

**BURMA COUP WATCH FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2023:  
Junta Destabilized by Trouble in Its Top Ranks**

- As of 25 Sep, there were at least 26,262 armed clashes and attacks, displacing 1,662,000 people since Feb 2021. Junta troops continued their violent crimes.
- Junta jailers brought to heel by hunger strike.
- Too corrupt even for the junta: coup leader sacks protégé.
- ASEAN concludes summit with introduction of troika of special envoys.
- Thai MP blasts junta incursion into Thailand.
- Isolated junta reaches out to BRICS, North Korea, and Belarus.
- Shattered healthcare system faces diseases spread and puts HIV patients at risk.
- Junta moves ahead with forced repatriation of Rohingya refugees, aims to refoul 7,000 by end of year.
- Cash starved junta robs overseas workers with 25% remittance tax.
- In preparation of sham election, junta moves ahead with census and biometric data capture.
- The junta’s attempted coup turns Burma into online scam haven.

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## Illegal junta's quest to cement control

### The junta risks Aung San Suu Kyi's health with prison transfer

On 6 Sep, it was reported that the regime had **transferred Aung San Suu Kyi** from a ministerial residence **back to prison**<sup>1</sup> and that the junta had denied her medical treatment for gingivitis. The junta's **Ministry of Interior** could reportedly take up to **one month to grant permission to receive medical treatment** but legal experts said that **verbal authorization was sufficient**.<sup>2</sup> On 14 Sep, the NLD's Central Working Committee stated that the regime had withheld medical treatment, proper food, and accommodation from Aung San Suu Kyi with the "intention to risk her life". The NLD called for international pressure on the junta to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners.<sup>3</sup>

### Privacy and safety at risk as junta prepares census and electronic registration

On 1 Sep, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing told his cabinet that the **sham election would take place after a national census conducted in Oct 2024**. The regime's Union Election Commission (UEC) reportedly demonstrated its electronic voting machines to the junta boss<sup>4</sup> and on 5 Sep unveiled them to political parties registered for the sham election<sup>5</sup> During 6-12 Sep, **UEC chair** Thein Soe **led a delegation to Russia** and to discuss "voter education", "effective media utilization", and "transparent election processes". On 7 Sep, the delegation signed a **"memorandum of understanding for cooperation in election activities"**. Russia's election commission invited Thein Soe to observe elections in Mar 2024.<sup>6</sup> During 10-16 Sep, a UEC delegation visited China but did not focus on elections.<sup>7</sup>

On 26 Sep, Ko Ko Hlaing, the **junta's Minister of International Cooperation, met with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) President Joan Donoghue** to discuss the procedures of **The Gambia v. Myanmar** case.

*DVB (2 Oct 2023) Kyaw Moe Tun and NUCC on PRIO shortlist for Nobel Peace Prize; Regime delegation meets with ICJ*

On 14 Sep, it was reported that the regime's planned **census could endanger activists in hiding and spark clashes** in resistance strongholds. A CDM professor expressed concern that the regime would target her family using thorough population records; due to the **lack of anonymity, the regime's census would not adhere to international standards** and would be **illegal according to Burma's 2013 census law**. The law required personal data to be confidential and not used for other administrative purposes. The head of a Sagaing Region resistance group and a Karenni State council member both said that they would **view census enumerators as junta agents and arrest them** if they entered their territories. The junta had also been collecting biometric data since Nov 2022. An Ayeyarwaddy Region university student said that he had registered for the junta's **electronic identification (e-ID)** hoping for added safety at junta checkpoints and that junta immigration officials collected **biometric data via eye and fingerprint scans and blood samples**. The **e-ID would replace the National Registration Card** and be tied to services such as healthcare, passports, banking, and SIM card purchases. This would effectively bar dissidents in hiding from accessing these services.<sup>8</sup> The junta's deputy immigration minister claimed that the **data of 52 million people had already been digitized** and that the regime would issue "smart cards" after people registered their biometric data.<sup>9</sup>

On 18 Sep, in Beijing, the junta's immigration minister Myint Kyaing met with China's deputy immigration minister, Xu Ganglu to seek China's help to implement the e-ID system for the junta's census. The system would **collect personal and biometric data of those aged 10 and up**.<sup>10</sup>

The junta's pilot census would reportedly take place during 1-15 Oct in 100 "areas" in 20 townships.<sup>11</sup>

### Junta seeks friends in low places

On 1 Sep, the **junta's ambassador to Brazil** made an inquiry about the procedures and **requirements to join BRICS**, an economic bloc that includes its allies China, Russia, and India. Observers said that the

<sup>1</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2023) Myanmar's Suu Kyi Unwell, Back in Prison: NLD Members

<sup>2</sup> RFA (6 Sep 2023) Suu Kyi requests for 'urgent' dental treatment go unheeded

<sup>3</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Sep 2023) Myanmar's junta bears 'sole responsibility' for Suu Kyi's health—NLD

<sup>4</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2023) No Election Likely Before 2025: Myanmar Junta Chief

<sup>5</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2023) No Election Likely Before 2025: Myanmar Junta Chief

<sup>6</sup> GNLM (13 Sep 2023) UEC delegation returns from Russia following cooperation talks

<sup>7</sup> Irrawaddy (12 Sep 2023) Two Myanmar Junta Election Officials on Separate Visits to China, Russia

<sup>8</sup> Frontier Myanmar (14 Sep 2023) Census or spy op? Upcoming population count raises alarm

<sup>9</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Sep 2023) No role in Myanmar junta's 2024 census – UN population agency

<sup>10</sup> Irrawaddy (21 Sep 2023) Myanmar Turns to China for Census and Surveillance Assistance

<sup>11</sup> GNLM (26 Sep 2023) Post milestones in enumeration of census population

junta was hoping to access the **BRICS' New Development Bank** by joining. Recently, junta media had heralded BRICS as the "**counterweight to the West**".<sup>12</sup>

During 6-13 Sep, several top junta officials took the new **direct Burma-Russia flights** and over 10-13 Sep attended the **Eastern Economic Forum** in Vladivostok to make agreements with their Russian counterparts. On 10 Sep, the regime's Trade Minister said that Russia had already delivered two of six **Sukhoi Su-30SME multi-role fighter jets** as per contract signed in Sep 2022. On 11 Sep, the Investment and Economic Relations Minister Kan Zaw said that Burma would start accepting **Russian Mir card payments in Oct**. Kan Zaw said the junta was currently using Chinese RMB to purchase Russian oil but was attempting to reach an **MMK-RUB agreement**. On 12 Sep, the junta's FM Than Swe met with Russia's FM Sergey Lavrov in Moscow to discuss bilateral cooperation in 12 sectors, particularly **finance and banking**. On 26 Sep, the president of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation Anatoly Bulochnikov met with the junta's Energy Minister Ko Ko Lwin in Naypyidaw to discuss cooperation on **oil and gas exploration**, building pipelines and refineries, and **supplying fuel to Burma**. Bulochnikov also met the junta's Electricity Minister Nyan Tun.<sup>13</sup>

On 11 Sep, the junta appointed Tin Maung Swe, its **ambassador to China** to concurrently **serve as ambassador to North Korea**. Diplomatic relations had been "rocky" in the past but seemed to have normalized since the attempted coup.<sup>14</sup> On 16 Sep, the junta ambassador **asked China to share nuclear technology** at the China-ASEAN Forum for Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology in Nanning. A political analyst said that the junta was **attempting to secure nuclear weapons** to overcome its lack of **international leverage**.<sup>15</sup> On 18 Sep, China's special envoy to Burma, Deng Xijun, met with the junta's FM Than Shwe and Minister for the Office of the Union Government Ko Ko Hlaing to discuss closer collaboration in **regional and international affairs**, especially regarding **ASEAN and the UN**.<sup>16</sup>

On 15 Sep, the junta's FM Than Swe attended the opening of the **junta's consulate in Minsk (Belarus)**, another **key arms supplier**, where he thanked the country for supporting the junta at the UN. He also met with Belarus FM Sergei Aleinik. On 19 Sep, the junta added four countries, including **Belarus**, to its list of countries with **visa-free entries** for visitors with diplomatic and special passports.

On 19 Sep, in Tokyo, a **pro-junta delegation met with Japanese opposition MPs** and the Japan-Myanmar Exchange Promotion Association. A source said the group told Japanese MPs that the **NUG and the PDF were responsible** for the crisis in Burma, including the junta's massacres. They claimed the **sham election** would solve Burma's political unrest. Human Rights Watch's Tepei Kasai urged the Japanese government to **clearly not endorse** the election as it would lead to further impunity.<sup>17</sup>

### **Too corrupt even for the junta, coup leader sacks his protégé**

On 7 Sep, **the junta arrested Brig. Gen. Yan Naung Soe**, the joint secretary of the regime's Central Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods. The Committee was set up to procure USD for import/export licensing and other commercial transactions.<sup>18</sup> On 12 Sep, it was reported that Nyo Saw, Min Aung Hlaing's advisor, would replace Yan Naung Soe on the committee.<sup>19</sup>

On 14 Sep, it was reported that the regime placed **Min Aung Hlaing's protégé, Lt. Gen. Moe Myint Tun, under house arrest**. His arrest followed the interrogation of traders, bankers, and junta-owned business officials in addition to Yan Naung Soe's arrest. **Moe Myint Tun was the chair of the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC), the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee (FESC), and Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods**. Those interrogated revealed that Moe Myint Tun had **accumulated millions of USD in bribes** since 2021, with individual **bribes worth at least USD 20,000**. The regime reportedly released Yan Naung Soe to act on the regime's behalf in court proceedings.<sup>20</sup> On 19 Sep, the junta opened an internal investigation into Moe Myint Tun.<sup>21</sup>

On 20 Sep, it was reported that **the regime fired Moe Myint Tun as chair** of the MIC, the FESC, and the **Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods** and replaced him with Deputy

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<sup>12</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Eyeing BRICS Membership as Sanctions Bite

<sup>13</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Sep 2023) Russia Still Chasing Oil and Gas Prospects in Myanmar

<sup>14</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Appoints New Ambassador to North Korea

<sup>15</sup> RFA (18 Sep 2023) Junta ambassador asks China to share advanced nuclear technology

<sup>16</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Hosts Chinese Envoy for Talks on Closer Ties

<sup>17</sup> Myanmar Now (28 Sep 2023) Pro-army Myanmar delegates visit Japan to lobby for junta-planned election

<sup>18</sup> Myanmar Now (12 Sep 2023) Myanmar regime arrests army general, targets businessmen and traders as economy continues to suffer

<sup>19</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta's 'Kickback King' in Spotlight of Corruption Crackdown

<sup>20</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Sep 2023) General Close to Myanmar Junta Boss Placed Under House Arrest, Interrogated for Corruption

<sup>21</sup> Irrawaddy (20 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Tightens Noose on 'Kick-Back King'

PM Mya Tun Oo.<sup>22</sup> The regime also arrested deputy commerce minister and joint-secretary on the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods Nyunt Aung.<sup>23</sup>

On 21 Sep, it was reported that the head of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) told regime investigators that Moe Myint Tun, Yan Naung Soe, and Nyunt Aung **took advantage of the large disparity between the CBM's official USD exchange rate and the market rate** to accumulate millions in USD. A source said that the regime would make a ruling prior to **seizing Moe Myint Tun's assets**.<sup>24</sup>

On 25 Sep, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing **removed Lt. Gen. Soe Htut for corruption** from the regime's leadership council. The junta chief reportedly replaced Moe Myint Tun with the regime military's chief of staff Maung Maung Aye and appointed to the council Nyo Saw, the chair of the Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC).<sup>25</sup> A political commentator said that **the changes suggested the regime was "unstable" and "spiraling out of control"**.<sup>26</sup>

## **CRPH, NUG & Other Democratic Forces (more at [CRPH, NUG & other Democratic forces tracker](#))**

### **NUCC announces Humanitarian Assistance Policy**

On 8 Sep, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) announced their **Humanitarian Assistance Policy**, which would guide the **responsible provision of humanitarian assistance in Burma**. The policy pushed for cooperation with **groups with the mandate and capacity to safely and quickly deliver services on the ground**. It also required administrators to work with local communities to “develop, adopt, engage, and coordinate people-centered disaster management activities”.<sup>27</sup>

### **Resistance governance efforts continue to expand**

During 7-9 Sep, representatives from the Chin National Front (CNF), Chin civil society groups, Chin State townships, and former Chin MPs **established the Working Committee for the Chinland Council (WCCCC)** with the **ultimate goal of forming a state-wide governing body**. The WCCCC would draft a constitution for Chinland and would form what would eventually become the Chinland Council.<sup>28</sup>

Notably, the Chin National Organization (CNO/CNDF) and the Zomi Federal Union (ZFU) did not participate in the 7-9 Sep meeting. After the Interim Chin National Consultative Council (ICNCC) and the Chin Joint Defence Council (CJDC), the WCCCC is the third body formed in Chin State with the goal of building a state-wide government. On 22 Sep, the WCCCC announced that they had formed a coordinating body which would negotiate and seek to build trust with other Chin EAOs.<sup>29</sup>

On 9 Sep, **Bo Nagar**, the leader of the Myanmar Royal Dragon Army, announced the **formation of the Burma National Revolution Force (BNRA)**, a Bamar armed organization comprised of 18 battalions. It would operate in Sagaing, Magway, and Mandalay Regions.<sup>30</sup> While the group would not operate under the National Unity Government (NUG) Ministry of Defense, they would adhere to the NUG's guidelines.<sup>31</sup> On 12 Sep, the NUG stated that they met with Bo Nagar on 2 May and had not agreed to the formation of the BNRA nor to its operation alongside the NUG.<sup>32</sup>

On 30 Sep, former Karen National Union (KNU) Chair Mutu Say Poe and two former KNU political leaders met with coup leader Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyitaw for “peace talks”.<sup>33</sup> On Oct 2, the KNU said that they **deemed the junta illegitimate**, “had absolutely no association or involvement [to the 30 Sep meeting]”, **and would not participate in political negotiations with the junta**.<sup>34</sup>

On 29 Sep, Frontier Myanmar reported that the **NUG-run police force and courts** in Sagaing Region faced **difficulties upholding a budding judicial system**. The limited number of qualified judges, stable judicial offices, and well-maintained prisons limited the capacity of resistance police forces and judiciaries to function effectively. Moreover, despite promises to repeal them, **NUG police continued to enforce pre-coup laws such as those which banned Buddhist women from marrying non-Buddhists**.

<sup>22</sup> Irrawaddy (20 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Strips General of Key Posts Amid Corruption Probe

<sup>23</sup> Irrawaddy (20 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Continues Tightening the Screws on Its Economic Team

<sup>24</sup> Myanmar Now (21 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta chief sacks protégé over 'corruption'

<sup>25</sup> Irrawaddy (26 Sep 2023) Myanmar Coup Leader Fires Two Members of Junta's Highest Body for Corruption

<sup>26</sup> RFA (26 Sep 2023) Myanmar reshuffle of generals suggests 'instability,' experts say

<sup>27</sup> National Unity Consultative Council via Facebook (8 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/4ppmmxkz>

<sup>28</sup> Khonumthung News (26 Sep 2023) Chin Resistance Will Form Chinland Council

<sup>29</sup> Khonumthung News via BNI (30 Sep 2023) Chinland Council Forms Coordination Team to Rally All Chin Groups

<sup>30</sup> The Chindwin Post (11 Sep 2023) Burma National Revolution force (BNRA), a new army establishes in central Myanmar

<sup>31</sup> SHAN (15 Sep 2023) BPLA AND BNRA: The young Bamar generation leaders on the right track

<sup>32</sup> NUG via Facebook (12 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/52bpzrkd>

<sup>33</sup> Irrawaddy (2 Oct 2023) Myanmar's KNU Distances Itself From Ex-Chairman Who Met With Junta Boss

<sup>34</sup> KNU via Facebook (2 Oct 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/54mrwbe6>



A legal expert criticized the NUG legal system for its reliance on appointed, non-local officials. He compared them to judicial systems in ethnic territories, which were “born from consultative councils which have a mandate from the local area.”<sup>35</sup>

### **NUG marks 2nd anniversary of people’s defensive war, designates CBM as terrorists**

On 7 Sep, NUG Acting President Duwa Lashi La marked the **2nd anniversary of the NUG’s declaration of the people’s defensive war** against the junta with state remarks.<sup>36</sup> On 18 Sep, the NUG reaffirmed its commitments to ratify all international human rights treaties with their optional protocols, abolish the death penalty, and cooperate with the ‘The Gambia v. Myanmar’ case at the ICJ. It also stated that it would continue to **work with the CRPH to abolish the 1982 Citizenship Law** and the National Verification Card process, and repeal the Race and Religion Protection Laws of 2015.<sup>37</sup>

On 14 Sep, the NUG’s Central Committee for Counter-Terrorism **designated as terrorists 44 Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) employees**. The NUG stated that CBM employees had violated the Counter Terrorism Law by using foreign currency reserves to purchase military supplies, including jet fuel. The NUG said they had also allowed the junta to drive up inflation and manipulate monetary policy.<sup>38</sup>

### **Civil disobedience, crackdowns (more at [protests, CDM, and crackdowns tracker](#))**

#### **Junta continues to block humanitarian access**

On 8 Sep, the UN Humanitarian Affairs Office (OCHA) reported that humanitarian access restrictions had increased, notably in the southeast regions and Kachin State. Increased checkpoints and blockades in conflict zones, tighter scrutiny of goods and personnel, and increased administrative restrictions led to numerous delays and cancellations of field missions. OCHA also stated that it had received only 25% of the required humanitarian funding.<sup>39</sup> On 14 Sep, the junta’s Home Affairs Minister urged local and international humanitarian aid organizations, to register with the junta. On 30 Aug, the coup leader Min Aung Hlaing had ordered his ministers to systematically regulate aid organizations.<sup>40</sup>

#### **The junta resorts to more death sentences**

On 12 Sep, in Bogale Township (Ayeyarwaddy Region), a junta court gave **four men the death penalty** for murdering a suspected regime informant.<sup>41</sup> On 29 Sep, locals reported that a junta court in the same region **sentenced three men to death** - two for their involvement in the killing of a village governor, and the third man for allegedly abetting the killing of his village administrator and his wife.<sup>42</sup>

On 19 Sep, it was reported that, **the junta sentenced to death a regime military doctor** in August. A source said the regime found that captain Ye Yint Swe, 32, supported the resistance after checking his Facebook posts and phone. A military defector said that before this, he had **never heard of an officer being sentenced to death** and that the **junta may execute the doctor as an example to others**. He added that junta chief Min Aung Hlaing would have personally signed off on the officer’s sentence.<sup>43</sup>

#### **The junta keeps persecuting independent media**

On 6 Sep, **a military tribunal** inside Insein Prison **sentenced Myanmar Now photojournalist Sai Zaw Thaïke to 20 years in prison with hard labor** on misinformation, incitement and sedition charges. On 23 May, the junta arrested him in Sittwe (Rakhine State) while he was reporting on the aftermath of Cyclone Mocha. The regime court **did not allow him legal representation, and no hearing or other court proceedings** took place prior to Sai Zaw Thaïke’s sentencing. The regime also barred him from family visits.<sup>44</sup> Reporters Without Borders (RSF) called on the international community to step up pressure on the junta to release Sai Zaw Thaïke and 69 other journalists.<sup>45</sup>

On 8 Sep, the junta **revoked the license of Piti Eain Literature, a Yangon publishing house** owned by a doctor in the CDM. The regime revoked his license for his posts on social media and his writing, which the junta deemed a threat to national security. The owner said that Piti Eain did not publish anti-junta

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<sup>35</sup> Frontier Myanmar (29 Sep 2023) ‘Better than those barbarians’: Resistance police force takes shape

<sup>36</sup> NMG via BNI (22 Sep 2023) NUG Urges International Community to Impose Strong Sanctions on the Coup Regime

<sup>37</sup> NUG via Facebook (18 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/57d375p5>

<sup>38</sup> Mizzima (18 Sep 2023) NUG labels 44 Central Bank of Myanmar workers as terrorists

<sup>39</sup> OCHA (8 Sep 2023) Humanitarian Update No. 32

<sup>40</sup> DMG (15 Sep 2023) Junta minister tells NGOs, INGOs to register; Irrawaddy (4 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Boss Only Indicts Himself With Attempts to Blame Others for Crisis, Critics Say

<sup>41</sup> RFA (14 Sep 2023) Junta sentences 4 men to death in Myanmar’s Ayeyarwady region

<sup>42</sup> RFA (29 Sep 2023) Court in Myanmar’s Ayeyarwady region sentences 3 to death

<sup>43</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Sep 2023) Army doctor handed death penalty for alleged support of resistance

<sup>44</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Sep 2023) Junta sentences Myanmar Now photojournalist to 20 years in prison

<sup>45</sup> Irrawaddy (8 Sep 2023) Press Freedom Group Urges Global Pressure on Myanmar Junta to Free Journalists

books and that the revocation was personal. An anonymous publisher said that the revocation set a **dangerous precedent** and that it was a **warning and a threat to the publishing community**.<sup>46</sup>

### Sham courts hand down harsh sentences

On 19 Sep, it was reported that over **7,368 individuals had been convicted** in minutes-long ad hoc trials carried out **without defense counsel**. In only one instance the accused was acquitted and the regime quickly removed the judge who ruled in the defendant's favor.<sup>47</sup> On 27 Sep, it was reported that, **in Sagaing Region, the junta prosecuted 253 people** over the last seven months. Regime **courts sentenced to death 10 people**, sentenced over **100 to life in prison**, and gave **eight "infinite jail sentences"**. The junta courts handed down infinite jail terms for drug possession under the 1993 Narcotics Law, denying **the right to defense and appeal**. A Mandalay-based lawyer said that the regime charged political prisoners under the Counter-Terrorism Law without an investigation. The lawyer added that the **junta prosecuted detainees on charges with a minimum 10-year jail sentence** and that it imposed a life sentence or the death penalty if it found any evidence that a crime was committed at all.<sup>48</sup>

On 25 Sep, in Kale Township (Sagaing Region), the junta sentenced four **political prisoners serving 2-year jail terms to 10 additional years** for alleged acts of terror. It was not known what offences they had committed. The junta also reportedly raided and sealed off the prisoners' homes.<sup>49</sup> On 26 Sep, Political Prisoners Network (PPN) Myanmar reported that in August, in Patheingyi Prison (Ayeyarwaddy Region), the **junta extended the sentences of 63 prisoners by 3 years**. In September, the regime **extended the sentences of 47 of the 63 prisoners by an extra 3 years**. The junta reportedly had already sentenced some of the 63 prisoners to 20 years. The additional sentences were an apparent reprisal for protests that over the detention of an inmate by guards and the rumored death sentence of a teacher.<sup>50</sup>

On 24 Sep, in Insein Prison (Yangon Region), Min Hein Khant, a 21-year-old political prisoner died of a heart attack. **Prison authorities denied him treatment** following an initial heart attack in May. A source close to his family said that Min Hein Khant was in good health prior to his arrest.

*RFA (25 Sep 2023) Young political prisoner dies of heart attack in Myanmar prison*

### Junta prisons ramp up restrictions and violence

On 4 Sep, a former political prisoner reported that the junta restricted inmates in Myingyan Prison (Mandalay Region) to **receive only one care package**, that consisted of **three servings of food, every two weeks**. He said that staff **denied prisoners permission to walk outside their cells**, watch television or read. Inmates reportedly could **no longer send letters to their families** and they had **lost contact for a month**. He added that mostly **ex-soldiers now staffed the prison**.<sup>51</sup> On 5 Sep, political prisoner aid volunteers reported that, since late August, the junta had also **imposed restrictions** on package deliveries in **Insein, Obo, Patheingyi, Tharyarwaddy, Dawei, and Myeik prisons**. The regime also prohibited prisoners from receiving medicine without a prescription and that medicine could only be taken with prison medical staff approval.<sup>52</sup> Also on 5 Sep, PPN stated that Obo prison guards had **beaten and tortured 90 men and 11 women** transferred from Monywa Prison. A PPN spokesperson said that prison guard began beating the detainees when they arrived at the prison gate and that **this practice had become the norm**. A man recently released from Obo prison confirmed the abuse and accused the warden and others of initiating and leading the abuses.<sup>53</sup>

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On 11 Sep, it was reported that the new restrictions on inmates followed the 12 Jul appointment of military officer Myo Swe as the head of the Prison Department. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) noted that **forbidding prisoners from sending letters was unprecedented and had not been implemented during previous regimes**.<sup>54</sup>

### Junta jailers brought to heel by hunger strike

On 8 Sep, in Monywa Prison (Sagaing Region), **14 political prisoners went on a hunger strike** to demand an **end to restrictions on mail delivery, and the return of their personal belongings** after

<sup>46</sup> RFA (11 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta revokes anti-coup movement publisher's license; DVB (12 Sep 2023) Nearly 200 religious buildings destroyed across country; Regime enforces e-commerce regulations

<sup>47</sup> OHCHR (19 Sep 2023) A/HRC/54/59: Situation of human rights in Myanmar - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Advance unedited version)

<sup>48</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Uses Sagaing Martial Law to Jail 253 Citizens

<sup>49</sup> Myanmar Now (28 Sep 2023) Kalay protesters handed 10-year sentences for alleged terrorism

<sup>50</sup> RFA (26 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta extends sentences of 63 protesting prisoners

<sup>51</sup> Myanmar Now (4 Sep 2023) Myanmar regime tightens restrictions on Daik-U Prison inmates

<sup>52</sup> Irrawaddy (5 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Punishes Political Prisoners by Restricting Food, Medicine Deliveries

<sup>53</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Sep 2023) Political prisoners beaten and tortured after transfer to Obo Prison

<sup>54</sup> Myanmar Now (11 Sep 2023) Myanmar's political detainees face unprecedented restrictions after military officer takes over prison department

prison officials confiscated items such as books, clothes, and blankets. Lwin Moe Thant of the Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee said that the 14 striking prisoners came from each ward of the prison and that other prisoners may join the strike.<sup>55</sup> Thaik Tun Oo of PPN said that confiscating permitted possessions was a violation of prisoners' rights and that the regime treated political prisoners like military targets.<sup>56</sup> On 9 Sep the junta's **Prison Department stated that the prisoners would not get medical care.**<sup>57</sup>

On 12 Sep, former political prisoners, PDF members, and anti-coup activists organized an online protest in solidarity with the prisoners on hunger strike at Monywa Prison.<sup>58</sup> It was reported that a total of **50 inmates had joined the hunger strike**, including prominent protest leader Wai Moe Naing. The Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee said that prison guards placed **Wai Moe Naing in solitary confinement** and that **three striking prisoners had fainted.**<sup>59</sup>

On 13 Sep, regime **prison authorities agreed to return all confiscated items to prisoners and lift restrictions** on receiving parcels.<sup>60</sup> A representative of the Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee said the three prisoners who had lost consciousness were likely to receive medical treatment.<sup>61</sup>

### **Conflict and displacement (more details at [conflict & displacement tracker](#))**

Data from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) showed that the regime had **killed more than 4,000 civilians** as of 24 Aug and **at least 1,080 civilians during 1 Jan-24 Aug.**<sup>62</sup> On 8 Sep, RFA reported that the junta had destroyed over **200 religious buildings** since the attempted coup.<sup>63</sup>

In its 19 Sep annual report on the situation of human rights in Burma, the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that **air and artillery strikes, mass killings, rapes, torching, and extrajudicial killings had all increased** between Apr 2022 and Jul 2023.

The junta **launched 687 airstrikes** during the reporting period, more than double the 301 airstrikes during Feb 2021 - Mar 2022. The report noted that there were 331 airstrikes in central Burma, a **324% rise on the previous period**; 258 of these were in Sagaing Region alone. Airstrikes were often combined with measures that systematically denied the ability of those injured to access medical care. OHCHR also documented **22 instances of mass killings of 10 or more people**, with the junta burning civilians alive and displaying beheaded or otherwise defiled corpses to terrorize locals on several occasions. While resistance fighters committed targeted killings of junta-aligned civilians, the scale and intensity of these killings was incomparable to that of the junta. The junta also **torched nearly 75,000 structures.**<sup>64</sup>

On 13 Sep, a pro-junta think tank denied that there was evidence of **junta cluster bomb use** in response to a 31 Aug report by the **Cluster Munition Coalition on junta cluster munition usage.** A Karenni National Defense Force spokesperson said that the junta used cluster munitions on **civilian targets and areas where IDPs took shelter.** Banyar Khun Aung, executive director of the Karenni Human Rights Group denounced the intentional use of cluster bombs against civilians as a crime against humanity.<sup>65</sup>

During this period, **at least 300 civilians were taken by junta troops to be used as human shields** against attack by resistance forces in Tanintharyi and Mandalay regions.<sup>66</sup>

### **Junta reshuffles security ministers, begs militiamen for support**

On 1 Sep, the junta **replaced the Security and Border Affairs Ministers** of Kachin, Karenni, Karen, and Chin States and Magway Region. The new ministers were all more junior than their predecessors. A former regime army captain said that the reshuffle would not affect junta strategy.<sup>67</sup>

On 10 Sep, in **Lashio Township (N. Shan State)**, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing urged militia and Border Guard Force leaders **to fight for the regime.** An analyst said **the junta lacked troops in Shan State** as it had sent two Shan State divisions to Karenni State. They added that the regime may attack the Myanmar

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<sup>55</sup> RFA (8 Sep 2023) Political prisoners begin hunger strike in Myanmar's Sagaing region

<sup>56</sup> Irrawaddy (9 Sep 2023) Myanmar Political Prisoners Launch Hunger Strike

<sup>57</sup> Irrawaddy (12 Sep 2023) Over 50 Political Prisoners on Hunger Strike at Notorious Myanmar Jail

<sup>58</sup> DVB (12 Sep 2023) Fifty prisoners join hunger strike at Monywa Prison

<sup>59</sup> Myanmar Now (13 Sep 2023) Dozens of political prisoners join hunger strike in Monywa

<sup>60</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Sep 2023) Monywa Prison authorities agree to hunger strike participants' demands

<sup>61</sup> Irrawaddy (9 Sep 2023) Hunger Strike in Myanmar Ends After Dissidents Refuse to 'Kneel'

<sup>62</sup> Irrawaddy (2 Sep 2023) Number of Civilians Killed by Myanmar Junta Since Coup Surpasses 4,000

<sup>63</sup> RFA (8 Sep 2023) With nearly 200 destroyed, religious buildings targeted by Myanmar's junta

<sup>64</sup> OHCHR (19 Sep 2023) A/HRC/54/59: Situation of human rights in Myanmar - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Advance unedited version)

<sup>65</sup> RFA (13 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta steps up use of banned cluster bombs

<sup>66</sup> Sum total of cases cited in this briefer for Tanintharyi and Mandalay regions

<sup>67</sup> Irrawaddy (2 Sep 2023) Myanmar's Battle-Scarred Junta Replaces Five Security Ministers

National Democratic Alliance Army in N. Shan State, on top of ongoing attacks against the Kachin Independence Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army.<sup>68</sup> On 13 Sep, members of the junta's leadership visited main towns Karenni, Kachin, Karen, and Mon states on a **propaganda tour**.<sup>69</sup>

## Sagaing Region

Junta forces continued raids with **scorched-earth tactics in Sagaing Region** amid clashes with local resistance forces. UNHCR reported **820,800 civilians displaced in Sagaing** as of 2 Oct 2023.<sup>70</sup>

**Increased aerial attacks:** In September, the junta killed 20 civilians and injured 38 in Sagaing Region from **aerial and land bombardments**.<sup>71</sup>

On 3 Sep, in **Kamma Township**, resistance forces attacked Kamma police station and immigration office and killed at least seven junta troops. A junta attack helicopter strafed the area and regime troops arrived from Pakokku in response.<sup>72</sup> On 19 Sep, junta troops reportedly looted houses in Kamma town after sixteen resistance groups attacked a police station and other junta buildings. The junta responded to the attack with airstrikes that injured a resident and forced 2,000 others to flee.<sup>73</sup>

During 9-12 Sep, in **Pale and Yinmarbin Townships**, the junta conducted a series of aerial assaults. On 9 Sep, a junta helicopter attacked an abandoned resistance base near Thit Gyi Taing village. On 10 Sep, a junta helicopter strafed a temporary school in Ka Paing village and injured one civilian. On 11 Sep, a junta helicopter strafed resistance forces while they clashed with junta troops near Kyun Bo Kone and Nwe Shauk villages. On 12 Sep, Pyu Saw Htee militia and junta troops raided In Gyin Su village. It was reported that the raids had forced at least 5,000 residents of seven villages to flee.<sup>74</sup>

From 22-26 Sep, in **Taze, Ye-U and Tabayin Townships**, junta troops repeatedly clashed with resistance forces and forced thousands of locals from 10 villages to flee. On 22 Sep, the junta shelled Taze town, killed a child, and injured her father. They clashed with resistance forces near Thae Kone village after junta reinforcements arrived. A junta helicopter strafed the village and injured four civilians. On 23 Sep, the junta killed a civilian and injured two others in three villages while traveling from Ye-U to Taze Township, in retaliation to a resistance attack on junta outposts. On 25 Sep, junta troops shelled Let Yet Kone village. On 26 Sep a junta helicopter strafed three villages.<sup>75</sup>

**Flotillas on the Chindwin River:** On 2 Sep, in **Salingyi Township**, resistance forces ambushed a 10-vessel flotilla twice, killed around 10 soldiers and damaged two vessels.<sup>76</sup> On 19 Sep, in **Sagaing Township**, one supply boat that was part of a 13-vessel junta flotilla sank after hitting a rock in the river. It was reported that 90 people were missing, the remaining 12 vessels continued traveling downstream on 20 Sep, and the number of fatalities was unclear.<sup>77</sup> On 20 Sep, in **Katha Township**, resistance forces attacked a junta flotilla, which had been transiting from Mandalay to Bhamo since 10 Sep. In retaliation, the junta soldiers raided Toke Gyi village, killed eight civilians, torched 34 houses, and forced 200 residents to flee. On 29 Sep, in **Salingyi Township**, junta troops on a **15-vessel flotilla carrying copper, jade, and timber fired on villages** and destroyed several buildings and religious structures. Resistance forces ambushed the flotilla twice since it departed from **Monywa Township**.<sup>78</sup>

**Ogre column joins junta offense around Railway:** During 2-7 Sep, in **Sagaing, Wetlet, and Shwebo Townships**, junta columns raided, shelled and torched villages along the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway line which the junta was attempting to repair and reopen. On 2 Sep, in Bone Bweit village, resistance forces discovered two bodies. In Kyun U Taw village, a junta column killed three people and burned their bodies and 11 houses in the village they had occupied for two weeks. The column headed to Wetlet Township to join five other junta columns that had displaced tens of thousands of residents of over 50 villages since Aug. A local defense group said that they did not have the capacity to fight this many regime troops at once. On 4 Sep, in Shwebo town, the junta killed a civilian. They also torched Ywar

<sup>68</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Chief Woos Shan Militias Amid Troop Shortages

<sup>69</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Attempts Charm Offensive in Ethnic States

<sup>70</sup> UNHCR (2 Oct 2023) Myanmar Emergency Overview Map: Number of people displaced since Feb 2021 and remain displaced (as of 2 Oct 2023)

<sup>71</sup> RFA (2 Oct 2023) Airstrikes and shelling killed 44 civilians in Myanmar in September

<sup>72</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Troops Loot Abandoned Magwe Town

<sup>73</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Troops Loot Abandoned Magwe Town

<sup>74</sup> Irrawaddy (12 Sep 2023) Myanmar Regime Conducts Series of Air Strikes in Sagaing Region; RFA (12 Sep 2023) Junta airstrike damages school in Myanmar's Sagaing region

<sup>75</sup> Irrawaddy (25 Sep 2023) Sagaing Civilians Killed in Myanmar Junta Shelling; Irrawaddy (26 Sep 2023) 10,000 Myanmar Civilians Flee Overnight as Junta Launches Sagaing Terror Mission; Myanmar Now (27 Sep 2023) Junta deploys airstrikes after ground battle with resistance forces near Mu River

<sup>76</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Sep 2023) Resistance Groups Kill 10 Myanmar Junta Troops in Attack on Military Flotilla

<sup>77</sup> RFA (20 Sep 2023) 90 feared dead after Myanmar junta boat sinks in rough river waters

<sup>78</sup> Irrawaddy (29 Sep 2023) Another Junta Flotilla in Upper Myanmar is Under Fire



Thit Kone village. On 7 Sep, junta troops clashed with resistance forces in Pa Win village after resistance fighters destroyed five sections of the train track between Pauk Kan and Thar Laing villages. Resistance forces had stepped up attacks on the railway to prevent the junta from transporting troops and supplies.<sup>79</sup>

On 30 Sep, NMG reported that the **Ogre column** had joined six other junta columns in efforts to clear the area around the railway from 21 Aug to 11 Sep. The Ogre Column was responsible for the dismemberment of five civilians and the rape and killing of two women in Wetlet Township in August. Wetlet PDF said that the column generally limited operations to the nighttime and dawn hours when civilians were most vulnerable. It was focused on carrying out exceptionally brutal executions.<sup>80</sup>

**Junta troops' exceptional brutality:** On 22 Sep, in **Myinmu Township**, the junta ambushed, killed, and dismembered 25 resistance fighters that were traveling to evacuate IDPs near Chay Yar Taw village.<sup>81</sup> On 26 Sep, in **Pale Township**, a junta column tortured, killed, and dismembered three men and displayed their body parts during a raid on Nyaung Kone village. They wrote "Kyar Balu" Column (Tiger Ogre Column) on one of the decapitated heads.<sup>82</sup> During 30 Sep-2 Oct, in **Depayin Township**, junta troops killed two civilians and decapitated another during a raid on Let Tee village after a clash with resistance forces. The junta then raided Pyan Kya village. On 1 Oct, they raided Nabe Hla village and kidnapped a civilian whose body was found in Bagan village after they torched houses on 2 Oct.<sup>83</sup>

## Magway Region

On 5 Sep, in **Saw Township**, the junta clashed with local resistance forces and injured four civilians.<sup>84</sup> On 11 Sep, junta troops started extorting MMK 500,000 from every car entering the township at the Kanzun checkpoint, which caused commodity prices to jump.<sup>85</sup>

During 9-11 Sep, in **Myaing Township**, junta troops detained a total of 11 people, raided Kan Gyi Yoe village, and killed a local PDF member. They then raided Chaung U To village and occupied Yin Ma Kyin village. On 10 Sep, they raided a resistance camp in Thin Paung Kan village. On 11 Sep, they arrested and tortured two villagers, released them, and killed one of the 11 detainees.<sup>86</sup>

During 12-18 Sep, in **Gangaw Township**, the regime and resistance forces clashed over seven days. On 16 Sep junta forces killed two people and injured seven others in Myintha village. On 18 Sep, a junta air strike forced over 2,000 residents to flee.<sup>87</sup> On 18 Sep, junta troops interrogated over 100 residents in Kant That village when resistance forces seized weapons from an arms depot. The junta had **armed the inexperienced villagers** to defend the depot but they retreated during the raid.<sup>88</sup>

## Chin State

On 8 Sep, RFA reported that **the regime had destroyed 85 Chin Christian churches** since Feb 2021 and it destroyed seven churches in Chin State in the month of August alone.<sup>89</sup>

On 26 Sep, a man was killed and a woman was injured after they stepped on a junta land mine outside **Mindat Town**.<sup>90</sup> The incident followed a resistance attack on a junta checkpoint at the town's entrance on 24 Sep. On 29 Sep, junta shelling of Mindat Town injured two children. Resistance attacks and corresponding junta arrests of locals had reportedly increased in Mindat Town through September.<sup>91</sup>

On 27 Sep, in **Kanpetlet Town**, CDF troops attacked junta General Administration and Department of Education buildings and killed three junta troops.<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, Than Lwin Times reported that junta administration in Kanpetlet had stopped operating.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2023) More Than 4,000 Displaced by Myanmar Junta in Sagaing; Irrawaddy (5 Sep 2023) Flee or Die: Junta Troops Drive Out 25,000 Civilians in Myanmar's Sagaing; Myanmar Now (6 Sep 2023) Tens of thousands flee amid massive military build-up in Wetlet Township; Myanmar Now (5 Sep 2023) Five bodies found in junta-occupied village in Sagaing Township; Irrawaddy (5 Sep 2023) Sagaing Resistance Groups Attack Myanmar Junta Troops Repairing Train Track; Irrawaddy (11 Sep 2023) Myanmar Battalion Plants Land Mines Near School, Monastery in Resistance Village; Frontier Myanmar (11 Sep 2023) Blood on the tracks: The war over Myanmar's railroads

<sup>80</sup> NMG via BNI (30 Sep 2023) Horrendous War Crimes of the Military Council's Ogre Column

<sup>81</sup> RFA (25 Sep 2023) Junta troops kill 28 militia members in Myanmar's Sagaing region

<sup>82</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Sep 2023) Myanmar military troops decapitate three men in Sagaing Region's Pale Township

<sup>83</sup> Myanmar Now (30 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta troops murder, dismember civilian in Depayin Township

<sup>84</sup> Than Lwin Times (8 Sep 2023) 4 injured in military's heavy weapon attack in Magway

<sup>85</sup> Than Lwin Times (14 Sep 2023) Military blocks commodity flow into Saw township

<sup>86</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Leaves Trail of Death and Destruction in Magwe

<sup>87</sup> DVB (18 Sep 2023) Regime claims 605 police officers killed since coup; NUG 'dissolves' jewelry association

<sup>88</sup> RFA (22 Sep 2023) Troops arrest more than 100 villagers in Myanmar's Magway region

<sup>89</sup> RFA (8 Sep 2023) With nearly 200 destroyed, religious buildings targeted by Myanmar's junta

<sup>90</sup> Khonumthung News (28 Sep 2023) Mindat Man Killed by Landmine Where Fighting Continues With Resistance Forces

<sup>91</sup> Khonumthung News (2 Oct 2023) Regime Shelling Injures Mindat Minors

<sup>92</sup> Khonumthung News (2 Oct 2023) CDF Attacks SAC in Kanpetlet

<sup>93</sup> Than Lwin Times (30 Sep 2023) Resistance force's flag hoisted in Kanpetlet

## Rakhine State

**AA-Junta Tensions:** Tensions between the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) and the junta continued to simmer. On 7 Sep, two junta border guard police engaged in a shootout with junta troops and defected to the AA.<sup>94</sup> On the same day, the regime arrested and charged three junta soldiers with treason after officials found messages to the AA on their phones.<sup>95</sup> In September, the junta stepped up searches and patrols for AA and PDF members in **Toungup, Thandwe, Ponnagyun, Sittwe, and Rathedaung Townships**.<sup>96</sup> On 13 Sep, the AA reportedly instructed villagers in **Kyauktaw Township** to dig bomb pits in **anticipation of resumed clashes** in the area.<sup>97</sup>

**ARSA Influence:** In **Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships**, ARSA's presence continued to grow. The junta reportedly entered Thein Taung village on 30 Aug after reports that Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) members were seen near the village.<sup>98</sup> On 9 Sep, ARSA fighters reportedly abducted and killed a Rohingya community elder in northern Buthidaung Township. ARSA reportedly accused him of feeding information to the junta and to the AA.<sup>99</sup> In response to ARSA presence, the AA reportedly began **conducting "clean-up operations"** in ten villages during 19-22 Sep and made 10 arrests.<sup>100</sup> Many locals alleged that the junta was supporting ARSA expansion by ignoring the group's activities. On 3 Sep, a local alleged that the junta was training ARSA fighters after the junta reportedly deployed more than 70 soldiers to Crow Island in **Maungdaw Township**.<sup>101</sup> On 4 Sep, a Rohingya refugee accused the junta of allowing large numbers of ARSA fighters to cross the border into Burma.<sup>102</sup>

## Kachin State

On 1 Sep, the junta conducted airstrikes around Kyaukgyi village in retaliation to a resistance force raid.<sup>103</sup> On 3 Sep, the Shwegu-based K-PDF conducted two drone attacks on the Myoma police station in Shwegu town, which had been repeatedly targeted since June.<sup>104</sup> On 7 Sep, the Myo Hla PDF conducted a drone strike on the junta-run township general administration office in Shwegu town, killed two regime officials, and wounded nine. The junta retaliated with random shootings, roadblocks, and arrests of civilians.<sup>105</sup> On 18 Sep, junta troops on a flotilla entered **Shwegu Township** and torched at least 50 vessels, including boats that housed more than 60 IDPs from Sagaing Region.<sup>106</sup> In Yae Le and Moe Sit villages, troops arrested 30 civilians, torched at least 48 houses; at least 4,000 villagers fled.<sup>107</sup> On 20 Sep, a local PDF attacked the flotilla again, killed nine junta soldiers, and injured 11 others.<sup>108</sup>

On 4 Sep, the Mohnyin K-PDF killed Than Tun Aung (Ah Phu), a prominent junta informant and leader of the Mohnyin criminal investigation unit while he was riding a motorcycle with his wife in the town.<sup>109</sup> On 12 Sep, a junta infantry column advancing from Nam Mun village to Indawgyi Lake encountered explosives set by the KIA and Indawgyi PDF forces near Shwe Let Pan village in **Mohnyin Township**. On 13 Sep, resistance fighters fired on the column as it left Mong Nawng village. The junta took gold mine workers hostage to use as **human shields**. On 14 Sep, after the miners were released, resistance groups once again attacked the column near Long Ton village and killed several junta soldiers.<sup>110</sup>

**Fighting around Nam Sang Yang:** On 4-5 Sep, regime forces attempted to advance towards Nam Sang Yang and clashed with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) near Da Bak Yang and Jar Pu villages along the Myitkyina-Bhamo road in **Waingmaw Township**.<sup>111</sup> On 7 Sep, a convoy of seven junta trucks shelled Dawthponeyan town in **Momauk Township** and forced civilians to flee. The convoy initially

<sup>94</sup> DMG (9 Sep 2023) Two border guard police desert in Maungdaw Twsp

<sup>95</sup> DVB (12 Sep 2023) Nearly 200 religious buildings destroyed across country; Regime enforces e-commerce regulations

<sup>96</sup> Narinjara (12 Sep 2023) Junta forces continue searching for AA camps, suspected locals in Taungup township; Narinjara (21 Sep 2023) Military council troops enter Rakhine towns during night hours; Narinjara (19 Sep 2023) Junta conducts extensive search in Thandwe amid alleged PDF presence

<sup>97</sup> Narinjara via BNI (16 Sep 2023) Arakan Army Instructs Bomb Shelter Digging in Some Villages of Kyauktaw Township to Be Completed Within a Week

<sup>98</sup> DMG (4 Sep 2023) ARSA members active in Maungdaw District, locals say

<sup>99</sup> DMG (11 Sep 2023) Muslim villager abducted by ARSA found dead in Buthidaung Twsp

<sup>100</sup> Narinjara (27 Sep 2023) AA is conducting operation to clean up terrorists in Buthidaung; Myanmar Now (26 Sep 2023) AA detains villagers in northern Rakhine State for alleged 'criminal' affiliations

<sup>101</sup> DVB (6 Sep 2023) Aung San Suu Kyi denied outside medical care; Malaysia calls for stronger action at ASEAN Summit

<sup>102</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Sep 2023) ARSA Spreading Through Western Myanmar

<sup>103</sup> Irrawaddy (1 Sep 2023) KIA: Myanmar Junta Under Attack in Kachin State

<sup>104</sup> KNG via BNI (6 Sep 2023) Shwegu Police Station Targeted in Twin Drone Attacks

<sup>105</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Sep 2023) Drone Strike Kills Two Myanmar Junta Officials in Kachin State: PDF

<sup>106</sup> Irrawaddy (21 Sep 2023) ရွှေကူညွှံ့ ရွှေဖောင်အစီး ၅၀ ခန့် စစ်တပ်ဖီးရှို့

<sup>107</sup> KNG via BNI (20 Sep 2023) Junta burns down civilian vessels in Shwegu

<sup>108</sup> BBC (27 Sep 2023) စက်တင်ဘာ ၂၇ ရက် ထိပ်တန်းသတင်းများ - ရိက္ခာတင်သင်္ဘော လုံခြုံရေးယူစစ်သားတွေတိုက်ခိုက်ခံရ

<sup>109</sup> Mizzima (8 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta informer shot dead in Kachin State's Mohnyin Town

<sup>110</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Sep 2023) KIA, PDF slow junta troops' advance through Kachin State using explosives, artillery

<sup>111</sup> Myanmar Now (7 Sep 2023) Myanmar military, KIA clash near Myitkyina-Bhamo road

included 10 trucks and was en route to reinforce junta soldiers near Nam Sang Yang before it engaged in clashes with the KIA.<sup>112</sup> During 9-11 Sep, KIA troops ambushed a 25-vehicle junta convoy near Hka Lar Yang village, en route from Bhamo to Nam Sang Yang. Regime troops shelled the area in retaliation and injured two female teachers in Dawthponeyan town.<sup>113</sup> On 16 Sep, junta forces attempted retake an outpost near Nam San Yang in Lailum Aungja village in **Waingmaw Township**, which had been seized by the KIA earlier that day. The junta deployed fighter jets and ground reinforcements.<sup>114</sup> On 27 Sep, regime troops and its People's Militia Force (PMF) arrested eight IDPs from a camp in a church in Kazu and forced them to carry troop rations to the Nam Sang Yang area. Junta troops traveling to Nam Sang Yang often used civilians as **human shields**.<sup>115</sup> On 28 Sep, the junta's shelling of an Arakan Army's (AA) base in Laiza killed an AA officer and injured others. The AA had maintained bases in areas under KIA control and other armed groups in northern Burma.<sup>116</sup>

On 11 Sep, junta troops ambushed KIA and resistance forces in Hawang Par village in **Hpakant Township** and killed five resistance fighters. The clash forced some residents to flee and trapped others in the village.<sup>117</sup> On 20 Sep, the KIA and PDFs seized and burned down a junta camp in Daru Hka village in **Sumprabum Township**. The same day, KIA-PDF forces attacked a junta checkpoint at a bridge between two villages in Hpakant Township. Joint KIA-PDF troops used drones to attack a junta-allied militia camp.<sup>118</sup> On 25 Sep, resistance forces launched attacks on a Military Affairs Security (MAS) office and a police outpost and reportedly seized the MAS office. The junta responded by indiscriminately firing artillery into the area from a nearby hilltop position.<sup>119</sup>

On 24 Sep, the Northern Brothers People's Defense Force (NBPDF) reportedly attacked a junta airbase near Maw Hpoung and damaged at least two F7 jets, a communications tower, and several buildings in **Myitkyina Township**. The regime subsequently tightened security at its checkpoints in the area.<sup>120</sup>

### **Northern Shan State**

Tensions between the junta and the TNLA intensified as the junta attempted to regain full control of Muse, a China-Burma border trade town in N. Shan State. The junta's aggressive advances into TNLA territory starting July 2023 had led to fighting in Kyaukme, Muse and Hseni Townships in N. Shan State, and in Mogok Township, Mandalay Region. These reportedly weakened TNLA efforts to strengthen its administration. PDFs under the NUG had claimed that they fought alongside the TNLA against junta troops, which the TNLA denied. However, the TNLA reportedly worked with the Ta'ang Political Consultative Committee (TPCC) - part of the NUCC - and granted refuge to many resistance activists. A political analyst said the TNLA would have to be careful of anti-NUG pressure from China.<sup>121</sup>

During 28-31 Aug the junta carried out airstrikes on and shelled several villages near Sei Lant village in Kutkai Township, killed two civilians, injured four others, and forced around 2,000 residents from eight villages to flee. The junta had been stationed in Sei Lant for more than a month.<sup>122</sup> On 5 Sep, junta soldiers in Kutkai Township shelled a village and damaged at least four homes. On 6 Sep, resistance forces attacked a junta convoy along the Lashio-Hsipaw road in Lashio Township. Resistance forces and the junta continued to send reinforcements to Muse and Lashio districts as tensions escalated.<sup>123</sup>

During 16-17 Sep, clashes between the KIA and junta troops near Ho Nawng and Peing Kang villages in Hseni Township prompted at least 80 people to seek shelter in a Buddhist monastery in a nearby village.<sup>124</sup> Shan Human Rights Foundation reported that on 17-25 Sep, junta shelling and airstrikes on Muse Township injured four women, caused damage to numerous houses across several villages, and prompted around 700 residents from various villages to flee.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> KNG (9 Sep 2023) Dawt Hpung Yang Residents Flee Military Council Convoy

<sup>113</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Sep 2023) Heavy Fighting With Myanmar Junta Reported in Kachin State; KNG via BNI (13 Sep 2023) KIA Attack on Military Supply Convoy Inflicts High Casualties and Mission Aborted Near Hkala Yang Kachin State

<sup>114</sup> Irrawaddy (18 Sep 2023) Myanmar Military Launches Major Operation to Recapture Outpost from KIA; KNG (18 Sep 2023) KIA Seizes Military Council Camp Near Namsan Yang

<sup>115</sup> Kachin News Group (30 Sep 2023) SAC Continues Abducting Civilians in Waingmaw Township

<sup>116</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Sep 2023) Military shell kills AA captain at armed group's base in Kachin State

<sup>117</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Sep 2023) Heavy Fighting With Myanmar Junta Reported in Kachin State

<sup>118</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Sep 2023) Ethnic Kachin forces and local resistance allies launch three attacks in one day on junta forces in Kachin State

<sup>119</sup> NMG (26 Sep 2023) KIA and PDF-K Attack Junta Buildings in Hpakant Town

<sup>120</sup> NMG (26 Sep 2023) Resistance Fires Rockets at Myitkyina Airbase

<sup>121</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Sep 2023) Fighting Set to Intensify on Myanmar's Border with China: Analysts

<sup>122</sup> Myanmar Now (1 Sep 2023) Aid needed for villagers displaced by clashes in northern Shan State; SHAN (4 Sep 2023) Teen Killed, Others Injured in Shelling by Military Regime in Northern Shan State

<sup>123</sup> SHAN (8 Sep 2023) TNLA and Military Council Clash in Lashio Township

<sup>124</sup> SHAN (20 Sep 2023) Escalating Conflict Forces Civilians to Seek Refuge in Northern Shan State

<sup>125</sup> SHRF (28 Sep 2023) Four women injured, houses damaged by SAC shelling and airstrikes in Muse township, northern Shan State

On 19 Sep, a junta attack on Man Kan village (Kutkai Township) injured a woman, and caused over 1300 residents to flee.<sup>126</sup> On 22 Sep, junta troops launched ground and air attacks on a TNLA base, shelled battlefields near two junta army bases and nearby villages. The TNLA also reported clashes in Muse Township on the same day after a joint junta force attacked Hseng Khaung and Ho Paw villages.<sup>127</sup>

On 23 Sep, a clash erupted between the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) and the TNLA in Kutkai Township after TNLA soldiers allegedly fired on SSPP/SSA personnel near Hper Pyin in Mong Yu village.<sup>128</sup> During 18-25 Sep, the junta and Namkham Myoma Militia made daily attacks on a TNLA post and forced over 1,000 residents from five villages in Namkham Township to flee.<sup>129</sup>

During 23-26 Sep, clashes between the junta and TNLA forced over a thousand residents from seven villages in Muse and Kutkai Townships to flee. Clashes began when the TNLA attacked a junta convoy near Sei Lant village in Muse Township on Muse-Namkham road on 23 Sep. On 25 Sep, the regime shelled a TNLA position on the Loi Mauk hills near the Muse-Namkham road in retaliation. On 26 Sep, junta troops shelled Ngawt Ngar village (Kutkai Township) and forced at least 200 residents to flee.<sup>130</sup>

### **Karenni State**

The Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) reported that in August, around **50 clashes** took place in Karenni State. The KNDF had killed at least 110 junta soldiers, injured 40 others, and captured three. Clashes began on 2 Aug when the junta's LID 55 launched an offensive in Demoso and Hpruso Townships to gain control of the Demoso-Hpruso Union Road and recapture Mese Town. Overall, junta forces conducted airstrikes and artillery shelling, **killed three civilians, injured three children, and damaged a church, two schools, and 20 houses.**<sup>131</sup> The KNDF chair said that within two months, the junta's offensive to retake Mese town had **displaced around 7,000 people, of whom 4,000 had fled to Thailand;** junta shelling, **airstrikes and arson** had destroyed Mese, Bawlakhe, Hpruso, and Demoso towns and regime forces covered them in landmines. Karenni IDPs stated that since Feb 2021, the World Food Programme (WFP) had never provided food aid in areas controlled by resistance forces.<sup>132</sup>

On 7 Sep, the KNDF, the Karenni Army (KA), and PDF attacked junta strongholds in Thay Su Le and Pu Hpar villages in **Demoso Township** and killed over 30 junta soldiers.<sup>133</sup> On 19 Sep, the junta conducted airstrikes on **Loikaw Township** and an IDP camp in **Pekon Township** (S.Shan State), no fighting occurred in those areas.<sup>134</sup> On 24 Sep, the junta's LIB 530 fired artillery at homes in Loilin Lay town in **Loikaw Township** and destroyed some houses. There was no fighting in the area.<sup>135</sup>

On 18 Sep, the Demoso PDF released nine family members of a junta soldier and two police officers who were detained during clashes on 16 Jul.<sup>136</sup>

### **Southern Shan State**

On 18 Sep, it was reported that junta troops occupying civilian areas in **Moebye** had planted numerous landmines in the area and prevented IDPs from returning home to **Pekon Township** for several months. On 7-8 Sep, the regime shelled a local public hospital and injured an elderly woman. It had also deployed forces along the road between **Moebye** and **Pekon** despite a lack of recent fighting.<sup>137</sup> On 20 Sep, the Moebye PDF warned residents not to use the road connecting **Moebye** town wards to the main road between Moebye and Nanmaekhon in Karenni State because of the junta's landmines there.<sup>138</sup> On 27 Sep, the Moebye PDF warned locals to be careful while travelling due to junta shelling during clashes.<sup>139</sup>

### **Karen State**

**Junta carries out retaliatory attacks in Hpapun:** In **Hpapun Township**, the 6 Sep seizure of a junta outpost by KNLA Brigade 5 troops and a 7 Sep joint KNLA-PDF attack on an administrative office in

<sup>126</sup> Myanmar Now (21 Sep 2023) More than 1,000 flee fighting in northern Shan State between junta and TNLA

<sup>127</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Sep 2023) Military attacks ethnic Ta'ang armed group's base in northern Shan State using aircraft and drones

<sup>128</sup> SHAN (27 Sep 2023) Fighting Breaks Out Between SSPP/SSA and TNLA in Northern Shan State

<sup>129</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Sep 2023) Military attacks ethnic Ta'ang armed group's base in northern Shan State using aircraft and drones

<sup>130</sup> RFA (28 Sep 2023) တရုတ်နယ်စပ်အနီး တိုက်ပွဲကြောင့် ဒေသခံတစ်ထောင်ကျော် ထွက်ပြေးနေရ

<sup>131</sup> Mizzima (7 Sep 2023) Karenni State clashes saw the deaths of 110 junta members, says KNDF

<sup>132</sup> Mizzima (7 Sep 2023) Karenni fighters seize two Myanmar junta military camps, killing 30 soldiers

<sup>133</sup> Mizzima (7 Sep 2023) Karenni fighters seize two Myanmar junta military camps, killing 30 soldiers

<sup>134</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (21 Sep 2023) တိုက်ပွဲမရှိတဲ့ ဖယ်ခုံနဲ့ လွိုင်ကော်မြို့နယ် အတွင်းက နေရာ နှစ်ခုကို စစ်ကောင်စီ လေယာဉ်နဲ့ ဖုံးကြ

<sup>135</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (27 Sep 2023) ခလရ (၅၃၀) တပ်ကနေ လွိုင်လင်လေးမြို့တွင်းကို လက်နက်ကြီးပစ်ခတ်

<sup>136</sup> NMG (20 Sep 2023) Demoso PDF Releases Families of Armed Forces

<sup>137</sup> SHAN (18 Sep 2023) Regime's Landmines Impede Civilians' Return to Mongpai

<sup>138</sup> Than Lwin Times (21 Sep 2023) Local PDF warn people not to use Moebye-Nanmaekhon major road

<sup>139</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (28 Sep 2023) မိုးမြို့အတွင်း လက်နက်ကြီးများ ရမ်းသမ်းပစ်ခတ်နေ၊ ကရပြုသွားလာကြဖို့ မိုးမြို့ PDF ပြန်လည်အသိပေး



Khamarmaung Town led to a week-long junta bombardment of Karen villages in the area.<sup>140</sup> The KNU alleged that junta troops had used cluster bombs during the attacks.<sup>141</sup> On 7-8 Sep, the junta launched airstrikes on Ler Mu Plaw, Khaw Poke, and Nan Khu Khee village tracts, which killed a teacher and three students, injured seven others, and destroyed a school, a church and ten homes. On 8 Sep, junta forces carried out airstrikes on three more villages.

**Myawaddy police station bombing:** On 3 Sep, in **Myawaddy Township**, joint KNLA-PDF forces dropped two bombs on a junta police station in Myawaddy Town, killed nine junta soldiers, and injured seven others. In response, junta troops tightened security in the area and shelled and conducted airstrikes near the KNLA's recently-seized Let Khat Taung base.<sup>142</sup>

In **Kyainseikgyi Township**, on 12 Sep, junta reinforcements arrived in Kale-Ta Khun Taing village. On Sep 14, they clashed with joint KNLA-PDF forces. The KNU reported that junta shelling killed at least one civilian, destroyed more than 50 houses, and forced at least 2,000 locals in the area to flee.<sup>143</sup>

## Bago Region

**Junta troops go on two-week long bombing spree:** In KNU-defined **Mone Township**, the junta attacked civilians across KNU-defined Mone, Kyaukkyi, and Shwegyin Townships after a joint KNLA-PDF raid on the Thit Cha Seik camp on 31 Aug.<sup>144</sup> In the four days following the attack, junta battalions shelled villages at least nine times, and conducted at least three airstrikes. In total, retaliatory attacks during this period killed at least seven civilians and injured 11.<sup>145</sup> The Karen Emergency Relief Committee of Mone Township reported that the junta **dropped 101 bombs and fired 451 shells** between the end of Aug and 16 Sep in **Mone Township**. In total, the attacks displaced more than 10,000 civilians.<sup>146</sup>

Continuing their retaliation on civilian targets, on 3 Sep, the junta bombed and strafed Haw Kho Waw village, killed one child, injured six villagers, and destroyed a school and a monastery.<sup>147</sup> On 18 Sep, after the more than 1,000 residents of Haw Kho Waw fled, junta troops burnt the village to the ground.<sup>148</sup>

During 19-20 Sep, the junta provided arms to Pyu Saw Htee in **Pyay and Taungoo Townships** following the recent intensification of clashes between resistance and junta troops in Bago Region.<sup>149</sup>

## Mon State

**Highway 8 a focal point for attacks:** In Mon State, resistance attacks and junta retaliatory arrests continued along Highway 8, the major road connecting Southern Burma to Central Burma. Assassinations of junta members in highway towns on 3 Sep and 13 Sep led to the arrest of at least 22 people.<sup>150</sup> On 22 Sep, crossfire from KNLA-junta clashes near Ah Lu village in **Bilin Township** injured two locals traveling along Highway 8.<sup>151</sup> On 24 and 25 Sep, in **Ye Township**, resistance troops attacked junta camps just off Highway 8.<sup>152</sup>

During 4-6 Sep, in **Bilin Township**, a junta ambush on joint KNLA-PDF forces near Ah Lu village killed at least three resistance soldiers, and forced locals to flee. On 6 Sep, the arrival of junta reinforcements in Ah Lu forced 2000 villagers from six other villages to flee.<sup>153</sup>

On 5 Sep, in **Thaton Township**, resistance troops attacked the junta-aligned Pa-O National Organisation office in Naung Ku Lar with mines and injured five soldiers ahead of a junta state minister visit.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Than Lwin Times (8 Sep 2023) Ward administrator killed, two staff injured in drone attack on Kama Maung administrative office in Karen state; Than Lwin Times (5 Sep 2023) KNU reports high casualties of junta soldiers in Hpapun battle

<sup>141</sup> NMG via BNI (18 Sep 2023) Junta Air-strike Drops Cluster Bombs on Villages- KNU protests Use of Notorious Cluster Weapons Subject to International Ban

<sup>142</sup> APF (4 Sep 2023) Five Myanmar junta officials killed, 11 wounded, in Myawaddy bomb attack; Than Lwin Times (7 Sep 2023) Death toll rises to 9 in drone attacks in Myawaddy

<sup>143</sup> MM Peace Monitor (15 Sep 2023) Intense fighting in Ale-Tagondaing displaces nearly 2,000 locals; Than Lwin Times (22 Sep 2023) About 50 houses destroyed by junta shelling in Kale Tagondaing battle;

<sup>144</sup> Than Lwin Times (3 Sep 2023) KNLA joint forces seize junta's Thit Cha Seik camp

<sup>145</sup> KPSN via Facebook (7 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/4rba39hk>; Irrawaddy (6 Sep 2023) Myanmar Regime Bombards Bago Villages, Killing Baby, Elderly Resident; Than Lwin Times (6 Sep 2023) Junta shelling kills two civilians in Kyaukkyi; Myanmar Peace Monitor (5 Sep 2023) Daily junta airstrikes continue in Bago's Nyaunglebin District

<sup>146</sup> Myanmar Peace Monitor (19 Sep 2023) Junta conducts more than 500 airstrikes and heavy shelling in Mone Township

<sup>147</sup> KHRG via Twitter (22 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/9a7ayjsk>

<sup>148</sup> KHRG via Twitter (28 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/4fsa3s79>

<sup>149</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Sep 2023) Junta forms new militia chapters in Bago as resistance forces gather momentum

<sup>150</sup> Than Lwin Times (12 Sep 2023) At least 15 people under arrest, investigation in Paung Township; Independent Mon News (18 Sep 2023) Military Junta Arrests 8 Individuals After Former People's Army Member Shot

<sup>151</sup> Than Lwin Times (5 Sep 2023) Two civilians injured in Belin shootout

<sup>152</sup> Independent Mon News (25 Sep 2023) PDF/KNLA Joint Forces Attack Light Infantry Battalions in Ye

<sup>153</sup> Than Lwin Times (6 Sep 2023) Locals from six villages flee junta invasion in Belin

<sup>154</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Sep 2023) PNO office hit by mine blast ahead of visit by Mon State ministers

## Tanintharyi Region

On 12 Sep, Myanmar Now reported that the **junta relied increasingly on ships** to move supplies from Yangon to southern Mon State and Tanintharyi Region. A KNU officer said that the junta had nearly stopped transporting supplies and weapons along **Highway 8**, which runs between Payagyi (Mon State) and Myeik. The KNLA had increased searches of vehicles along Highway 8 in a bid to cut off junta supply lines in the Southeast. Rail lines past Mawlamyine had also stopped running.<sup>155</sup>

**Highway attacks and arrests:** Resistance groups carried out a number of attacks along **Highway 8** and other major roads in September. On 6 Sep, joint PDF forces attacked junta troops with landmines along the main road outside of **Tanintharyi Town**, killed four troops, and injured one other.<sup>156</sup> On 7 Sep, in **Dawei Township**, joint PDF forces attacked a junta checkpoint along Highway 8 near Maung Mei Shaung town three times in September, killing at least four junta soldiers and injuring three others.<sup>157</sup>

**Junta shells, bombs from sea:** Meanwhile, a local People's Defense Team (PDT) member said increasing PDF control over areas south of **Palaw town** had forced the junta to carry out a growing number of attacks from ships.<sup>158</sup> On 7 Sep, the junta navy fought with a local PDF near Kyauk Kar village.<sup>159</sup> On 9-11 Sep, a junta warship and troops in Pala Town shelled coastal villages in Palaw Township several times, killed one civilian, and injured four. An NUG officer claimed the junta took at least 10 villagers hostage during the attacks.<sup>160</sup>

During 15-17 Sep, junta navy and ground forces continued to carry out attacks on coastal villages, abducted and murdered villagers, and torched houses. On 15 Sep, junta troops retaliated against a resistance attack on troops in Let Ku village by torching houses and taking at least 130 civilians as **human shields**.<sup>161</sup> On the 16 and 17 Sep, junta navy and army troops near Let Ku Village again shelled the area, killed five villagers.<sup>162</sup> In total at least 30 houses were torched over the course of the fighting.<sup>163</sup>

**Junta use of human shields:** The junta took at least **179 civilians as human shields** in Tanintharyi Region in September.<sup>164</sup> On 18 Sep, in **Yebyu Township**, junta troops began patrolling villages and forced nearly 10,000 locals to flee. They took 16 villagers as human shields.<sup>165</sup> On 21 Sep, in **Kawthoung Township**, junta troops clashed with resistance forces, took 30 locals as human shields, and forced over 350 locals to flee to Thailand.<sup>166</sup> On 22-23 Sep, junta troops stationed in Palaw Township moved north to **Thayetchaung Township** and clashed with joint PDF forces. During fighting, they took three civilians as human shields, killed them, and then reportedly dressed them as resistance fighters. They also burned down at least two houses.<sup>167</sup>

## Naypyidaw Union Territory

On 15 Sep, resistance forces conducted a drone attack against a junta airbase located next to Naypyidaw International Airport. Details of the damage and/or the number of casualties were unknown.<sup>168</sup>

## Mandalay Region

In **Ngazun Township**, in retaliation for a resistance drone attack, regime forces arrested at least 70 civilians in Tha Kyin village to use as **human shields** on 3-4 Sep. The regime troops tortured and interrogated the detainees at the local administrative office and released 40 of them on 5 Sep.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Myanmar Now (12 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta shells Tanintharyi Region coastal villages from ships offshore

<sup>156</sup> Than Lwin Times (8 Sep 2023) Military officer among four killed in Tanintharyi attack

<sup>157</sup> Than Lwin Times (9 Sep 2023) Two soldiers killed in attack on checkpoint in Dawei; Than Lwin Times (13 Sep 2023) Two regime troops killed in attack on Dawei checkpoint

<sup>158</sup> Myanmar Now (12 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta shells Tanintharyi Region coastal villages from ships offshore

<sup>159</sup> Than Lwin Times (10 Sep 2023) Junta shelling kills one civilian, injuries four in Palaw

<sup>160</sup> Myanmar Now (10 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta shells Tanintharyi Region coastal villages from ships offshore

<sup>161</sup> RFA (19 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta kills 4 civilians during Tanintharyi mass arrests

<sup>162</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Sep 2023) Myanmar Resistance Suffers Heavy Casualties in Tanintharyi Clash; Myanmar Now (20 Sep 2023) Military still deploying warships in southern Myanmar battles

<sup>163</sup> Independent Mon News (27 Sep 2023) Thousands Flee Emergency in Palaw Township

<sup>164</sup> Sum total of cases cited in this briefer for Tanintharyi region

<sup>165</sup> HURFOM (26 Sep 2023) Military junta arrests 16 villagers and uses them as human shield in Dawei

<sup>166</sup> Than Lwin Times (23 Sep 2023) More than 30 residents abducted by junta in Kawthoung

<sup>167</sup> Myanmar Now (27 Sep 2023) Junta troops kill three civilian hostages after battle in Tanintharyi

<sup>168</sup> Irrawaddy (18 Sep 2023) Naypyitaw Junta Airbase Hit by Myanmar Resistance Drone Strike

<sup>169</sup> RFA (5 Sep 2023) Junta troops detain more than 70 civilians in Myanmar's Mandalay region

In **Myingyan Township**, a junta column raided Ma Gyi Su village on 20 Sep, took 60 people as **human shields**, and tortured villagers, including women, children, and elderly, despite lack of fighting in the area at the time. On 21 Sep, the column moved to Ywar Thar Yar village and reportedly set up a base.<sup>170</sup>

In **Mogok Township**, after junta troops raided a TNLA-occupied village, joint TNLA-PDF fighters attacked a junta outpost on Palaung Kone San Hill on 10 Sep and killed seven junta troops.<sup>171</sup> A TNLA spokesman said that junta repeatedly launched airstrikes and shelled the area afterward.<sup>172</sup> On 13 Sep, the NUG Defense Department announced that joint TNLA-PDF fighters killed over 80 junta personnel, including officers, in clashes during July-Sep on the N. Shan State and Mandalay Region border.<sup>173</sup>

In **Mogok Township**, on 15 Sep, the junta retaliated against a resistance force attack on the Kyat Pyin village junta police station and killed a PDF member. On 18 Sep, resistance forces intercepted a junta reinforcement convoy, destroyed two vehicles and killed eight junta troops.<sup>174</sup> Since then, in Nyaung Kone village, junta shelling killed three villagers, including a child, injured five, and forced over 100 families to flee to monasteries.<sup>175</sup> On 19 Sep, resistance forces seized a temporary junta outpost between the Palaung Kone San Hill and Nyaung Kone village.<sup>176</sup> On 26 Sep, resistance forces attacked and seized a junta outpost in Yay Htwat village while the junta continued shelling near Kyat Pyin village.<sup>177</sup>

## Yangon Region

In **South Okkalapa Township**, the junta arbitrarily arrested a man and a woman after two bombs exploded at a golf course and near Inno city on 22 Sep.<sup>178</sup>

## Rohingya

### Junta moves ahead with forced repatriation of 7,000 refugees

On 5 Sep, the junta **re-stated their intention to forcibly repatriate 7,000 Rohingya refugees**. The junta's permanent secretary, Ko Ko Naing, claimed the junta had “cleared” 20 villages for refouled Rohingya and that China and “other members of the international community” would assist in building new villages. He claimed that **returnees would be screened by the junta's immigration department**, offered “citizenship cards”, and provided with farming supplies. On 2 Sep, a group of diplomats from 16 countries visited “repatriation” camps in Northern Maungdaw Township.<sup>179</sup> A former MP stated that **the junta's plan was unlikely to succeed if it refused to engage in dialogue with the ULA/AA**. He added that increasing ARSA presence in Northern Rakhine State would make repatriation difficult.<sup>180</sup>

Rohingya refugees expressed skepticism about the likelihood that the repatriation effort would succeed. One stated that the Rohingya would only return if they were guaranteed citizenship, access to education, freedom of movement, and the right to resettle their original land. Another said that the junta's repatriation plan would only “move refugees from one camp to another”.<sup>181</sup>

### France to intervene at ICJ, UK reduces aid

After French PM Emmanuel Macron's visit to Bangladesh, **France announced their intention to intervene in the Gambia vs. Myanmar case at the ICJ**. They also planned to contribute EUR 1 million to the World Food Programme's activities in Cox's Bazar. Five other countries have so far announced their intention to intervene in The Gambia vs. Myanmar case. Only one has so far actually intervened.<sup>182</sup>

On 12 Sep, the **UK announced GBP 3 million** in aid for Rohingya, bringing their annual funding for Rohingya to GBP 16.9 million in 2023. According to Burma Campaign UK, UK government funding for Rohingya **had fallen to 15% of their funding provided in 2019-20**.<sup>183</sup> On 21 Sep, US State Secretary

<sup>170</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Sep 2023) Army troops abuse, rob civilian hostages in Mandalay Region

<sup>171</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Sep 2023) Ethnic Ta'ang and local resistance forces launch offensive against junta in Mandalay's Mogok Township; Irrawaddy (27 Sep 2023) Resistance Forces Seize Myanmar Junta Outpost in Mandalay's Mogoke

<sup>172</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Sep 2023) TNLA: Attacks on Myanmar Junta in Mandalay Rising

<sup>173</sup> Myanmar Now (13 Sep 2023) Mandalay PDF claims to have caused dozens of junta casualties in recent months

<sup>174</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Sep 2023) Ethnic Ta'ang and local resistance forces launch offensive against junta in Mandalay's Mogok Township

<sup>175</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Sep 2023) Three Civilians Killed by Junta Shelling in Upper Myanmar

<sup>176</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Sep 2023) Three Civilians Killed by Junta Shelling in Upper Myanmar

<sup>177</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Sep 2023) Resistance Forces Seize Myanmar Junta Outpost in Mandalay's Mogoke

<sup>178</sup> DVB (25 Sep 2023) တောင်ငူတိုင်းဒေသကြီး ဖွဲ့စည်းပုံအခြေခံဥပဒေကို အတည်အခံ ပြုလုပ်ပေးမည်

<sup>179</sup> Narinjara (6 Sep 2023) 7,000 Muslim refugees will be accepted by Myanmar by this year

<sup>180</sup> Narinjara (6 Sep 2023) Military Council's Refugees Repatriation Unlikely to Succeed Without Dialogue with ULA, Say Analysts

<sup>181</sup> RFA (5 Sep 2023) Junta offers villages, but Rohingya won't return without guarantees

<sup>182</sup> BSS (11 Sep 2023) Bangladesh, France issue joint statement after Hasina-Macron talk

<sup>183</sup> Mizzima (17 Sep 2023) UK aid cuts to Rohingya now at 85%, says NGO

Antony Blinken stated that **the US would provide an additional USD 116 million in humanitarian aid** to support Rohingya people in Burma, Bangladesh, and the surrounding region.<sup>184</sup>

### **Refugees bear brunt of worsening conditions**

Youth Congress Rohingya (YCR) stated, in a 22 Sep research report, that the Bangladesh government's efforts to curb crime by increasing restrictions on movement not only **deprived Rohingya of many fundamental rights** but had also **driven up crime rates and endangered camp residents**. Survey respondents affirmed that Armed Police Battalion (APBn) officers had beaten them and that restrictions on their freedom of movement barred them from access to healthcare and livelihood opportunities. Nearly 70% of respondents reported they were only able to move to other camps beyond their own 'a little bit' and 40% said they could not go to towns outside their camp. Almost 90% of respondents reported that restrictions had worsened when the APBn assumed control over camp security in 2019.<sup>185</sup>

A UNHCR survey of livelihood indicators in **Bhasan Char** showed that the **unemployment rate amongst Rohingya there was a shocking 77% in 2022**. The unemployment rate was 92% amongst women and 79% amongst 15- to 29-year-olds. The labor force participation rate was 44%. In Cox's Bazar, the unemployment rate was 36% and the labor force participation rate was 33% in 2019.<sup>186</sup>

On 18 Sep, UNICEF reported that Bangladesh experienced the largest upsurge in dengue cases since data collection began in 2000, during the 2023 rainy season. In Cox's Bazar, **11,116 Rohingya refugees tested positive for dengue, 11 of whom died**. Rohingya people comprised 86% of dengue cases in Cox's Bazar but only made up 21% of cases admitted to local hospitals.<sup>187</sup>

### **Women remain defiant despite regime crackdown (more details at [women tracker](#))**

On 13 Sep, Rakhaing Women's Initiative Organization (RWIO) stated that there were at least **40 cases of violence against women** in Rakhine State this year before 4 Sep. **Domestic violence remained underreported** due to intimidation and women's perceived lack of financial independence.<sup>188</sup>

On 3 Sep, two female human traffickers lured a Sittwe woman to Yangon with promises of employment in China. The woman managed to contact her father who filed a complaint with the police.<sup>189</sup> On 4 Sep, a man raped a 10-year-old girl in Buthidaung Township (Rakhine State).<sup>190</sup> On 16 Sep, an unknown perpetrator raped and killed a female secondary school teacher. The ULA/AA reportedly launched an investigation but has yet to arrest a suspect.<sup>191</sup>

On 11 Sep, health education providers said that women in IDP camps in Rakhine State urgently required **effective and far-reaching reproductive health education**. A lack of awareness had led to miscarriages, vaginal and uterine infections, and unwanted pregnancies.<sup>192</sup>

On 7 Sep, junta troops arrested a young woman driving a motorcycle in Kale Township in Sagaing Region, and beat her during interrogation. She died of her injuries the next day.<sup>193</sup> On 8 Sep, in South Okkalapa Township (Yangon Region), junta officials arrested and beat 11 women in a female dormitory because their National Registration Cards (NRC) cards said they were from Sagaing.<sup>194</sup>

On 18 Sep, Arakan Women Network Chair Daw Nyo Aye hospitalized during court proceedings.<sup>195</sup> Daw Nyo Aye, who was charged under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, said prison authorities forced her to sit for long periods and denied her hypertension medicine.<sup>196</sup> On the same day, a labour activist reported that management at a garment factory in Shwepyithar Township (Yangon Region) forced **a 7-month pregnant worker to work without a lunch break** after she took three days of medical leave.<sup>197</sup> On 24 Sep, a landmine killed a woman in Law Kyay Khu village in Hpruso Township (Karenni State).<sup>198</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Reuters (22 Sep 2023) US to provide \$116 million in humanitarian aid for Myanmar, Bangladesh

<sup>185</sup> Youth Congress Rohingya (22 Sep 2023) This Persecution Is The Worst There Is

<sup>186</sup> UNHCR (20 Aug 2023) Brief 2: Livelihood on Bhasan Char

<sup>187</sup> UNICEF (20 Sep 2023) UNICEF Bangladesh Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3 (Dengue Outbreak): 18 September 2023

<sup>188</sup> DMG (13 Sep 2023) Violence against women remains underreported scourge, activists say

<sup>189</sup> DMG (8 Sep 2023) Sittwe trafficking victim expected to return home

<sup>190</sup> DMG (7 Sep 2023) 10-year-old raped in Buthidaung

<sup>191</sup> Narinjara (18 Sep 2023) Rakhine school teacher raped and killed, ULA/AA investigation underway

<sup>192</sup> DMG (11 Sep 2023) Knowledge about women's health lacking among Arakan State IDPs

<sup>193</sup> RFA (7 Sep 2023) Woman dies from beating in Myanmar's Sagaing region

<sup>194</sup> Mizzima (8 Sep 2023) Junta guest list check in Yangon leads to assault and detainment of 11 Sagaing women

<sup>195</sup> Narinjara (18 Sep 2023) Rakhine women leader Daw Nyo Aye rushed to hospital with worsening health during court procedure

<sup>196</sup> Narinjara (19 Sep 2023) Rakhine activist Daw Nyo Aye's health deteriorates as she was forced to sit for hours in prison

<sup>197</sup> Myanmar Labour News (18 Sep 2023) Working 12 to 16 hours a day, but losing more social security benefits; Myanmar Labour News (20 Sep 2023) A 7-month pregnant labour is being forced to work without a break at Jia Xin (Myanmar) Garment Factory

<sup>198</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (26 Sep 2023) နေအိမ်အတွင်း စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်တွေ ထောင်ထားခဲ့တဲ့ မြေမြုပ်မိုင်းနင်းမိတာကြောင့် ဖျံ့ဆိုဒေသံ အမျိုးသမီးတစ်ဦး သေဆုံး



### Attempted coup chokes access to treatment for people living with HIV

On 8 Sep, Frontier Myanmar reported that **the junta's attempted coup** had made it more difficult for **people living with HIV (PLWHA)** to access antiretroviral therapy (ART) drugs. The junta had **slashed healthcare spending by 32%** for the 2022–2023 fiscal year, compared to the 2020 national budget. Moreover, the Civil Disobedience Movement had temporarily halted all ART clinics under the National AIDS Programme (NAP), which supported PLWHA. Since the attempted coup, reported **understaffing at clinics** had led to long queues for ART drugs. Patients now received only a one-month supply of medicine from clinics. Previously, they received three months of medications. Finally, public clinics increasingly demanded payment, or bribes, from PLWHA for previously free services, such as blood tests. The healthcare breakdown, lack of CSOs in conflict areas, and stigma surrounding HIV reportedly led to many **HIV-related deaths going unreported**.<sup>199</sup>

### Outbreaks overwhelm limited healthcare system

In September, there were reported **outbreaks of pneumonia in Mon State** and **of seasonal flu amongst IDPs in Sagaing Region and Karenni State**. This led to hospital overcrowding, deaths, and school shutdowns in the affected areas.<sup>200</sup> In **Rakhine State**, the junta-run Rakhine State Health Department (DPH) recorded **1,449 dengue fever cases** and one death. Most cases occurred post-Cyclone Mocha.<sup>201</sup>

On 13 Sep, RFA reported that **poor health infrastructure and junta control over major hospitals in Burma** had forced many people to seek medical care in **Thai hospitals along the Thai-Burma border**. While registered migrants in Thailand were able to pay into the national health insurance system, **undocumented migrants, stateless people**, and others crossing the border to access healthcare were often unable to pay, leaving hospitals to foot the bill. Growing amounts of patients coming from Burma meant many hospitals now ran **large deficits**. A hospital director called on the Ministry of Public Health to provide long-term solutions and humanitarian aid to cover costs of treating non-Thai patients.<sup>202</sup>

### Resistance education in Chin, Karen expands

A 26 Sep report by **the Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)** stated that **schools run by the junta's Ministry of Education** in KNU-controlled and mixed administration areas dropped from 370 in 2019–2020 to 0 in 2022–2023. Meanwhile, the number of schools administered by the **KNU's Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD) in those areas went from 382 to 909**. The assistant director of the Karen Teacher Working Group said that, at least **40,000 students** had switched from regime to KECD schools since 2021. At least 2,000 new educational facilities were needed to accommodate them.<sup>203</sup> On 3 Oct, DVB reported that more than **3800 Zotung students** in 45 schools were attending Zotung Federal Council-run classes in Chin State.<sup>204</sup>

On 9 Sep, **parents and teachers** in the **Naga Self-Administered Zone (Sagaing Region)** reported that students **had yet to receive textbooks**, that there was a **shortage of teachers**, and that Gr. 10 students were working as teachers. **Below 34% of students in the SAZ passed** their final exams in 2022–2023.<sup>205</sup>

### Junta continues targeting schools and health facilities

On 9 Sep, the **Karen Human Rights Organization (KHRG)** reported that the junta had launched over **24 attacks** that damaged or destroyed over **37 education-related buildings** in Southeast Burma since 1 Feb 2021. Junta airstrikes or shelling **killed 48 children and injured over 100 others**.<sup>206</sup>

On 10 Sep, in **Yinmarbin township (Sagaing Region)**, a **junta helicopter** attacked a **temporary school** established in Ka Paing village by **CDM teachers**, injured a civilian, and forced locals to flee.<sup>207</sup> On 21 Sep, in **Sagaing Township (Sagaing Region)**, the junta **arrested the principal** of a private high school and their family members and shut down the school, **alleging ties** to organizations designated by the

<sup>199</sup> Frontier Myanmar (18 Sep 2023) Myanmar on brink of HIV treatment crisis

<sup>200</sup> Than Lwin Times (3 Sep 2023) Pneumonia outbreak raises concern in Mon state; Kachin News Group (6 Sep 2023) Flu Outbreak Affects Displaced Villagers in Indaw Township; Kantarawaddy Times (26 Sep 2023) ဒီးမော့ဆိုက်က စစ်ရှောင်စခန်းတချို့မှာ ရာသီတုပ်ကွေးကြောင့် ကျောင်းတချို့ပိတ်ထားရ

<sup>201</sup> DMG (9 Sep 2023) Arakan State reports nearly 1,500 dengue cases, one death so far this year

<sup>202</sup> RFA (13 Sep 2023) Thai border hospitals feel strain as Myanmar's war drives patients over border

<sup>203</sup> KPSN (26 Sep 2023) "A shifting power balance" Junta control shrinks in southeast Burma; DVB (2 Oct 2023) Kyaw Moe Tun and NUCC on PRIO shortlist for Nobel Peace Prize; Regime delegation meets with ICJ

<sup>204</sup> DVB (3 Oct 2023) Over 281 civilians killed by airstrikes since coup; Regime civil servants given wage increase

<sup>205</sup> NMG (9 Sep 2023) Students Struggle Without Text Books in Naga Self-Administered Region

<sup>206</sup> Than Lwin Times (10 Sep 2023) Junta's attack on education becomes more common: KHRG

<sup>207</sup> RFA (12 Sep 2023) Junta airstrike damages school in Myanmar's Sagaing region

regime as terrorist groups.<sup>208</sup> On 21 Sep, Karen News reported that in **Kyaukkyi Township** (Bago Region), junta airstrikes forced locals including healthcare workers, to flee. The evacuation of healthcare workers **crippled local hospitals**.<sup>209</sup> On 27 Sep, in **Wuntho Township** (Sagaing Region), the junta **shelled a monastery and injured eighteen children** in Gyoe Taung village, six of whom were seriously injured. The attack forced locals to temporarily close the village school.<sup>210</sup>

On 26 Sep, **teachers in Karenni State** called on the regime to **stop shelling schools**. They stated children had the right to education without the threat of air or artillery strikes.<sup>211</sup> On 29 Sep, in **Kyondoe Township** (Karen State), a group of villagers from three villages protested to demand **junta troops stationed at the local school and monastery withdraw**.<sup>212</sup>

## **Business and economics (more details at [business & economic responses tracker](#))**

### **Cash-starved junta targets migrant workers with inhumane taxes**

On 1 Sep, the junta implemented its directive for **workers leaving for overseas jobs** to open an account at one of 14 banks under the junta's Central Bank of Myanmar and use it to **remit 25% of their earnings**. The directive would apply to workers in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Qatar, and the UAE. Their remittances would be subject to the regime's USD exchange rate of MMK 2,100 rather than the market rate of MMK 3,400. A failure to comply would cause a three-year overseas work ban. Labor activists and migrant workers said that the junta's rule was an **exploitative scheme** to accumulate foreign currency and **encouraged illegal work**. On 24 Sep, migrant workers in Bangkok protested outside the UN offices after the junta announced a progressive income tax between 5%-25% effective Oct 2023 to Mar 2024, despite an exemption from double taxation for citizens of ASEAN states.<sup>213</sup>

### **Singaporean, Israeli, and Danish firms continue arming the junta**

On 1 Sep, Justice for Myanmar (JfM) published a **"Dirty Over 30" list of tycoons** who have enriched themselves by **supplying arms, military equipment, and funds to the junta via Singapore**. The list featured, among others, the heads of the Htoo Group, Star Sapphire Group, and Asia Sun Group. JfM also called on Singapore to expedite and make public investigations on Singaporean suppliers to the junta and push other ASEAN members to issue sanctions on the junta and its transactors.<sup>214</sup>

On 6 Sep, Middle East Monitor reported, citing Haaretz, that **Israeli arms manufacturer** Elbit Systems and state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) maintained arms trade with the regime even after the attempted coup. IAI sent at least four shipments from 2018 to Mar 2022 to the regime's Directorate of Defence Procurement. The shipments may have contained Dvora-class patrol boats, two of which the junta navy put into service in Dec 2022.<sup>215</sup>

On 7 Sep, it was reported that the **Danish Justice Ministry had approved the sale of engines** for the junta navy warship UMS Moattama by the Volkswagen subsidiary MAN Energy Solutions in Denmark. Despite arms trade sanctions, the Danish Defense Ministry's Material and Procurement Agency encouraged the approval of the sale. An expert on EU arms sanctions said that the sale of engines for military applications in Burma was forbidden before 2018.<sup>216</sup>

### **Burma's web of online scams exposed**

On 14 Sep, it was reported that an online scam business **operating out of Yangon's** upscale MMB Tower employed educated, multilingual staff with **attractive salaries and no abuse**. Although the current owners of MMB could not be identified, it was reported that two US-sanctioned businesses had their headquarters at MMB and that their owners had ties to the United Wa State Army.<sup>217</sup>

On 3 Sep, the **United Wa State Army**, with the help of **Chinese law enforcement, detained 269 suspects** across 11 online scam operations in Shan State and extradited 186 who were Chinese nationals. On 6 and 7 Sep, Wa State police **arrested over 1000 Chinese** nationals and handed them over to Chinese

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<sup>208</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Sep 2023) Junta arrests principal of private high school in Sagaing

<sup>209</sup> Karen News (21 Sep 2023) After Air-strikes On Kyaukkyi Township- Local Hospital Has No Doctors

<sup>210</sup> RFA (30 Sep 2023) Junta shells school in Myanmar's Sagaing region, injuring 18 kids

<sup>211</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (26 Sep 2023) Teachers Demand An End To Airstrikes On Schools In Karenni State

<sup>212</sup> Karen News (29 Sep 2023) Residents Demand Military Council Troops Must Leave School and Monastery

<sup>213</sup> RFA (13 Sep 2023) Junta requires workers abroad to send money home via approved banks; Irrawaddy (12 Sep 2023) Cash-Starved Junta Milks Myanmar Migrant Workers With New Remittance Rule; Frontier Myanmar (22 Sep 2023) 'We don't have a choice': Junta puts the squeeze on overseas workers; Irrawaddy (26 Sep 2023) Junta Makes Second Grab at 'Empty' Wallets of Myanmar Migrant Workers

<sup>214</sup> Justice for Myanmar (1 Sep 2023) Funds and arms to Myanmar war criminals

<sup>215</sup> Middle East Monitor (6 Sep 2023) Israel sold arms to Myanmar after 2021 military coup, despite govt. ban

<sup>216</sup> Myanmar Now (7 Sep 2023) Danish links to Myanmar warship exposed in leaked documents; Irrawaddy (4 Sep 2023) Danish Firm Supplied Engines for Myanmar's Biggest Warship During Genocide: Report

<sup>217</sup> RFA (14 Sep 2023) How a scam ring opened shop in downtown Yangon

authorities. During 16 Sep, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security announced it had extradited another 109 suspects, making it a total of 1,482 so far. It was reported that China was also cooperating with local **authorities in Kokang and Mongla** regions in Shan State to crack down on organized crime groups.<sup>218</sup>

On 26 Sep, UNODC estimated that around **20 significant casinos** were operating in autonomous special regions in Burma. UNODC reported that the use of **physical abuse** to control others was **more prevalent in Burma** than in other countries. Additionally, in Burma, large **structures had been built specifically** for large online scam operations that accommodate **thousands of trafficking victims**. Typical amounts of **ransoms had reportedly increased** from the equivalent of USD 5,000 in 2022 to USD 30,000 in 2023. Moreover, identifying and releasing potential victims had become extremely challenging in remote areas because foreign authorities had little to no negotiating power over captors.<sup>219</sup>

### **Junta struggles to keep lights on**

On 5 Sep, the World Bank (WB) reported that the **power supply-demand gap in Burma had widened** since 2021. WB projected a **depletion of domestic gas fields** over the rest of the decade with no current foreign interest in developing new gas fields. Since the attempted coup, **clashes leading to fatalities** had taken place within **10km of 77% of existing power plants**. Rising Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) prices and low forex availability led to the suspension of LNG power plants in Yangon in 2021. To compensate for the lower power supply, the regime **relied heavily on hydropower reservoirs** during the rainy season in 2022. This decision led to a **prolonged electricity shortage** during the dry season in 2023 and left **four million households without electricity**. Moreover, petroleum fuel prices had increased two to three times since 2021 due to supply shortages and depreciation of the MMK.<sup>220</sup>

On 14 Sep, **EarthRights International** and an unnamed **Burma CSO** filed a legal complaint to the National Contact Points of Canada and the UK, which stated that MTI Energy Inc.'s (**MTI**) planned purchase of **Chevron's 41.1% share of the Yadana gas project**, a joint venture with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), was in breach of the OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Although MTI was registered in Canada, a subsidiary registered in the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda would handle the purchase. This gave **Canada and the UK jurisdiction** over the complaint. The complaint argued that MTI had engaged in improper involvement in political activities and corruption and that it would contribute to human rights violations by completing the acquisition.<sup>221</sup>

On 21 Sep, it was reported that the junta had **transferred** a substantial part of **oil storage and distribution** operations to Brighter Energy Co, a subsidiary of the crony-owned Kanbawza Group, to **evade international sanctions**.<sup>222</sup>

### **Amid import restrictions junta forces its products on retailers**

On 5 Sep, the junta directed regional and state officials to **investigate stores and shops** that were **not selling "certain" SIM cards and goods** (military-produced products). The junta's administrative council in Mandalay Region gave the order to identify "discriminatory" big stores and retail shops and investigate whether they were **supporting "terrorist organizations."** After the crackdown started on 6 Sep, Burma's biggest supermarket chain City Mart reportedly started restocking Myanmar Beer in Yangon.<sup>223</sup> On 14 Sep, shop and bar owners reported that **administration officials accompanied by junta soldiers** had started **threatening** to take action if they boycotted junta-produced liquor and cigarettes. They said that junta forces fined owners and threatened to revoke their liquor licenses.<sup>224</sup>

On 16 Sep, it was reported that the junta's **crackdown on edible oil sellers** had led to **supply disruptions**. The junta had urged consumers to report wholesalers and retailers who sold above the junta's wholesale reference price of MMK 4,155 per viss.<sup>225</sup>

On 27 Sep, the junta's Ministry of Transport and Communications threatened mobile phone service users and sellers with six-month **jail terms if they do not register SIM cards**, which would require users to

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<sup>218</sup> South China Morning Post (5 Sep 2023) Police in China and Myanmar detain 269 in cyber scam crackdown; Narinjara (9 Sep 2023) 1,000 Chinese online cheaters arrested by Wa police, handed over to China police; RFA (14 Sep 2023) The long arm of Chinese law is getting longer in Southeast Asia; China Daily (18 Sep 2023) Latest group of telecom fraud suspects returned to China from Myanmar; ISP-Myanmar (21 Sep 2023) Rare Earths Mining Freeze; Chinese Market Squeeze

<sup>219</sup> UNODC (26 Sep 2023) Casinos, cyber fraud, and trafficking in persons for forced criminality in Southeast Asia

<sup>220</sup> World Bank (5 Sep 2023) In the Dark: Power Sector Challenges in Myanmar

<sup>221</sup> EarthRights International (14 Sep 2023) Advocates challenge MTI Energy's human rights record in Myanmar

<sup>222</sup> Irrawaddy (21 Sep 2023) Myanmar Junta Re-Channels Fuel Imports as Western Sanctions Tighten

<sup>223</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Sep 2023) Junta threatens businesses to stock military-made products amid boycotts; Mizzima (20 Sep 2023) Ayeyarwaddy bars and restaurants forced to stock military-owned companies' products

<sup>224</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Sep 2023) Power-Drunk Junta Tries Selling Myanmar Beer at Gunpoint

<sup>225</sup> Nikkei Asia (16 Sep 2023) Myanmar's fight to tame inflation sows turmoil over cooking oil

**submit their personal information.** Critics said the regime would use identity registration to crack down on activists and resistance members.<sup>226</sup>

## **International responses (more details at [international responses tracker](#))**

### **Conflicting reactions at India border**

On 23 Sep, the **Manipur State chief minister** said that they had requested the Indian government to **permanently close** the currently suspended **free movement regime** (FMR) with Burma. He said that to curb the rising influx of “illegal immigrants” and drug trade, India had started **fencing 60km of the border** and formed a joint committee on narcotics and border affairs. A **Chin National Defense Force** (CNDF) spokesperson said that they **helped arrest drug smugglers** and that the fence extension would **hurt refugees fleeing**. An IDP said that they were only building refugee camps on the Burma side and that **Indian authorities had driven them out**, but drug smugglers had their own way of crossing the border. A refugee in Mizoram said the **UNHCR should not ignore** the situation.<sup>227</sup>

On 27 Sep, the **Mizoram State** government decided to **ignore** the Indian Home Affairs Ministry’s directive to **collect biometric data of refugees from Burma** by 30 Sep, based on **humanitarian grounds**. The Mizoram Minister of Information said that the **Chin and Mizo were relatives** but that the Indian government would simply push the refugees out after taking their data. The **Manipur State** government already possessed specific information about 718 Burmese nationals but had requested a **year-long deadline extension** due to the ongoing Kuki-Metei conflict.<sup>228</sup>

### **Thai MP blasts junta incursion**

On 13 Sep, Thai Fair Party MP Kannavee Suebsang called on the Thai government to investigate the **incursion of 80–100 junta soldiers** into Tak province on 3 Sep. The **KNU** said that the soldiers had **deliberately crossed to attack** resistance positions from the Thai side. Locals reported the soldiers’ presence to Thai soldiers, who did not intervene until it was made public on social media on 5 Sep. The **Thai Army then negotiated** with the junta soldiers, who refused to leave until they convinced the KNU to let the junta troops return. Kannavee said that the KNU perceived **Thailand’s inaction** as siding with the junta. He said that the incursion was a violation of Thailand’s sovereignty and should be treated as an international relations issue. The **Thai Defense Minister** claimed that it was “**normal**” for junta soldiers to enter Thailand due to conflict and that they had departed peacefully.<sup>229</sup>

### **Thailand refouls refugees**

On 2 Sep, Thai authorities stated that around **70 refugees** who fled clashes in Mese Township (Karenni State) to Mae Hong Son had “**voluntarily**” **returned home**. An aid worker said that the international community should speak out against Thai authorities **refouling refugees**.<sup>230</sup> On 5 Sep, it was reported that IDPs near Mae Hong Son had **dug bunkers in fear** of the regime’s frequent airstrikes near the border.<sup>231</sup> On 10 Sep, aid groups reported that over **600 refugees** who fled to Mae Hong Son had **returned to IDP camps** in Mese Township since early Sep. Banyar of the Karenni Interim Executive Council said that **some returned willingly** but Thai authorities had **forcibly repatriated** others. However, ongoing clashes prevented IDPs from returning to their homes. Moreover, the Thai government imposed **greater restrictions** on **international aid**, which deteriorated living conditions in Mae Hong Son. Returnees relied on Thai imports and would face food shortages in Burma too.<sup>232</sup>

### **ASEAN announces troika of special envoys**

On 4 Sep, the **ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People’s Forum** (ACSC/APF) **declared the junta a terrorist organization** threatening the security and stability of the region and urged ASEAN leaders at the summit to impose targeted sanctions to cut off cash, arms, and aviation fuel, hold junta leaders accountable for their crimes, and engage officially with legitimate stakeholders.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> RFA (27 Sep 2023) Junta threatens prison terms for unregistered SIM card users

<sup>227</sup> Telegraph India (25 Sep 2023) Manipur government requests Centre to ‘permanently close’ free movement regime with Myanmar to check influx from across border; RFA (25 Sep 2023) India plans to extend fence along Myanmar border

<sup>228</sup> The Hindu (28 Sep 2023) Manipur, Mizoram differ on Myanmar ‘refugees’; Indian Express (29 Sep 2023) Mizoram to ignore Centre order, says ‘won’t collect biometric data of Myanmar refugees’

<sup>229</sup> Bangkok Post (13 Sep 2023) Myanmar troops spark cry for probe; RFA (14 Sep 2023) More than 80 Myanmar junta troops stranded on Thai side of border; Thai Enquirer via Facebook (13 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/2s9j2v3t>

<sup>230</sup> DVB (4 Sep 2023) Refugees begin to return from Thailand; Aung San Suu Kyi appeals rejected by Supreme Court

<sup>231</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (5 Sep 2023) Karenni Refugees Fear Attack on Thai Camp

<sup>232</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (13 Sep 2023) Refugees Return to Mese Township from Thailand Amid Conflict; Kantarawaddy Times (12 Sep 2023) Thais Offer to Return Willing Refugees to Daw Hnoe Ku Camp in Karenni State

<sup>233</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Sep 2023) ASEAN Must Cut Ties With ‘Terrorist’ Regime in Myanmar: Civil Society



On 4 Sep, **Malaysia's** FM Zambry Abdul Kadir called for strong and effective measures imposed on the junta. **Cambodia's** new Prime Minister Hun Manet said that ASEAN and the international community should oppose using the threat of force against a sovereign state.<sup>234</sup> During 5-7 Sep, ASEAN agreed that the **Five-Point Consensus (5PC)** would continue guiding its **approach to the crisis** in Burma, noted its grave concern over the **lack of substantial progress** implementing the 5PC that the junta agreed to, and urged the **junta "in particular"** and all related parties to **de-escalate violence** and stop targeted attacks on civilians. ASEAN officially confirmed the **Philippines** to be the **2026 ASEAN chair** and that the chairship would continue alphabetical rotation afterward. The **junta complained** that the review of the 5PC and decisions were **"biased and one-sided"** and claimed that it was the one who asked the Philippines to chair in 2023.

Indonesian FM Retno Marsudi said that ASEAN also agreed to an **informal "troika" of special envoys on Burma**, composed of the special envoy of the **present chair** supported by the special envoys of the **previous and next chair**. Journalist Leong Wai Kit said in a Twitter/X post that the junta had rejected the idea of the troika in 2021 and 2022, but that this time ASEAN leaders had the final word.<sup>235</sup> On 6 Sep, **US VP Kamala Harris** announced the establishment of a US-ASEAN center in Washington.<sup>236</sup>

On 7 Sep, **Bangladesh** President Mohammad Shahabuddin said that **Rohingya repatriation delays** and shortage of humanitarian aid could put the entire region at risk and urged the international community to find a **durable solution** to the Burma crisis.<sup>237</sup>

On 5 Sep, in an interview, **Timor-Leste's** President Jose Ramos-Horta said that the country was still **on track to join ASEAN** and that he was **confident in the bloc's ability** to eventually resolve the crisis in Burma. He added that the **junta was losing the war** as it only controlled 30% of the country.<sup>238</sup> On 6 Sep, the **ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)** stated that ASEAN's 5PC "review and decision" did **not provide decisive and meaningful steps** but rather reflected ASEAN's attitude towards the crisis in Burma as "some bureaucratic mix-up."<sup>239</sup>

On 13 Sep, a **US State Department** representative said that the **next ASEAN chair, Laos**, would **not have the same leverage or resources** as Indonesia to hold the junta accountable and continue pressuring it to implement the 5PC. She said that the US and dialogue partners were speaking with ASEAN and individual members to **ensure continued momentum**. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar said that the de-facto ASEAN special envoy for Burma had expressed "a lot of anxiety" **Indonesia's progress** would be **undermined by Laos** and other members.<sup>240</sup> On 15 Sep, in a video message, VP of the **European Parliament** Heidi Hautala said to the CRPH that the **EU would send a representative** to Indonesia to work on **ASEAN** and to form stronger ties with the **CRPH and the NUG**. She said that the EU should provide more financial and capacity-building support to the democratic forces.<sup>241</sup>

### **Junta remains part of ASEAN military exercises**

On 31 Aug, Justice for Myanmar (JfM) demanded that ASEAN cancel its **ASEAN Air Chiefs' Conference (AACC)** to be held in Naypyidaw in Sep. The AACC would be **chaired** by Htun Aung, **head of the junta's air force** that has killed nearly 1,000 people in 930 airstrikes.<sup>242</sup> From 13-15 Sep, junta media reported that Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Brunei attended AACC while Singapore and the Philippines sent video messages, and Indonesia and Malaysia boycotted. During the **three days the AACC** took place, the junta conducted **20 airstrikes on civilians**.<sup>243</sup>

On 4 Sep, the **US Defense Department** said that ASEAN invited the junta to the **Thai/US-chaired ADMM+ maritime security conference** and training program in Hawaii during 12-14 Sep. Although

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<sup>234</sup> Reuters (4 Sep 2023) Malaysia calls on ASEAN for 'strong measures' on Myanmar

<sup>235</sup> Reuters (5 Sep 2023) Conflict-riven Myanmar cedes upcoming ASEAN chair to Philippines; ASEAN (7 Sep 2023) Chairman's Statement of the 13th ASEAN-United Nations Summit; Leong Wai Kit via X (9 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/4muy7r4>; Irrawaddy (11 Sep 2023) Shamed by ASEAN, Myanmar's Generals Try to Save Face; Leong Wai Kit via X (5 Sep 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/ftkcyse2>

<sup>236</sup> Reuters (6 Sep 2023) US VP Harris: US will continue to press Myanmar to foster democracy

<sup>237</sup> Reuters (7 Sep 2023) Bangladesh president calls for durable solution to Myanmar crisis

<sup>238</sup> Al Jazeera (5 Sep 2023) Q&A: East Timor's ASEAN membership and the Myanmar conflict

<sup>239</sup> ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (6 Sep 2023) ASEAN's 'review and decision' on Five Point Consensus falls short of what is needed to resolve Myanmar crisis, Southeast Asian MPs say

<sup>240</sup> RFA (13 Sep 2023) Official: US pushing Laos to press Myanmar junta; Reuters (14 Sep 2023) UN rights expert urges US to go further with sanctions against Myanmar junta

<sup>241</sup> Mizzima (19 Sep 2023) EU representative on ASEAN to work with Myanmar democratic forces

<sup>242</sup> Justice for Myanmar (31 Aug 2023) JfM demands ASEAN cancel air force conference to be chaired by Myanmar war criminal in September

<sup>243</sup> Nikkei Asia (15 Sep 2023) 6 ASEAN air force chiefs attend conference hosted by Myanmar; RFA (18 Sep 2023) Myanmar military launches 20 airstrikes during ASEAN Air Chiefs conference

the US had boycotted junta/Russia-chaired counter-terrorism exercises, the US Department of Defense stated that attendance at ASEAN forums was determined by ASEAN member states.<sup>244</sup>

During 19-23 Sep, ASEAN members conducted a joint **non-combat military exercise** in Indonesia, the first-ever **featuring only bloc members**. Prospective member Timor-Leste joined and the **junta** attended as an **observer**. Indonesia's military chief said that the exercise included training in humanitarian aid, disaster relief, rescue operations, and joint maritime patrols. Analysts said that this exercise was a sign of growing cooperation and **unity on maritime security** in light of the **South China Sea dispute**.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, the joint military drills dubbed "**ASEAN Solidarity Exercise**" (ASEX 23) reflected the shared fear of being **forced to choose** between the **US and China**, and the fear of the importance of **ASEAN being undermined** by AUKUS and the QUAD.<sup>246</sup>

During 25-30 Sep, **Singapore boycotted** the junta/Russia co-chaired ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM+) **counter-terrorism exercise** held in Russia.<sup>247</sup> JfM reported that multinational military teams **simulated attacks on "terrorist"** enemies using many **weapons currently in the junta's arsenal**, including 120 mm mortars, battle tanks, and Russian helicopters. JfM stated that by allowing the event to take place, ASEAN had **boosted the junta's capacity** to continue its campaign of terror against civilians and **deepened their complicity**.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Myanmar Now (4 Sep 2023) EXCLUSIVE: ASEAN security summit in US will include Myanmar junta officials

<sup>245</sup> BenarNews (18 Sep 2023) Southeast Asian nations set to begin first ASEAN-only joint military exercise; AFP (19 Sep 2023) Myanmar junta present at first-ever ASEAN military drills

<sup>246</sup> Al Jazeera (25 Sep 2023) 'Baby steps' for ASEAN as it wraps up first-ever joint military drills

<sup>247</sup> Myanmar Now (26 Sep 2023) Six countries boycott ASEAN military exercise led by Russia and Myanmar junta

<sup>248</sup> Justice for Myanmar (30 Sep 2023) ASEAN aiding and abetting the Myanmar junta's atrocities through counter terrorism military training in Russia