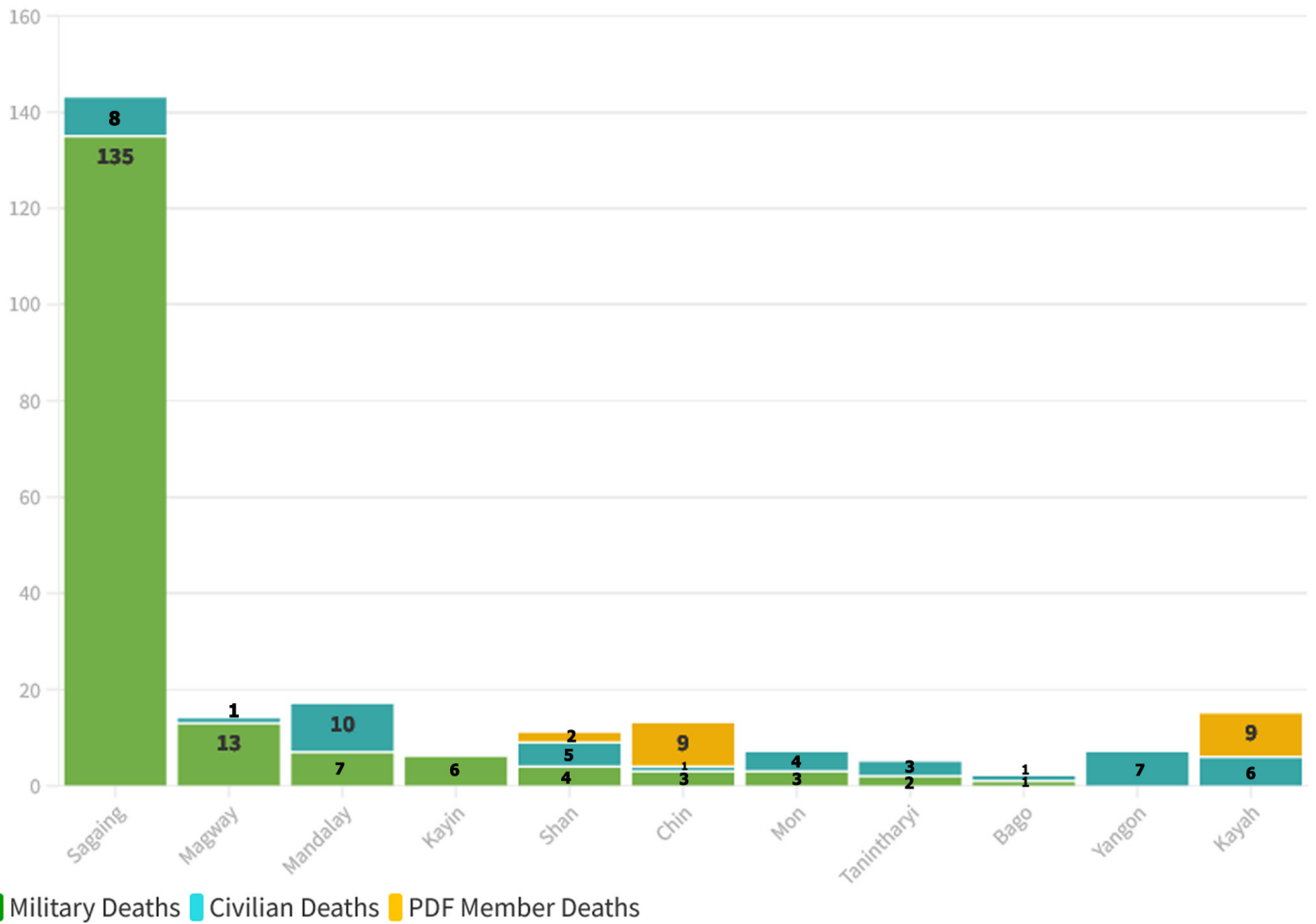
Military Deaths



PDF Member Deaths



Civilian Deaths



13000

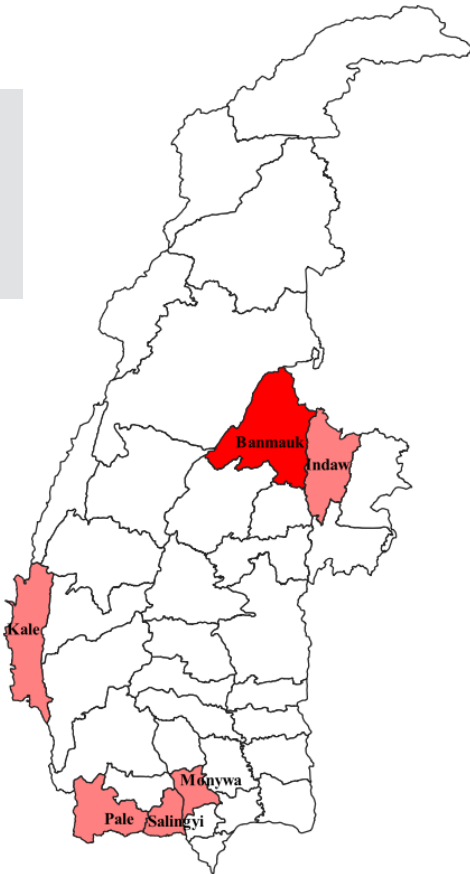
Total Number of IDPs (24 - 30 May 2023)





Total no of days of clashes

**14 Days**



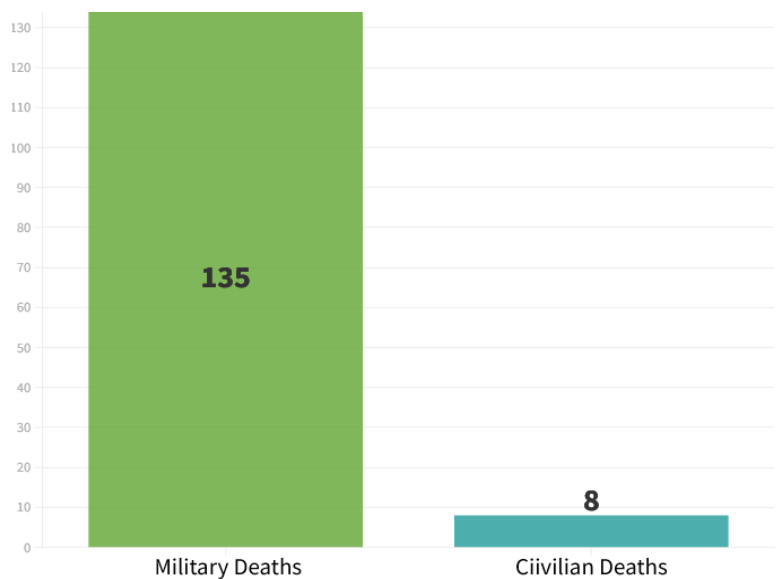
No.of Days of Clashes



## Sagaing Region

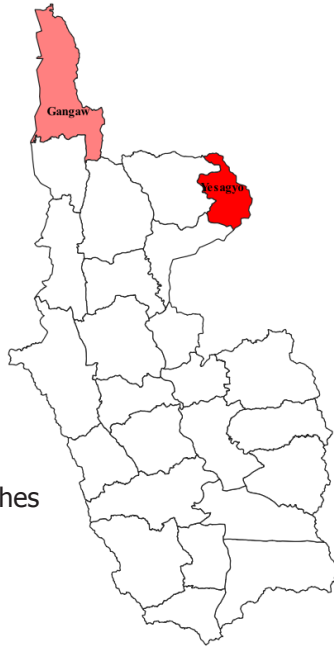
A total of 103 military council soldiers were killed in the battles between the military council troops and the PDFs in Salingyi, Banmauk, Monywa, Kalay, Pale and Indaw Townships. Thirty-one military council soldiers were killed in mine attacks in Yinmarbin, KhinU, Monywa and Budalin Townships. On 28 May, Ko Htway, a member of People’s Militia Force was killed as his wife threw an inaga bomb at her husband in a quarrel in Aungzeya Tatkone near Monywa-Pathein junction in Yinmarbin Township.

On 28 May, U Myo Thant Zin Tun, head of the Forest Department was killed by an unknown armed force on the river bank near Chipar village in Shwebo Township. On 29 May, two men on a motorbike were killed in a bomb blast near the Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) office on 19th road in new Aungzeya ward in Myinmu. Five civilians were killed in the military council’s shootings in Indaw, Bankmauk, Ayadaw and Kawlin Townships. Over 9,000 locals from Kani and Sagaing Townships fled to safer places due to the military council’s offensive.



Total no of days of clashes

3 Days

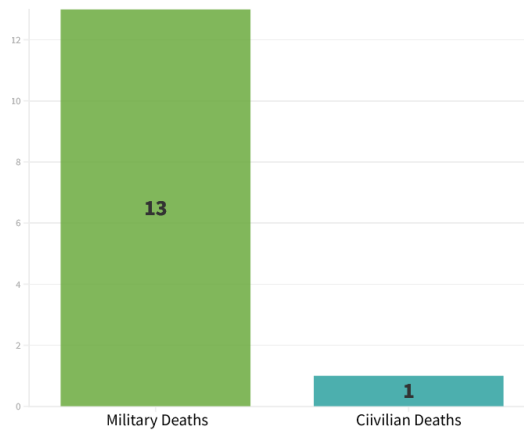


No. of Days of Clashes



## Magway Region

There were battles between the military council and a combined force of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the PDFs in Yesagyo and Gangaw Townships, killing 13 military council soldiers. On 26 May, the military council's artillery shelling killed a woman during the offensive in the villages of Yelaegyun in Yesagyo Township. Over 1,000 locals have fled to safer places.

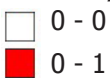


Total no of days of clashes

1 Day



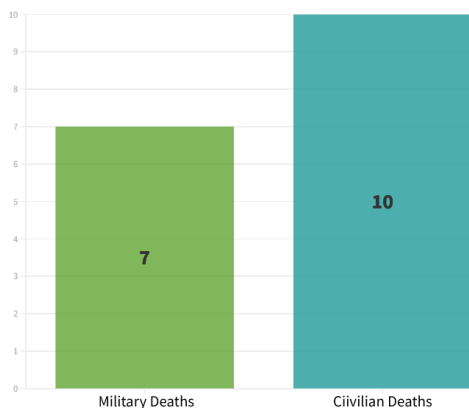
No. of Days of Clashes



## Mandalay Region

On 28 May, six military council soldiers were killed in a joint attack on the military council troops stationed at Aungmyaymingalar monastery and the electricity office in Mintada ward in eastern Mogok, by a combined force of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the PDF. On 24 May, two men were killed by an unknown armed force near Htanaungpinlae village in Natogyi Township. On 29 May, Ko Hein Win Zaw who completed Pyu Saw Htee training course, from Koepin village in Kyarhnyat village-tract in Thabeikkyin Township was shot dead by an unknown armed group.

Three locals from Myingyan, Taungtha and Thabeikkyin Townships were killed by the military council troops. On 26 May, five USDP members including the ward/village USDP chair were killed in a shooting by an unknown armed group in Htaukyit village in TadaU Township. On 24 May, more than 1,000 locals fled to safer places due to the military council's offensives in Magyisu village in Myingyan



Township.

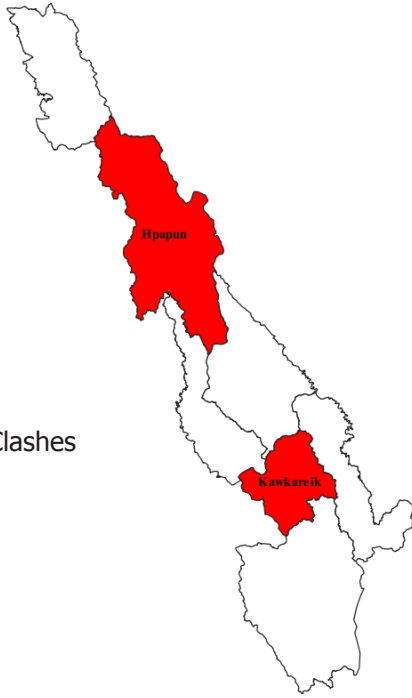


Total no of days of clashes

**2 Days**

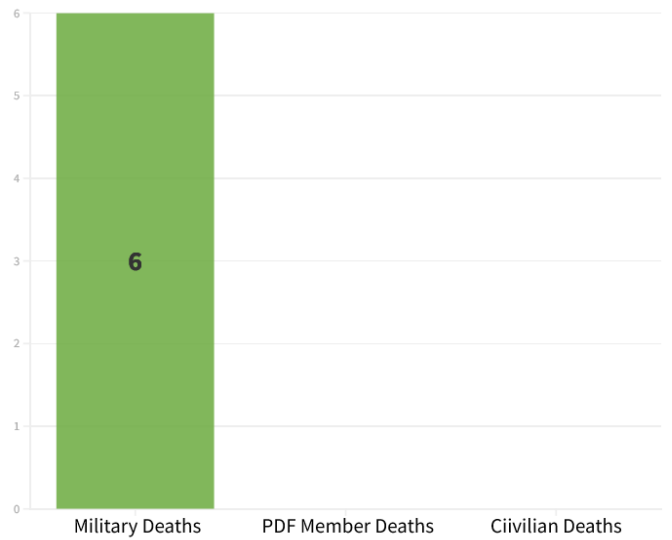
No. of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1



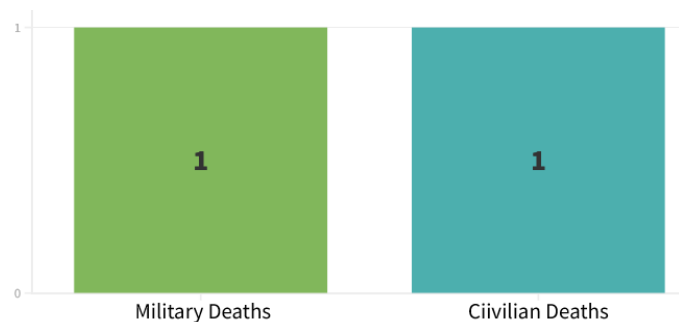
## Karen State

On 25 May, one military council soldier was killed in the battle between the military council troop and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Tamaingkone village near Kawkaik. On 26 May, five members of the Border Guard Force (BGF) were killed in the attack on the patrolling BGF by the KNLA.



## Bago Region

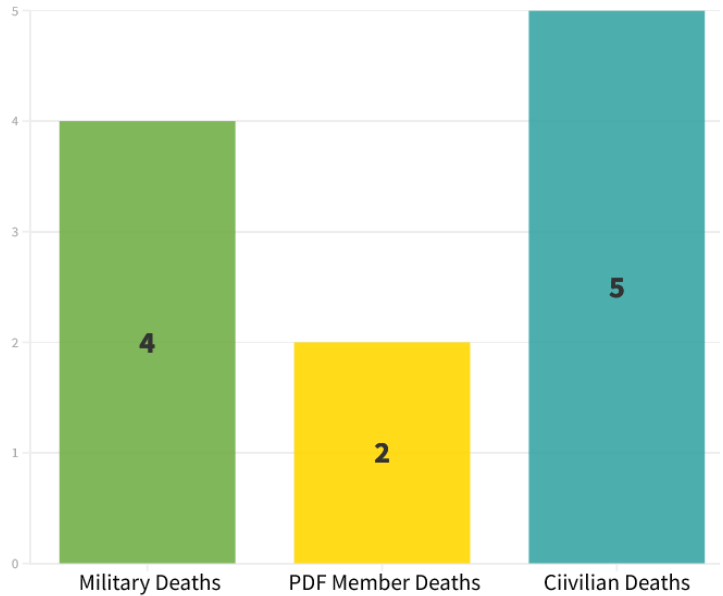
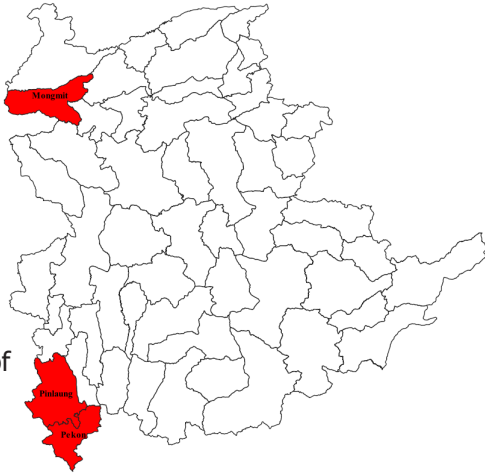
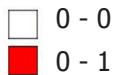
On 25 May, military council soldiers took 20 political prisoners from Kyaikzakaw prison in DaikU Township to the interrogation center. Of them, Ko Thant Zin Win was killed. On 29 May, sergeant Kyaw Htway who was being interrogated in connection with the escape of political prisoners from Taungoo prison died at the interrogation center.



Total no of days of clashes

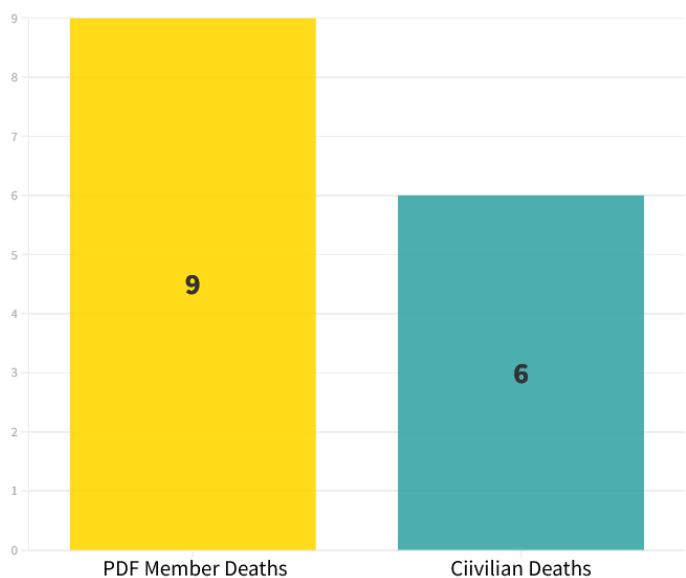
**3 Days**

No. of Days of Clashes



## Shan State

Four military council soldiers and two PDF members were killed in the battles between the military council troops and a combined force of the PDF and the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) in Moemake, Pinlaung and Pekon Townships. Four locals were killed by the military council's airstrike and shooting in Pekon Township on 27 May. On 28 May, Nan Kham San, 30, from Wantone village in Karli of Kunhing Township was shot dead by an unknown armed group.



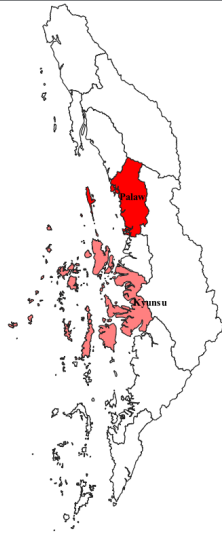
## Karenni (Kayah) State

On 24 May, five locals and nine PDF members were killed by the military council's bombing in Demoso Township. On 29 May, a woman in a car driving on Bawlakhe-Hpasawng road was killed in a shooting.

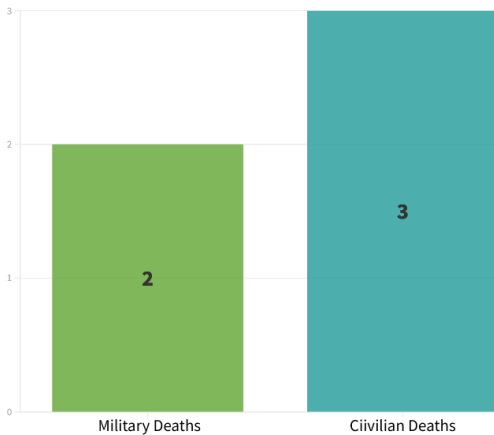
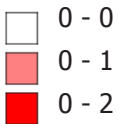


Total no of days of clashes

3 Days



No. of Days of Clashes



## Tanintharyi Region

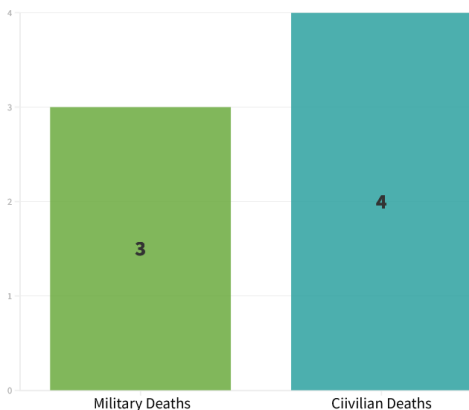
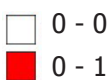
There were battles between the military council troops and the PDFs in Kyunsu and Palaw Townships. On 23 May, two military council soldiers were killed in an ambush attack near Kyaukkahnyar village in Yebyu Township. On 28 May, a local was killed as he stepped on a landmine near Magyeekone and Kyaungnaint villages in Palaw Township. On 30 May, two men from Zayit ward who were feeding dogs were shot dead by the patrolling military council troops in Dawei. On 27 May, around 2,000 locals from four villages in Bananae village-tract fled to safer places due to the battle between the military council and the PDF.

Total no of days of clashes

2 Days

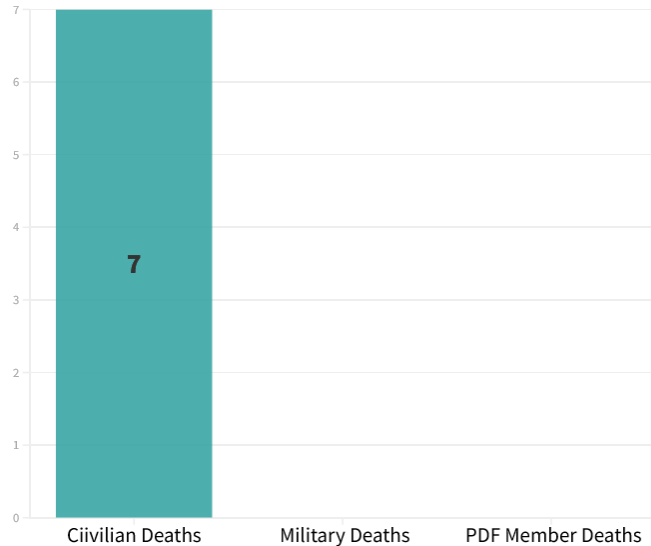


No. of Days of Clashes



## Mon State

Three military council soldiers were killed in the battles between the military council and a combined force of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and PDFs, in Kyaikhto and Ye Townships. On 26 May, U Soe Mi, Inpyaung village administrator in Paung Township was shot dead by an unknown armed group. On 27 May, a combined force of the KNLA and PDF dropped bombs on the military council soldiers stationed in Daung village of Bilin Township. However, a bomb missed the target and hit and killed two teenagers. On 30 May, a local man was killed by the military council's shooting in the battle near Painnaetaw village in Ye Township.



### Yangon Region

On 24 May, five civilians were killed in the military council’s shooting on a civilian vehicle on No.2 road near Ywathagyi University of Economics in South Dagon Township. On 26 May, a nationalist was shot dead by an unknown armed group at Shwethukha tea shop at the corner of Ba Htoo road and Zeyarthikdi road at No.48 ward in North Dagon Township. On 30 May, singer Li Li Naing Kyaw, a pro-military supporter was shot dead by the PDF in front of her house on Yan Aung road at No.2 ward in Yankin Township.

Total no of days of clashes

4 Days

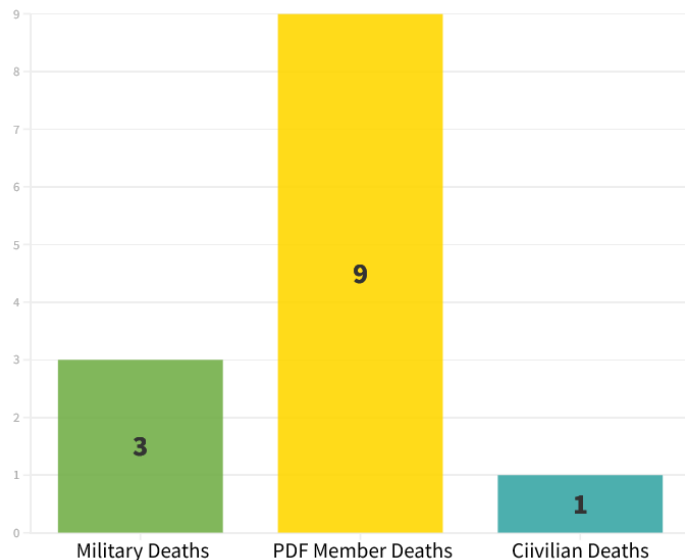


No.of Days of Clashes

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 1
- 2 - 3

### Chin State

Three military council soldiers and nine PDF members were killed in the battles between the military council troops and a combined Chinland Defense Forces (CDFs) in Thantlang and Mindat Townships. On 24 May, U Chan Kee Yan living near the golf course in Myothit ward in Hakha, was killed as he stepped on a landmine while picking goat feeds in the forest.







The United States State Department engaged partners on Myanmar sanctions coordination on 24 May. The Sanctions Coordinators for the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and the services in charge of sanctions policy and implementation of the European Commission and the European External Action Service met to continue to assess and align ongoing efforts related to sanctions on Myanmar. The partners identified the continued need for sustained direct cooperation in order to restrict the regime's ability to carry out atrocities against the people of Myanmar and pressure the regime to change course to restore the country's path toward genuine and inclusive democracy.

The France-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on 26 May called on Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar to impose new sanctions against the Myanmar military council. This came after video journalist Ma Hmu Yadanar Khet Moe Moe Tun from the Myanmar Pressphoto Agency was sentenced to 10 more years in prison.



The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on 30 May called for the unconditional release of all jailed journalists.



The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on 30 May called for the unconditional release of all jailed journalists. According to the RSF's report, about 70 Myanmar journalists have been detained since the military coup.

On 31 May, former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who visited Myanmar in late April called for more diplomatic pressure on the ruling generals to end the violence. He is communicating with authorities in military-run Myanmar as well as members of the armed resistance following a surprise visit to the country last month. He said he was still communicating with the president of Indonesia — who holds the rotating chair of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations — and Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG).

The United Nations should be replaced with a new body that can actually solve global problems and ASEAN should drop its long-standing non-interference policy to tackle the Myanmar crisis, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on 26 May.

Rohingya refugees and human rights activists have said they are disappointed that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has postponed the deadline for the military council to submit its report on genocide charges against the Rohingyas, for another three months.

The Rohingya refugee community has criticized the ICJ for delaying this postponement citing that the military council is not yet ready. This repeated postponement is like giving time to the military council troops who committed genocide.

### 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.