

**BURMA COUP WATCH FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023:  
Illegal junta's losing streak continues with no break in sight**

- As of 31 Dec, there were at least 29,440 armed clashes and attacks against civilians since 1 Feb 2021. Junta troops continued their violent crimes.
- Three Brotherhood Alliance takes over 400 junta bases nationwide since 27 Oct.
- Rights group reports junta burned over 440 bodies in 156 recorded cases.
- Junta breaks terms of China-brokered temporary ceasefire with Three Brotherhood Alliance member with air and artillery strikes.
- Thailand to form humanitarian aid taskforce with illegal junta.
- Junta greed sinks to new low with policy to extort money from undocumented migrants.
- Burma takes top spot from Afghanistan in opium cultivation.
- Indonesian anti-Rohingya online hate speech surges, mob storms refugee shelter, navy pushes away boats.
- Desperation pushes Burmese civilians to sell kidneys, private Indian hospital acts as broker.
- Indian authorities beat imprisoned women refugees on hunger strike.
- Junta boss embarks on self-glorifying propaganda tour as troops exit ranks.
- Illegal junta shells, bombs museum and a proposed UNESCO world heritage site in Arakan State

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## Illegal junta's quest to cement control

On, 18 Dec, the junta's **Supreme Court rejected Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal against her conviction** under corruption charges. The charges alleged that she accepted USD 600,000 and seven gold bars as bribes during 2017-2018. A legal official said that appeals of her conviction for election fraud, breach of Burma's Official Secrets Act, and five other corruption charges were still being processed.<sup>1</sup>

### Junta boss goes on propaganda blitz

At a cabinet meeting on 29 Nov, coup leader **Min Aung Hlaing blamed ethnic armed groups** for the **junta's military failures**. He **accused** the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) **of funding themselves through drug trafficking**. He also **claimed that "foreign drone experts"** had joined anti-junta offensives in N. Shan State's Kokang SAZ and that the ethnic armed groups had used **"drones with advanced technology"** in their attacks, but **did not elaborate**.<sup>2</sup>

On 5 Dec, junta media reported that coup leader **Min Aung Hlaing called on EROs to find a political solution** to escalating conflict and urged them to "[discard] their naughty moves". He reportedly warned that **residents of conflict-affected regions would "suffer bad impacts"** if EROs continued their offensives. The junta chief blamed the Karenni National Progressive Party and the Karenni National Defence Force for the destruction of houses and buildings in **Loikaw Township (Karenni State)**. He also claimed that the Arakan Army had destabilized the development of Arakan State.<sup>3</sup> Observers noted that any political **dialogue with EROs without the NUG would be unrealistic**.<sup>4</sup>

On 7 Dec, in a bid to boost morale, the junta boss awarded medals to 147 regime personnel, including civilian staff and two junta colonels killed in clashes.<sup>5</sup> On 8 Dec, in **Pyin Oo Lwin (Mandalay Region)**, junta boss **Min Aung Hlaing announced** to graduates of the junta's **Defense Services Academy** that **elections would be held soon**. He claimed that election procedures had already begun but **did not specify a date**. NUG ministry of defence spokesperson Maung Maung Swe said that nationwide **elections were impossible without territorial control**. He added that the coup leader's speech was a **tactic to boost morale** by implying that they would not have to fight after elections.<sup>6</sup> Afterwards on 10 Dec, the coup leader visited **Lashio (N. Shan State)** and **met IDPs** and **wounded junta troops for propaganda photo-ops**. Although the regime's North-Eastern Command was located in Lashio, junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun claimed the visit took place "close to the front line."<sup>7</sup>

On 25 Dec, the junta chief remotely **co-hosted the 4th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Leaders' Meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang**. The PMs of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam attended. **He pandered to China** and claimed that drug trade, human trafficking, and scam operations hindered regional security and economic development. **To secure allies, he called on regional leaders** to cooperate in combatting these crimes and **expedite the LMC initiatives corridor**.<sup>8</sup>

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

#### **Pro-democracy groups set up administration in newly-captured areas**

On 11 Dec, it was reported that the resistance had captured at least 80% of Loikaw and all of Moebye Township (S. Shan State). Despite funding and human resource challenges amid conflict, the Interim Executive Council (IEC) **established key administrative, political and social departments** and initiated its programs in **nine townships** across Karenni State and Moby Township (S. Shan State).<sup>9</sup>

On 15 Dec, the KIA, All Burma Students' Democratic Front, and Indaw PDF began establishing a **resistance-run administrative structure in Maw Luu town** (Sagaing Region) after its 13 Dec seizure. The groups agreed to appoint two people from each six wards in the town to a governing council.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AP (18 Dec 2023) Myanmar Supreme Court rejects ousted leader Suu Kyi's special appeal in bribery conviction

<sup>2</sup> Irrawaddy (1 Dec 2023) As Myanmar's Junta Loses Control, Its Coup Leader Ratchets Up His Blame Game

<sup>3</sup> GNLM (5 Dec 2023) Senior General Min Aung Hlaing asserts commitment to democratic and federal Union, warns against disintegration

<sup>4</sup> Irrawaddy (5 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Boss Tries to Drive Wedge Between Ethnic Armies, Civilians

<sup>5</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2023) Myanmar Coup Leader Showers Medals on Troops as String of Defeats Erodes Morale

<sup>6</sup> Myanmar Now (9 Dec 2023) Despite escalating violence, Myanmar junta leader says elections will proceed

<sup>7</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Chief Uses Injured Soldiers and IDPs for Propaganda Splash

<sup>8</sup> Irrawaddy (26 Dec 2023) From Pariah to Co-Host: Myanmar Coup Leader Promotes Rule of Law at Mekong Forum

<sup>9</sup> RFA (11 Dec 2023) Ethnic Karenni forces control capital, key township in Myanmar's Kayah state; NMG (7 Dec 2023) IEC Begins Administering Karenni State

<sup>10</sup> Kachin News (19 Dec 2023) People's Administration Started in Captured Town in Indaw Township

## Democratic groups continue legislative and constitutional reform

On 1 Dec, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) released its **Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) policy**, which discussed links between the CDM and the Transitional Justice Policy.<sup>11</sup> On 4 Dec, the NUCC released its **Transitional Justice (TJ) policy** and outlined its policy position on the **Rohingya** and the filing of its declaration with the ICC Registrar in accordance with Article 12.3 of the Rome Statute. Using a **victim-centered approach**, the TJ policy would focus on Truth Seeking, Accountability, Reparation, Institutional Reform, and Reconciliation.<sup>12</sup>

During 4-8 Dec, the **Chinland Council** held its **inaugural assembly** at the Chin National Front's (CNF) Camp Victoria. CNF representatives, Chin State MPs, and Chin State township and area-based representatives attended. More than **80% of township and village tract level organizations** voiced support for the initiative.<sup>13</sup> On 7 Dec, **assembly attendees approved the Chinland constitution**. The constitution denoted the Council as the political body to oversee executive, parliamentary, and judiciary wings, which would be established within 60 days. The constitution named 15 ministries under its executive branch. Even though the constitution did not include any writing on shared rule between state and union, it stated a **federal democratic union** was the ultimate goal of its signatories.<sup>14</sup>

## NUG, affiliated groups emphasize humane POW treatment

On 13 Dec, the NUG's deputy secretary for the Ministry of Defense said that armed groups under the NUG "**adopted rules and directives**" to handle prisoners of war in line with "**international humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention**", but acknowledged some may employ their own practices on the ground. A spokesperson for the TNLA stated that the group released surrendered soldiers immediately after their capture. Arrested soldiers were held and not forced to work or face punishment. **Several former POWs corroborated the EROs' claims** to humane treatment, stating they had been housed, fed, and had received medical treatment while captured.<sup>15</sup>

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

### Illegal junta unable to best AA, arrests civilians instead

During 13-26 Nov, the junta **arrested over 70 civilians in Arakan State** for alleged ties to the Arakan Army (AA). A **junta officer** from Pauktaw Township reportedly **demanding a ransom of MMK 30 million (approx. USD 14,300) for each detainee**. Locals from Thandwe town reported that the junta had **arrested 10 civil society leaders** and that their **whereabouts were unknown**.<sup>16</sup>

On 15 Dec, in Maungdaw Township, junta soldiers **arrested three civil servants** of the township's cooperatives & rural development department. On the same day in **Sittwe Township**, junta soldiers **arrested residents of three households**.<sup>17</sup> On 21 Dec, it was reported that the **junta had arrested at least 170 civilians in Arakan State since mid-November**, when junta-AA fighting resumed. A member of a Sittwe-based CSO estimated that the **number of detainees was closer to 200** and that family members **did not announce some arrests out of fear, shame, or due to lack of internet access**.<sup>18</sup>

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

As of 18 Dec the number of displaced people in Burma reached 2.6 million, 660,000 were newly displaced since 27 Oct.<sup>19</sup>

## Rights group reports evidence of junta systematically burning bodies

Myanmar Witness reported that during Mar 2022-Sep 2023 junta forces burned at least 440 bodies in 146 incidents across Burma. The report included bodies of those reportedly burned alive, burned after death, and those who had died of an arson attack or air and artillery strikes. Around 24% of cases mentioned female victims and, in some cases, sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>11</sup> NUCC (1 Dec 2023) <http://tinyurl.com/58e5wvw3>

<sup>12</sup> NUCC (4 Dec 2023) <http://tinyurl.com/muaxveys>

<sup>13</sup> Irrawaddy (26 Dec 2023) The First Chin-Written Constitution: A New Template For Self-Determination?

<sup>14</sup> Chin World via BNI (8 Dec 2023) Chin State Council Sets 60-Day Timeline to Form Chin State Parliament, Cabinet, and Supreme Court; Irrawaddy (26 Dec 2023) The First Chin-Written Constitution: A New Template For Self-Determination?

<sup>15</sup> RFA (13 Dec 2023) Myanmar shadow govt claims hundreds of junta surrenders since end October

<sup>16</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Dec 2023) Myanmar Regime Snatching Civilians Across Rakhine State as Fighting Rages

<sup>17</sup> Narinjara (15 Dec 2023) Junta soldiers raid office, arrest government officials in Maungdaw

<sup>18</sup> Irrawaddy (21 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Accused of Starving and Arresting Civilians in Rakhine State 'to Instill Fear'

<sup>19</sup> UNOCHA (15 Dec 2023) Myanmar: Intensification of clashes Flash Update 10

<sup>20</sup> RFA (26 Dec 2023) Military burned more than 440 bodies over 19-month period; CIR (23 Dec 2023) Military burned more than 440 bodies over 19-month period

## Illegal junta scrambles to shore up troop count amid defeat and rising defections

As of 27 Dec, the junta had **lost control of 23 towns** and more than **400 bases** and outposts **across the country** since Operation 1027 started. The Three Brotherhood Alliance seized at least ten towns and over 260 junta bases and outposts in **N. Shan State**, over 140 bases and outposts in **Arakan State**, and two bases in **Chin State**. The KNLA captured a town, and the KNDF, KNPLF, KA, and local PDFs seized over 40 junta camps in **Karenni and S. Shan States**. Chin resistance forces seized three towns near the India-Myanmar border, and the KIA and local PDFs captured four towns in **Sagaing Region**.<sup>21</sup>

The NUG reported that **in November, at least 433 junta soldiers – including two entire battalions-and police had surrendered** during clashes, and **resistance forces had arrested 100** others since the launch of Operation 1027.<sup>22</sup> On 19 Dec, it was reported that over **650 junta soldiers, police, and militia members had surrendered** since Operation 1027 began.<sup>23</sup>

On 4 Dec, the **junta announced it would pardon deserters who wished to return** to the army and **readmit them to their original battalion or reassign them** based on need. Ex-junta soldiers said this was the **first time the junta allowed deserters to rejoin** its ranks. A defector said the announcement could be an **implicit warning of harsher punishment on deserters** who did not take the offer.<sup>24</sup>

On 6 Dec, the regime began **transferring “pardoned” soldiers from Obo prison (Mandalay Region) to active duty**. A source inside the prison said that the **transfer did not include officers**. Another source, inside **Htone Bo prison (Mandalay Region)**, said that at least 10 soldiers had been set for release.<sup>25</sup>

On 7 Dec, in **Patheingyi Township (Ayeyarwaddy Region)**, the junta granted **"amnesty" to at least 100 soldiers and transferred them to a training camp** with the intention of sending them to the frontline. An ex-junta officer said that regulations prohibited deserters and those with a criminal record from being reinstated into the military. A source at the training camp said that the junta did not give released soldiers a chance to opt out of rejoining and that most of them seemed reluctant despite promises of promotions.<sup>26</sup>

In **Bago Region**, the junta **“pardoned” and transferred 239 soldiers from Patheingyi, Taungtha, Pyaw, Paunde, and Daik-U Prisons** to local military training schools and persuaded them to rejoin the military. On 12 Dec, the junta **returned all 39 soldiers from Pyaw Prison back to the prison after 36 had refused to rejoin**. A source close to **Taungtha Prison** reported that the junta also **returned the 63 soldiers back to prison** after they refused to rejoin.<sup>27</sup>

On 14 Dec, it was reported that the **junta transferred at least 649 soldiers from prison back to military duty** nationwide. Those released included **prisoners from Insein Prison (Yangon Region), Obo and Myingyan Prisons (Mandalay Region), and Sittoung Prison (Arakan State)**. Sources said that most were **taken forcibly, in bad health, and unfit to fight**. Junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun had reportedly said that junta **deserters who returned** or had intentions to serve again would **not be considered deserters but absent without leave (AWOL)**. This was likely meant to **circumvent the Defense Services Act**, which carried prison sentences of up to seven years for attempted desertion.<sup>28</sup>

On 22 Dec, it was reported that the junta had used **fake job advertisements on Facebook to conscript** young men. The advertisements **promised pay, accommodations, and training** in skills such as mechanics, driving, and even engineering. However, the advertisements **did not disclose any connection to the military**. It was reported that **recruiters in Yangon Region** called in job seekers for an **interview at a tea shop** and afterwards took them to a **recruitment camp in Insein Township**. At the camp, junta soldiers threatened the men to enlist and confiscated their IDs and phones. Camp personnel then **imprisoned and abused the men for two weeks** before transferring them to Mandalay Region, where they underwent basic training. A former forced recruit reported that the junta also **forcibly enlisted minors and forced men living with HIV and hepatitis** to undergo military training.<sup>29</sup>

On 7 Dec, it was reported that in **Ayeyarwaddy Region, resistance fighters who surrendered** to the junta had **volunteered to join junta-affiliated militias**. A member of the Patheingyi Urban Guerilla Group

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<sup>21</sup> The Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2023) Myanmar's Operation 1027 Against The Junta Two Months On

<sup>22</sup> RFA (13 Dec 2023) Myanmar shadow govt claims hundreds of junta surrenders since end October

<sup>23</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Dec 2023) White Flag: Over 650 Myanmar Junta Troops Have Surrendered Since Launch of Operation 1027

<sup>24</sup> Myanmar Now (5 Dec 2023) Beleaguered junta will pardon deserters who return to barracks

<sup>25</sup> Myanmar Now (7 Dec 2023) Myanmar regime sends 'pardoned' deserters back to barracks

<sup>26</sup> NMG via BNI (13 Dec 2023) Military Council Grants Amnesty to Veterans Convicted of Various Crimes, Send Them Back to Frontlines

<sup>27</sup> RFA (16 Dec 2023) Junta sends pardoned deserters who refused to rejoin military back to prison

<sup>28</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Dec 2023) Myanmar Military Putting Jailed Deserters Back on Frontlines

<sup>29</sup> Myanmar Now (22 Dec 2023) Myanmar army uses sham job announcements to trap young men into military service

said that junta soldiers and **former resistance leaders** had stepped up **their recruitment efforts** and used **money and food as bribes**.<sup>30</sup>

### **Junta breaks ceasefire after China brokered negotiations**

On 6 Dec, **junta Foreign Minister Than Swe met with China's FM Wang Yi** in Beijing ahead of the **8th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Foreign Minister's Meeting**. Junta media reported that the talks between the two FMs focused on BRI projects and combating drug and human trafficking, and scam operations. However, sources close to the meeting said that the **junta had requested China** to use its influence to **broker negotiations between the junta and the Three Brotherhood Alliance**, composed of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Arakan Army (AA). Observers noted that the Three Brotherhood Alliance would likely not stop fighting even with China-mediated peace talks after their territorial gains.<sup>31</sup>

During 7-8 Dec, the **junta met with the Three Brotherhood Alliance in Kunming** for talks mediated by China. A leaked draft consensus showed that the meeting aimed to **implement a ceasefire before the end of December**. The consensus would have required the junta to pledge to a hand over of Laukkai to the MNDAA through "political arrangements." In exchange, the MNDAA would have agreed to not take Laukkai by force and would reopen border trade routes with China with regime cooperation. The document also revealed **China's priorities**: it included a **pledge from all parties to eliminate online scam operations**. Political analyst Than Soe Naing citing a source close to the negotiations said that the proposed ceasefire was limited in scope and focused on the MNDAA. He added that the MNDAA agreed to a **15-day ceasefire to allow junta personnel, their families, and civil servants to flee into China**.<sup>32</sup>

On 11 Dec, **junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun confirmed** via regime media that the junta's National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee had engaged with the Three Brotherhood Alliance in China-backed negotiations but did not share details.<sup>33</sup> **China claimed** that the talks had **yielded "positive results."** Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said that **China would "continue to provide support and facilitation to this end."**<sup>34</sup>

On 13 Dec, the **Three Brotherhood Alliance** stated that it would **continue its offensive operations** against the junta and that it would **never ignore the aims of the people of Burma**. The alliance added that it **aimed to build a federal democratic union with self-administered regions**. A source in the Three Brotherhood Alliance said that **the talks brokered by China lasted only 10 minutes**. The alliance did **not issue an official statement on the talks**.<sup>35</sup>

During 18-19 Dec, **less than 15 days after the talks**, the **junta conducted air and artillery strikes on the MNDAA** in the Kokang Self-Administered Zone.<sup>36</sup> (See N. Shan State conflict for more details)

On 21 Dec, Wang Wenbin, **China's Foreign Ministry** spokesperson said that China would work for a **"soft landing"** to the conflict in N. Shan State. He added that China hoped **"all parties concerned in [Burma]"** would keep the border stable and **protect Chinese projects in Burma**.<sup>37</sup>

During 22-24 Dec, the junta met with the Three Brotherhood Alliance for a **second round of unsuccessful talks** mediated by China. A TNLA official said that the talks **failed due to a wide gap between both sides' demands**. They agreed to **meet again in January**. A China-based political analyst said that the **talks were unlikely to succeed** because the **junta would not share political or economic power** and only attended the talks to hold onto its existing power. Further military victories by the alliance would give it the upper hand in negotiations. A political observer said that **China would continue to intervene in N. Shan State to protect its interests**.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> RFA (7 Dec 2023) Myanmar junta recruiting former resistance fighters to bolster numbers

<sup>31</sup> Irrawaddy (7 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Asks China to Pressure Brotherhood Alliance to End Offensive

<sup>32</sup> Myanmar Now (13 Dec 2023) Fate of Laukkai at centre of talks between Myanmar junta, Brotherhood Alliance

<sup>33</sup> Myanmar Now (12 Dec 2023) Myanmar junta holds China-mediated talks with members of Brotherhood Alliance

<sup>34</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 2023) China Says Peace Talks Held Over North Myanmar Conflict With 'Positive Results'

<sup>35</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Dec 2023) Brotherhood Alliance Denies Myanmar Junta Peace Deal Rumors

<sup>36</sup> Irrawaddy (20 Dec 2023) Fighting Resumes in Myanmar's Kokang Region Ending Brief Pause That Followed China Peace Talks

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs China (21 Dec 2023) Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin's Regular Press Conference on December 21, 2023

<sup>38</sup> RFA (28 Dec 2023) Myanmar junta and ethnic army alliance fail to reach agreement to reduce combat



## Sagaing Region

Junta forces continued raids and scorched-earth tactics in Sagaing Region amid clashes with local resistance forces. UNHCR reported 1,077,200 civilians displaced (nearly 20% of the population) in Sagaing as of 1 Jan 2024.<sup>39</sup>

**Resistance forces continue to gain ground:** On 3 Dec, the junta conducted airstrikes on **Tigyaing town** while resistance forces attempted to seize the town. Tigyaing PDF claimed that they controlled **half of the town**. Since Nov 8, clashes had displaced **nearly 70,000 residents**.<sup>40</sup>

On 13 Dec, in **Indaw Township**, the Kachin Independence Army, All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), and Indaw PDF **seized Maw Luu town**, located on the Shwebo-Myitkyina road. It was reportedly the **fourth successfully captured town in Sagaing** under Operation 1027. The junta's retaliatory artillery and air strikes displaced thousands of locals. The ABSDF said numerous junta troops and staff had **defected before their attack**.<sup>41</sup>

**Junta attempts to recapture losses:** On 5 Dec, in **Tamu Township**, during their **attempts to recapture Khampat town** which they had lost on 7 Nov, junta troops detained and tortured seven resistance fighters and killed four of them. Two men that the junta stabbed and left for dead escaped. The junta soldiers held the remaining fighter as a guide. A Chin National Defense Force spokesperson said that while the junta claimed it had carried out **"successful" operations** near Khampat, there had been **no new ground battles**. The junta had only murdered resistance fighters and torched 80% of nearby Htan Ta Pin village.<sup>42</sup> On 6 Dec, **fighting resumed**. On 10 Dec, junta troops **occupied an orphanage** and took 36 children and four teachers **as human shields**. They attacked PDF with air and artillery strikes launched from outside the orphanage and a camp the junta had recaptured. On 11 Dec, resistance forces **rescued the orphans** and teachers.<sup>43</sup> On 16 Dec, the junta **gave up its attempt** to retake Khampat town after a week of conducting airstrikes.<sup>44</sup>

During 16-21 Dec, in **Paungbyin Township**, junta airstrikes killed two civilians and injured 11 others. Locals speculated that the junta was trying to **stop the resistance from advancing** after they had **failed to retake nearby Shwe Pyi Aye town**. Resistance groups had taken the town on 22 Nov.<sup>45</sup>

On 24 Dec, the junta imposed **blockades on Kawlin Township**, which had been under NUG control since 6 Nov. An Indaw PDF member said the junta was using its **four cuts strategy**.<sup>46</sup> On 28 Dec, junta shelling killed three people including two children and injured two others.<sup>47</sup>

## Magway Region

On 15 Dec, in **Seikphyu, Saw, and Pauk Townships**, the junta conducted aerial and artillery strikes, killed two women, injured three others, and displaced around 8,000 civilians. A PDF member said that while Seikphyu was strategically important, there had been no fighting in the area.<sup>48</sup> On 16 Dec, in **Gangaw Township**, junta troops shelled Shone Shi village, killed two people, and injured five others.<sup>49</sup>

## Chin State

On 4 Dec, the Chinland Defence Force-Mindat (CDF-Mindat) reported that the junta carried out 67 airstrikes in **Mindat Township** during Jan-Nov 2023. Junta airstrikes killed six civilians, injured 15 others, and damaged 103 buildings including four monasteries, five churches, and six schools.<sup>50</sup>

**AA seizes bases across Paletwa Township:** On 5 Dec, the AA announced that they had captured the junta's Ta Run Aing strategic base and seized junta weapons, ammunition, and military equipment.<sup>51</sup> A day earlier, the AA accused the junta of using chemical weapons during bombing runs.<sup>52</sup> On 10 Dec, the

<sup>39</sup> UNHCR (1 Jan 2024) Myanmar Emergency Overview Map: Number of people displaced since Feb 2021 and remain displaced (as of 1 Jan 2024)

<sup>40</sup> DVB (5 Dec 2023) Thailand ready to assist refugees; Military deserters offered amnesty; DVB (19 Dec 2023) Brotherhood Alliance seizes Namhsan; Philippines urges ASEAN to act on Burma

<sup>41</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Dec 2023) Myanmar Resistance Forces Seize Fourth Sagaing Town

<sup>42</sup> Myanmar Now (8 Dec 2023) Junta troops slay captured resistance fighters in advance toward Indo-Myanmar border town

<sup>43</sup> RFA (12 Dec 2023) Junta troops seize orphanage during battle in central Myanmar

<sup>44</sup> Irrawaddy (18 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Troops Retreat After Failing to Retake Strategic India Border Town

<sup>45</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2023) Junta bombs eastern Chindwin River villages in attempt to prevent resistance advances in Sagaing, locals say

<sup>46</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2023) Junta Blockades Township Seized by Myanmar Resistance in Sagaing

<sup>47</sup> Kachin News (30 Dec 2023) SAC Artillery Kills Two Children and Adult in Kawlin

<sup>48</sup> RFA (18 Dec 2023) Two dead, 3 injured in airstrikes on central Myanmar village

<sup>49</sup> DVB (19 Dec 2023) Brotherhood Alliance seizes Namhsan; Philippines urges ASEAN to act on Burma

<sup>50</sup> Khonumthung News (11 Dec 2023) SAC Attacks Mindat Civilians With Airstrikes and Artillery From Afar

<sup>51</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2023) Sittwe residents flee as fighting intensifies near Rakhine State capital

<sup>52</sup> Irrawaddy (5 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Uses Chemical Warfare: Arakan Army

AA announced they had also taken the junta's Hnonebu strategic base. The AA first attacked both bases on 14 Nov.<sup>53</sup> A political analyst highlighted the camps' importance due to their location along a trade route to India and said that their seizure would impact the development of India's Kaladan Project.<sup>54</sup> On 12 Dec, the junta strafed, shelled, and bombed Hnonebu camp.<sup>55</sup>

On 22 Dec, Three Brotherhood Alliance stated that the AA had launched an attack on a junta base near Myeikwa village on the Myanmar-India border in **Paletwa Township**.<sup>56</sup> On 28 Dec, the AA captured the camp.<sup>57</sup> 151 junta soldiers from the camp reportedly fled to Mizoram State (India) where the Assam Rifles provided them medical treatment. On 2 Jan, Indian authorities repatriated them by air.<sup>58</sup>

**Chin resistance takes bases in Matupi and Hakha Townships:** On 1 Dec the CDF attacked a junta camp near **Matupi Town**. A CDF officer said the group planned to increase operations in **Matupi Township** and control **Matupi Town**.<sup>59</sup> On 18 Dec, joint Chin Resistance forces attacked and captured a junta base along the Paletwa-Matupi road. After the seizure, junta troops carried out airstrikes on two nearby towns, killed four civilians, and injured one other. The Paletwa-Matupi road served as an important route for food and weapons transport in **Matupi Township** and **Northern Arakan State**.<sup>60</sup>

On 18 Dec, in **Hakha Township**, Chin resistance forces seized a junta base along the road connecting **Hakha Town** and **Gangaw Town**. A spokesperson for the Chin National Front stated that Chin resistance groups now had control over the Magway Region entrance to **Hakha Township**.<sup>61</sup>

### **Arakan State**

On 22 Dec, the AA stated that fighting in Arakan State had killed 34 civilians and injured 130 others since 13 Nov.<sup>62</sup> On 18 Dec, it was reported that fighting had displaced 150,000 people since 13 Nov. This brought the total displaced people in Arakan State to approximately 210,000.<sup>63</sup>

**Junta blockades entire Arakan State:** Junta blockades of all roads and waterways in Arakan State caused devastating **impacts on food security, fuel supplies, access to medical care, humanitarian aid delivery, and commodity prices**. In December, the junta arrested at least 186 people for violating travel restrictions.<sup>64</sup> It was reported that, by 9 Dec, **food prices had skyrocketed tenfold in some cases:** one viss (1.68 kg) of onion rose from MMK 5,000 to MMK 20,000; one viss of dried chili rose from MMK 10,000 to MMK 60,000; one viss of cooking oil rose from MMK 6,000 to MMK 60,000; and one liter of fuel rose from MMK 2,200 to MMK 27,000.<sup>65</sup> By 5 Dec, in **Sittwe**, the price of a bag of rice had increased from MMK 120,000 to MMK 200,000. As of 6 Dec, gas stations had shut across all townships except **Thandwe** and **Gwa**, in Southern Arakan State.<sup>66</sup> In **Manaung Township**, the junta continued to block goods to the island, despite no clashes around the township.<sup>67</sup> On 19 Dec, the junta extended their total ban on fishing and travel by water in and around **Ramree** and **Kyaukphyu Townships** until 19 Feb.<sup>68</sup>

**Junta bombards Mrauk-U, destroys heritage site:** On 13 Dec, junta troops clashed with the AA in **Mrauk-U Town**. Junta troops shelled the town and strafed from a helicopter following the attack and

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<sup>53</sup> Myanmar Now (12 Dec 2023) Arakan Army seizes Myanmar junta tactical base in Paletwa

<sup>54</sup> DMG (7 Dec 2023) Fall of Paletwa Twsp tactical base deals serious blow to regime: analysts

<sup>55</sup> DMG (12 Dec 2023) Breaking News: Regime jet attacks Paletwa base seized by AA

<sup>56</sup> DMG (23 Dec 2023) AA attempting to seize junta base near Indian border in Paletwa Twsp

<sup>57</sup> DMG (30 Dec 2023) AA notches junta base seizures in Chin State's Paletwa

<sup>58</sup> NDTV (2 Jan 2024) 151 Myanmar Soldiers Who Fled To Mizoram Last Week, Sent Back: Sources

<sup>59</sup> Khonumthung News (6 Dec 2023) CDF Raids SAC Camp Outside Matupi

<sup>60</sup> Khonumthung News (26 Dec 2023) Chin Resistance Capture Strategic Camp Between Matupi and Paletwa

<sup>61</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Dec 2023) Resistance forces seize control of strategic highway base, limiting junta access to Chin State from Magway

<sup>62</sup> Narinjara (22 Dec 2023) 40-Day Rakhine Conflict: 34 civilians killed, 130 injured and 242 arrested

<sup>63</sup> Narinjara (18 Dec 2023) Number of displaced individuals in Rakhine increases by 150,000, they need food and warm clothing urgently

<sup>64</sup> DMG (5 Dec 2023) Dozens of vegetable vendors in Kyaukphyu briefly detained, released on bail; DMG (13 Dec 2023) Junta detains at least 20 ferry boatmen in Sittwe; Narinjara (16 Dec 2023) 2 Students and 2 Teachers Released Among 53 Arrested at Sittwe BXT Port, Remaining Individuals Face Charges Under Section 6(1); DMG (18 Dec 2023) Junta detains dozens of vendors in Kyaukphyu; DMG (22 Dec 2023) Junta detains 10 civilians for breaching travel restrictions; DMG (28 Dec 2023) Over three days, regime detains at least 26 people in Kyaukphyu; DMG (4 Dec 2023) Arakan Army detains three GAD officers in Mrauk-U; Narinjara (5 Dec 2023) AA detains 5 Mrauk U government officials including deputy director of Mrauk U district

<sup>65</sup> Narinjara (9 Dec 2023) Food prices soaring in Rakhine State

<sup>66</sup> DMG (6 Dec 2023) Filling stations shut down across Arakan State

<sup>67</sup> DMG (11 Dec 2023) Manaung Twsp starving amid regime blockade of surrounding waters

<sup>68</sup> Myanmar Now (21 Dec 2023) Junta shuts down Rakhine coastal waterways after fighting on Ramree Island

reportedly damaged at least three historically significant pagodas as well as a temple and a monastery.<sup>69</sup> Afterwards, the junta arrested at least 50 civilians on the Kaladan River, west of **Mrauk-U**.<sup>70</sup>

On 21 Dec, locals fled **Mrauk-U** in anticipation of further fighting between the junta and the AA.<sup>71</sup> Following this, the AA launched an attack on the junta's **Mrauk-U** district police station in Ngwe Taung Pauk village, and a nearby junta base. In retaliation, the junta repeatedly shelled and fired at **Mrauk-U town**. During 21 Dec-1 Jan, the junta killed 19, and injured at least 35 more in the town.<sup>72</sup>

On 25 Dec, the junta shelled a **local archaeological museum** and destroyed several Arakanese historical artifacts.<sup>73</sup> On 26 Dec, the NUG stated that the **attack on the archaeological museum** constituted an attack on a cultural heritage site and was in violation of the Geneva Convention, Hague Convention, and Burma's Protection and Preservation of Ancient Monuments Act. It stated it would pursue legal action in domestic and international courts against the junta. The regime had **submitted a proposal to UNESCO** to consider Mrauk-U as a **World Heritage Site in 2021**.<sup>74</sup>

By 25 Dec, up to **90%** of **Mrauk-U Town** residents had fled.<sup>75</sup> On 27 Dec, the AA announced that they had taken control of the junta base and district police station on 25 Dec and 27 Dec, respectively.<sup>76</sup> After seizing the police station, the AA reportedly freed up to 11 prisoners. Locals reported that the junta **took up to eight political prisoners** with them in retreat.<sup>77</sup> On 28 Dec, AA launched an attack on Myaungbwe police station and seized it on 30 Dec. Locals, mostly Rohingya, fled the area after the attack.<sup>78</sup>

**Junta atrocities in Pauktaw continue:** On 3 Dec, in **Pauktaw Township**, junta shelling set fire to several parts of the **Pauktaw** downtown. It was reported that, since attacks on the town began, roughly 70% of the town had been destroyed or burnt down.<sup>79</sup> On 5 Dec, junta troops shelled Manawthiri village from a warship and injured one woman. After the shelling, junta troops entered the village and **burnt down** at least **19 houses** near the village. Prior to the attack all residents had reportedly fled the village.<sup>80</sup> It was reported that more than 40,000 people had fled **Pauktaw Town** and at least 20 surrounding villages since fighting started in mid-November.<sup>81</sup> The town's water access and position outside of **Sittwe** made it valuable to both the AA and the junta.

On 20 Dec, junta troops reportedly shelled and again burned down the **Pauktaw** Myoma market.<sup>82</sup> On 21 Dec, locals reported that the junta torched several houses in **Pauktaw Town** after a clash with the AA.<sup>83</sup> The AA reportedly struck one of three junta ships traveling to Pauktaw carrying troops and weapons and forced their retreat.<sup>84</sup>

**AA attacks near deep sea port, gas pipeline:** On 18 Dec, in **Ramree Township** the AA attacked a junta position just outside **Ramree Town**, seized some military equipment, and afterwards clashed with junta troops. Afterwards, the junta bombed, shelled, and fired at several villages in the township from fighter jets, warships, and helicopters, killed at least one civilian, injured three others, and burnt down a number of houses and gas stations. Roughly 13,000 people fled their homes due to the attacks.<sup>85</sup> **Ramree Island** is home to a gas pipeline connected to Yunnan Province (China).

On 22 Dec, in **Kyaukphyu Township**, the junta and the AA clashed after the AA ambushed a junta convoy and carried out a landmine attack on a junta truck traveling near Danyawaddy naval base.<sup>86</sup> Around 300 locals fled the area after the attacks.<sup>87</sup> On 23 Dec, the junta and AA clashed again outside of

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<sup>69</sup> Narinjara (14 Dec 2023) Three Brotherhood Alliance Reports Clashes in Mrauk-U, Ann and Myebon Townships in Rakhine State on December 13

<sup>70</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Dec 2023) Junta conducts airstrikes at ancient city of Mrauk-U

<sup>71</sup> DMG (22 Dec 2023) Thousands of Mrauk-U residents flee on fears of fresh fighting

<sup>72</sup> DVB (3 Jan 2024) Laos assumes ASEAN chairmanship; NUG attempts to reassure China

<sup>73</sup> DMG (26 Dec 2023) AA vows to hit back at junta for attacks on Arakanese heritage

<sup>74</sup> Narinjara (26 Dec 2023) Mrauk-U archaeological museum assault violates Geneva Convention: NUG

<sup>75</sup> Narinjara (25 Dec 2023) Tens of thousands of people leave Mrauk-U as fighting gets more intense

<sup>76</sup> Narinjara (27 Dec 2023) AA successfully captures Mrauk-U district police station

<sup>77</sup> Narinjara (27 Dec 2023) 11 inmates were released from the Mrauk-U District Police Station following AA's capture

<sup>78</sup> DMG (28 Dec 2023) AA attacks another Mrauk-U police station in pre-dawn raid; Narinjara (30 Dec 2023) Fleeing soldiers from Myaung Bway police station open fired on Muslim village taking 4 villagers as human shields

<sup>79</sup> Narinjara (5 Dec 2023) Fire breaks out again in Pauk Taw city after junta's shelling

<sup>80</sup> DMG (6 Dec 2023) Junta shelling destroys several homes, injures woman in Pauktaw Twsp village

<sup>81</sup> DMG (8 Dec 2023) Over 40,000 residents flee Pauktaw

<sup>82</sup> Narinjara (22 Dec 2023) Attack by AA on reinforcing warships in Pauktaw Township results in one warship hit and a retreat with serious casualties

<sup>83</sup> DMG (21 Dec 2023) AA accuses regime of arson attack in war-torn Pauktaw

<sup>84</sup> Irrawaddy (22 Dec 2023) Battle For Rakhine: Myanmar Junta Supply Vessels Retreat After Attack by Arakan Army

<sup>85</sup> DMG (20 Dec 2023) Regime shelling displaces thousands of local people in Ramree

<sup>86</sup> DMG (22 Dec 2023) Arakan Army clashes with military in Kyaukphyu

<sup>87</sup> Narinjara (24 Dec 2023) Nearly 300 residents flee as clashes erupted near Dhanyawadi naval base in Kyauk Phyu



**Kyaukphyu Town.**<sup>88</sup> Located near the Chinese-backed **Kyaukphyu deep sea port** on Ma Day Island, Danyawaddy naval base was reported to be the largest junta base in Arakan State.

### Kachin State

On 1 Dec, joint Kachin Independence Army (KIA)-Myo Hla Defense forces captured a junta base near Shwe Nyeinchan village in Shwegu Township, and controlled the surrounding area.<sup>89</sup> On 5 Dec, KIA and local PDF forces **seized a junta air defence base** between Nam Mun and Beelu villages in **Mohnyin Township.**<sup>90</sup> On 19 Dec, junta troops retreated from a camp near N'hka Ga village in Machanbaw Township. A local said **junta troops retreated from five outposts** in Mansi Township in Nov and Dec.<sup>91</sup>

**Atrocities by the junta and allied Lisu PMF:** On 5 Dec, the junta-aligned Lisu People's Militia Force (Lisu PMF) **shelled Aung Myay-1 village in Waingmaw Township** and killed a local Lisu man in retaliation to a KIA attack on the Lisu PMF's base.<sup>92</sup> On 28 Dec, the Lisu PMF arrested two civilians from the same village for engaging with the KIA. Locals reported that the **Lisu PMF frequently arrested civilians** and sent them to **the Northern Military Command in Myitkyina.**<sup>93</sup> On 6 Dec, two junta artillery **shells aimed at the KIA HQ in Laiza** in Momauk Township **landed in China.** It was reported that the junta had **increased shelling on Laiza since the KIA seized its Gangdau Yang outpost** at the end of November.<sup>94</sup> On that same day, in **Mohnyin Township** junta shelling killed a child and injured another child and two women.<sup>95</sup> On 15 Dec, the junta **shelled Munglai Hkyet and Mai Ja Yang** in Momauk Township and injured two children.<sup>96</sup>

### Northern Shan State

**Operation 1027 - Civilian casualties and forced recruitment:** On 14 Dec, it was reported that junta bombings had killed eight civilians, injured 16 others, and destroyed 40 houses in Namhkam town during 1-12 Dec. On 13 Dec, junta artillery destroyed a monastery that sheltered over 300 IDPs.<sup>97</sup> On 18 Dec, **Ta'ang Women's Organization** data showed that since Operation 1027, junta air and artillery strikes had **killed over 120 civilians** and injured over 210 others in **N. Shan State.**<sup>98</sup> On 15 Dec, **UNHCR** data showed that junta air and artillery strikes **killed more than 130 civilians**, injured 210, and **destroyed at least 430 houses and religious buildings** since Operation 1027. Around **120,000 civilians** in N. Shan State had **fled their homes.** As of 15 Dec, around 99,000 people from 16 townships remained displaced.<sup>99</sup> On 1 Jan, an MNDA-affiliated news site stated that junta airstrikes **killed 69 civilians**, injured 69 others, and destroyed hundreds of houses in the **Kokang Self-Administered Zone** during 27 Oct-31 Dec.<sup>100</sup>

On 21 Dec, it was reported that the Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP) had **forcibly recruited Shan and Lisu men** in villages along the Pyin Oo Lwin-Mogoke and Nawngkhio roads and in Shan villages on the border of Mogoke and Madaya Townships. If they could not find men to recruit, they would **take random villagers for ransom.** The SSPP recruited 15 villagers from Nawngkhio village. It was also reported that the **MNDAA had abducted and forcibly recruited displaced civilians**, in violation of the Laws of War.<sup>101</sup> In one case, the **MNDAA pressured IDPs** sheltering in a monastery in Pang Hseng (Kyu Koke), to send men aged 16-50 to join the group.<sup>102</sup>

**Operation 1027 - MNDA:** During 3-6 Dec, MNDA troops seized the junta's **Four Cardinal Pagoda Hill camp** in Laukkai Township, a **key military outpost** 2km away from a junta HQ.<sup>103</sup> On 15 Dec, the

<sup>88</sup> DMG (24 Dec 2023) Four regime soldiers wounded in clash with AA in Kyaukphyu Twsp

<sup>89</sup> KNG (1 Dec 2023) ရွှေကူနယ်က စစ်တပ်ရဲ့အထိုင်တပ်စခန်းတစ်ခုကို KIA နဲ့ PDF ပူးပေါင်းအဖွဲ့က တိုက်ခိုက်သိမ်းပိုက်

<sup>90</sup> KNG (5 Dec 2023) ဘီးလူးရွာမှာရှိတဲ့ စစ်ကောင်စီရဲ့ လေကြောင်းကာကွယ်ရေးတပ်ကို လုံခြုံရေးယူပေးနေတဲ့ တပ်စခန်းတစ်ခုကို KIA တိုက်ခိုက်သိမ်းပိုက်

<sup>91</sup> KNG (22 Dec 2023) SAC Retreats from Six Camps in Kachin State

<sup>92</sup> KNG (6 Dec 2023) ဝိုင်းမော်မှာ လက်နက်ကြီးထိမှန်မှုကြောင့် အရပ်သားပြည်သူတစ်ဦးသေဆုံး

<sup>93</sup> KNG (28 Dec 2023) ဝိုင်းမော်ဒေသခံ ၂ ယောက်ကို ရွှေမင်းပြည်သူ့စစ်အဖွဲ့ ဖမ်းဆီးသွား

<sup>94</sup> KNG (8 Dec 2023) SAC Shells Hit China During Laiza Attack

<sup>95</sup> KNG (6 Dec 2023) မိုးညှင်းမှာ လက်နက်ကြီးကျည်ထိလို့ ၆ နှစ်ကျော်အရွယ်ကလေးတစ်ယောက်သေဆုံး

<sup>96</sup> KNG (18 Dec 2023) Regime Shells Laiza and Mai Ja Yang

<sup>97</sup> SHAN (14 Dec 2023) နမ့်ခမ်းမြို့ လေကြောင်း ဗုံးကြဲတိုက်ခိုက်ခံရသည့်အတွက် ထိခိုက်သေဆုံးသူ နှင့် ဒဏ်ရာရသူ (၃၀) ခန့်ရှိ

<sup>98</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Dec 2023) လေတပ် ဗုံးကြဲမှုကြောင့် တစ်ရက်အတွင်း ရှမ်းမြောက်ဒေသခံ ၇ ဦး သေဆုံး

<sup>99</sup> Irrawaddy (18 Dec 2023) Number of Civilians Fleeing War in Myanmar Doubled to 660,000 in One Month: UN

<sup>100</sup> The Kokang (1 Jan 2024) <http://tinyurl.com/yc2uy3mk>

<sup>101</sup> "Human Rights Watch (21 Dec 2023) Myanmar: Armed Group Abuses in Shan State Abductions, Forced Recruitment Violate Laws of War"

<sup>102</sup> The Irrawaddy (21 Dec 2023) Armed Groups in Myanmar's Shan State Accused of Forced Recruitment

<sup>103</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2023) MNDA seizes key outpost south of Laukkai

MNDAA also seized the BP 125 Border Trade Area. On 18 Dec, it seized the Yanlone Kyaing China-Myanmar border gate, **three miles outside of Laukkai**. On 24 Dec, it seized **three junta camps north of Laukkai**. Around **100 junta troops from LID 55 surrendered**.<sup>104</sup>

On 15 Dec, the Three Brotherhood Alliance seized the **105-Mile Trade Zone in Muse Township** and the junta's **last tactical base** on a nearby hill. Located 7km southeast of Muse town, the 105-Mile Trade Zone handled **90% of cross-border trade with China**.<sup>105</sup> During 18-21 Dec, the KIA seized a **junta camp near Nam Khai bridge**, which connected Kutkai and Nam Hpat Kar **in Kutkai Township**.<sup>106</sup>

On 2 Dec, the junta **bombed** Sei Lant village in **Muse Township**, injured a child, two adults, and destroyed at least three houses.<sup>107</sup> On 6 Dec, in **Mabein Township**, **junta aerial bombing struck a bus** on the Mabein-Nga O road near Hko Tar village, **killed two passengers** and injured three others.<sup>108</sup>

On 4 Dec, the junta fired a short-range rocket at Kyaungkhan **monastery in Hseni Township** that **sheltered around 1300 IDPs**, killed a woman, and injured two others. It was reported that the MNDAA had captured a police station and the township's administration departments, but could **not seize the junta's main bases** outside Hseni.<sup>109</sup>

During 6-7 Dec, junta shelling on Nam Hpat Kar ward and Zee Da Ban village in **Kutkai Township** **killed two civilians, including a child**, and injured four others.<sup>110</sup> During 9-10 Dec, junta shells in Kutkai town and Loi Hseng village killed one child and injured seven others.<sup>111</sup> On 15 Dec, junta troops **shot dead two civilians in Kutkai town**.<sup>112</sup> On 17 Dec, junta **shelling injured two women and a child**.<sup>113</sup>

During 23-24 Dec, junta airstrikes **killed three IDPs** and injured five others, including a child in Laukkai. A junta **landmine injured a girl in an IDP camp** near the Burma-China border.<sup>114</sup> On 25 Dec, the junta shelled Ton Chain ward in Laukkai twice, killed eight locals, and injured 25 others.<sup>115</sup>

**Operation 1027 - TNLA:** During 5-7 Dec, the TNLA said that it and Mogok PDF had seized a junta camp in Lel Gyi village and took **full control of Mong Lone town in Kyaukme Township**.<sup>116</sup>

On 11 Dec, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) announced it **captured four junta bases in Namhsan Township**, including the police station. On 12 Dec, the junta bombed and shelled Namhsan town and killed one civilian.<sup>117</sup> On 15 Dec, the TNLA **declared full control of the town** after seizing junta bases, a police station, a junta tea factory, and six township administration departments. Clashes lasted a week, and the TNLA **arrested 64 junta troops** and seized weapons, **including four howitzers**.<sup>118</sup>

During 22-23 Dec, the TNLA **captured Manton town** and gained control of **Palaung Self-Administered Zone (SAZ)** comprised of Manton and Namhsan townships. Manton was **the second-**

<sup>104</sup> Myanmar Now (26 Dec 2023) လောက်ကိုင်က တပ်စခန်း ၃ ခုကို MNDAA သိမ်းပိုက်

<sup>105</sup> Myanmar Now (15 Dec 2023) Brotherhood Alliance captures major trade zone on China-Myanmar border

<sup>106</sup> KNG (21 Dec 2023) KIA Seizes SAC Camp in Kutkai Township

<sup>107</sup> SHAN (3 Dec 2023) စစ်ကောင်စီ လေကြောင်းဖုံးကြံ အရပ်သား ၃ဦး ထိခိုက် နေအိမ်အများအပြားပျက်စီး

<sup>108</sup> KNG (7 Dec 2023) မဘိန်း- ငအို ကားလမ်းပိုင်းမှာ စစ်ကောင်စီဖုံးကြံခံရမှုကြောင့် လိုင်းကားတစ်စီးထိမှန်ပြီး အရပ်သား ၂ဦးသေဆုံး၊ ၃ ဦးဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>109</sup> SHAN (4 Dec 2023) သိန္နီစစ်ရှောင်စခန်း ရှော့တိုက်ခိုက်မှု အမျိုးသမီး ၁ ဦးသေ၊ ၂ ဦးဒဏ်ရာရ၊ စစ်ဘေးရှောင်များကို နှစ်ဖက်တပ်ဖွဲ့များက လူသားဒိုင်းကာလုပ်နေ

<sup>110</sup> SHAN (8 Dec 2023) နမ့်ဖတ်ကာအတွင်း နှစ်ရက်ဆက်တိုက် လက်နက်ကြီးကျ၊ ၂ ဦးသေဆုံး၊ ၅ ဦးထိခိုက်ဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>111</sup> SHAN (11 Dec 2023) ကွတ်ခိုင်မြို့နယ် လက်နက်ကြီး၊ မြေမြှုပ်မိုင်းကြောင့် ကလေးငယ် ၁ ဦးသေဆုံး၊ ၈ ဦး ထိခိုက်ဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>112</sup> SHAN (18 Dec 2023) ကွတ်ခိုင် လက်နက်ကြီးကြောင့် ကလေး ၁ ဦးနှင့် အမျိုးသမီး ၂ ဦး ထိခိုက်ဒဏ်ရာရ၊ စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်က အရပ်သား ၂ ဦးကို ပစ်သတ်

<sup>113</sup> SHAN (18 Dec 2023) ကွတ်ခိုင် လက်နက်ကြီးကြောင့် ကလေး ၁ ဦးနှင့် အမျိုးသမီး ၂ ဦး ထိခိုက်ဒဏ်ရာရ၊ စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်က အရပ်သား ၂ ဦးကို ပစ်သတ်

<sup>114</sup> SHAN (25 Dec 2023) လောက်ကိုင်မြို့ စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်က လေကြောင်းဖုံးကြံမှုကြောင့် အရပ်သား ၃ ဦး သေဆုံး၊ ၅ ဦးဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>115</sup> Myanmar Now (27 Dec 2023) လက်နက်ကြီးကြောင့် လောက်ကိုင်မြို့ခံ ၈ ဦး သေဆုံး

<sup>116</sup> SHAN (12 Dec 2023) Resistance Seize Camps in Kyaukme Township and Mandalay Region; DVB (12 Dec 2023) မိုင်းလုံမြို့ရှိ စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်စခန်းကို TNLA ပူးပေါင်းတပ်ဖွဲ့ သိမ်းပိုက်

<sup>117</sup> SHAN (12 Dec 2023) နမ့်ဆန်မြို့ စစ်ကောင်စီတပ် လေကြောင်းဖုံးကြံခြင်းကြောင့် အရပ်သား ၁ ဦးသေဆုံး

<sup>118</sup> SHAN (18 Dec 2023) နမ့်ဆန်မြို့ကို TNLA တပ်ဖွဲ့ ထိန်းချုပ်နိုင်ပြီ

**largest town** in the Palaung SAZ and bordered Namhsan, Namhkam and Namtu townships,<sup>119</sup> and **the fourth town** the TNLA had fully taken over since Operation 1027.<sup>120</sup>

On 2 Dec, junta airstrikes killed two civilians, injured a child and five adults, and damaged nine houses and a school in **Namhkam Town**.<sup>121</sup> On 7 Dec, junta aerial bombing killed five civilians, including two children, in five villages and destroyed houses in **Namhkam Township** on 8 Dec.<sup>122</sup> On 11 Dec, a junta airstrike near Myoma Police Station in Namhkam town destroyed at least 10 houses.<sup>123</sup> On 11 Dec, the TNLA attacked the junta's Sakhanthitkone base. On 12 Dec, junta forces retaliated with **aerial attacks** on Namhkam with six jets, and killed one civilian.<sup>124</sup> On 19 Dec, the TNLA fully controlled **Namhkam town** after seizing the junta's Sakhanthit Kone base.<sup>125</sup>

On 2 Dec, the junta dropped **four 500 lb bombs** on Long Htway village in **Lashio Township**, killed two women, and injured another.<sup>126</sup> On 5 Dec, junta bombing of **Mong Lone town** in **Kyaukme Township** killed a woman and injured 10 locals. Locals reported that the junta shelled the town, and that clashes between junta troops and the TNLA **displaced over 500 civilians**.<sup>127</sup>

On 18 Dec, the junta bombs near the **hospital in Namhsan town** killed four civilians and destroyed several houses. Junta airstrikes on and shelling of a village north of **Kyaukme town** on the same day killed three locals, including two kids, and destroyed over 20 houses.<sup>128</sup>

During 23-25 Dec, the junta shelled **Namtu town**, injured two, including a child, and destroyed two houses.<sup>129</sup> On 25 Dec, **the junta dropped 28 bombs** on Namtu town, killed two civilians, and destroyed a number of houses.<sup>130</sup> On 28 Dec, the TNLA took full control of **Namtu Township** when it seized the junta **LIB 324's** base.<sup>131</sup>

### Karenni State

On 8 Dec, the Karenni Humanitarian Aid Initiative reported that during 11 Nov-8 Dec, junta artillery and air strikes had **killed 82 civilians** in Karenni and S. Shan States, including **12 children** and two monks.<sup>132</sup> The Karenni Interim Executive Council (IEC) said that due to communication difficulties, the actual civilian death toll may be higher.<sup>133</sup>

**Allied resistance forces seize over 85% of Loikaw:** On 9 Dec, in **Loikaw Township**, resistance forces including the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) **seized the police HQ** under Operation 11.11. The KNDF claimed it had captured at least **10 out of 18 junta positions** in Loikaw, including **Loikaw University, the district court, and the police headquarters**. It was reported that junta troops **still occupied key locations**, including the Regional Command Center, Loikaw General Hospital, the State Government Office, and religious buildings.<sup>134</sup> On 20 Dec, it was reported that resistance forces had **seized over 85% of Loikaw**. A Karenni Army Colonel stated that the remaining junta troops were **confined to a church, fire station, hospital, and prison**. An unsuccessful attempt to seize the prison, which detained around 200 political prisoners, stalled their advance.<sup>135</sup> On 26 Dec, it was reported that families of at least **140 political prisoners** held in Loikaw were increasingly worried about their loved ones as the junta had **cut all outside communication** in response to Operation 11.11.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2023) TNLA seizes Manton, takes full control of Palaung region

<sup>120</sup> SHAN (24 Dec 2023) မန်တိုမြို့နယ်ကို TNLA တပ်ဖွဲ့ သိမ်းပိုက်ပြီးနောက် စတုတ္ထမြောက် ထိန်းချုပ်နိုင်သည့် မြို့ဖြစ်လာ

<sup>121</sup> SHAN (6 Dec 2023) SAC Airstrikes Targeting Civilians in Muse and Namkham Townships

<sup>122</sup> SHAN (8 Dec 2023) နမ့်ခမ်းမြို့နယ် စစ်ကောင်စီ လေကြောင်းဖြင့်ပုံးကြဲတိုက်ခိုက်

<sup>123</sup> SHAN (12 Dec 2023) နမ့်ခမ်း စစ်ကောင်စီတပ် လေကြောင်းပုံးကြဲ တိုက်ခိုက်မှုကြောင့် ပြည်သူ့နေအိမ် ၁၀ လုံးကျော် ထိခိုက်ပျက်စီး

<sup>124</sup> SHAN (12 Dec 2023) နမ့်ခမ်းမြို့ပေါ်စစ်ကောင်စီတပ် လေယာဉ် ၆ စီးဖြင့် အင်အားဖြည့် ပုံးကြဲတိုက်ခိုက်၊ အရပ်သား ၁ ဦး ထိမှန်သေဆုံး

<sup>125</sup> SHAN (19 Dec 2023) နမ့်ခမ်းမြို့ကို TNLA တပ်ဖွဲ့ အလုံးစုံ ထိန်းချုပ်

<sup>126</sup> SHAN (4 Dec 2023) လားရှိုး စစ်ကောင်စီ တိုက်လေယာဉ်ပုံးကြဲမှုကြောင့် အမျိုးသမီး ၂ ဦးသေဆုံး၊ ၁ ဦး ဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>127</sup> SHAN (6 Dec 2023) သျှမ်း-မန္တလေးနယ်စပ် မိုင်းလုံမြို့ လေယာဉ်ပုံးကြဲမှုကြောင့် အမျိုးသမီး ၁ ဦးသေ၊ အရပ်သား ၁၀ ဦးဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>128</sup> Myanmar Now (19 Dec 2023) လေတပ် ပုံးကြဲမှုကြောင့် တစ်ရက်အတွင်း ရှမ်းမြောက်ဒေသခံ ၇ ဦး သေဆုံး

<sup>129</sup> SHAN (23 Dec 2023) နမ့်တူမြို့ စစ်ကောင်စီ လက်နက်ကြီးပစ်ခတ်မှုကြောင့် အရပ်သား (၂)ဦးထိခိုက်ဒဏ်ရာရ

<sup>130</sup> Myanmar Now (26 Dec 2023) နမ့်တူမြို့ရှိ စစ်ကောင်စီတပ်များကို TNLA ဆက်လက်ထိုးစစ်ဆင်

<sup>131</sup> Myanmar Now (28 Dec 2023) TNLA captures another town in northern Shan State, taking full control of Namtu Township

<sup>132</sup> KHAI via Facebook (8 Dec 2023) <http://tinyurl.com/5fafa78y>

<sup>133</sup> Thanlwin Times (13 Dec 2023) More than 80 civilians killed in conflict in Karenni State

<sup>134</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 2023) Karenni Resistance Marks Successful Month of Attacks on Myanmar Junta

<sup>135</sup> Myanmar Now (20 Dec 2023) Resistance forces claim control of '85 percent' of Karenni State capital

<sup>136</sup> NMG (26 Dec 2023) Families Worry About Safety of Political Prisoners Amid Fighting in Loikaw

**Junta air and artillery strikes displace 90% of Loikaw residents:** In **Loikaw Township**, the Karenni Army reported that **the regime** dropped around **110 bombs during 1-9 Dec** and at least **477 bombs** since Operation 11.11 started. The Karenni Civil Society Network reported that as of 3 Dec, junta attacks had destroyed at least **299 buildings in Loikaw** since 1 Feb 2021.<sup>137</sup> On 4 Dec, it was reported that the junta's ban on and confiscation of aid vehicles entering Loikaw had forced aid organizations to cease relief efforts and left over **10,000 civilians trapped** in the city.<sup>138</sup> On 11 Dec, Loikaw residents reported that junta **roadblocks** had caused food and medicine shortages and left around 10,000 people trapped and in need of humanitarian aid in the area.<sup>139</sup> On 23 Dec, junta shells **destroyed** the office and **seven ambulances** of the Shwe Loikaw charity group and nearby houses.<sup>140</sup> On 25 Dec, junta troops continued conducting air and artillery strikes targeting Karenni resistance groups in Loikaw City.<sup>141</sup> The attacks had displaced **90% of Loikaw's 50,000 residents**, mostly to nearby Nyaung Shwe, Taunggyi, and Kalaw Townships (S. Shan State).<sup>142</sup>

**Former prisoners establish Karenni Political Prisoner Association:** On 12 Dec, the Kantarawaddy Times reported that former political prisoners of the 2021 attempted coup had formed the **Karenni Political Prisoner Association (KPPA)**. It aimed to engage in public organizing, assist political prisoners, and work with revolutionary forces using **non-violent mass mobilization**.<sup>143</sup> It was reported that the KPPA was collaborating with the **Karenni Interim Executive Council**, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, and the Myanmar Political Prisoners Network.<sup>144</sup>

**Thailand forcibly relocates Karenni refugees:** On 5 Dec, it was reported that **Thai authorities** had forced refugees from **Daw Noe Ku** camp to **move their temporary shelters** to a designated area or return to Burma. A Thai policy allowed refugees to stay two months maximum.<sup>145</sup> The **Karenni Civil Society Network** stated that Thailand had yet to fulfill its claim it would accept refugees. The Karenni Interim Executive Council's Banyar **urged Thailand** to allow **cross-border aid**.<sup>146</sup>

## Southern Shan State

**Karenni resistance continues gaining ground:** On 15 Dec, The Irrawaddy reported that **Karenni resistance** forces had seized **75% of Moebye** town (Pekon Township), strategically located on a major supply route to Loikaw (Karenni State). Only the junta bases of Set Taw Yar Mountain and Battalion 422 remained.<sup>147</sup> During 23-25 Dec, in Pekon Township, resistance forces **gained control of vital roads** leading to Pekon town by seizing junta camps at Shwe Pyi Aye and Loipata hilltop. **Daily junta shelling** of Pekon and Moebye towns prevented residents from returning.<sup>148</sup>

**Number of Karenni IDPs increases:** On 7 Dec, SHAN reported that due to the significant increase in **IDPs from Karenni State** since Operation 11.11, there were now over **10,000 people in IDP camps in Hsihseng Township**. As most were women and children, there was an **urgent need** for essential items such as clothing, diapers, and hygiene products.<sup>149</sup>

## Karen State

On 10 Dec, KHRG reported that in Southeast Burma, the junta carried out **at least 95 airstrikes, 249 shellings, and killed 518 civilians** in 2023.<sup>150</sup> That this was the most attacks since 1 Feb 2021.<sup>151</sup>

**Kawkareik fighting continues through December:** In **Kawkareik Town**, fighting continued as junta troops retaliated against KNLA-PDF attacks. Resistance troops also reportedly seized the junta's Kawt

<sup>137</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (11 Dec 2023) Junta Unleashes Over 100 Airstrikes in Loikaw within 9 Days; NMG (8 Dec 2023) အာဏာသိမ်းပြီးနောက်ပိုင်း လွိုင်ကော်တွင် အဆောက်အဦး ၃၀၀ နီးပါး ပျက်စီး

<sup>138</sup> RFA (4 Dec 2023) Junta ban on aid vehicles leads to humanitarian crisis in Kayah capital

<sup>139</sup> RFA (11 Dec 2023) Ethnic Karenni forces control capital, key township in Myanmar's Kayah state

<sup>140</sup> THADIN (15 Dec 2023) Due to the junta council firing heavy weapons, the office and seven ambulances of a charity group burnt down to ashes

<sup>141</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (29 Dec 2023) Regime Bombards Loikaw with Airstrikes on Christmas

<sup>142</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Dec 2023) Loikaw Residents Flee Myanmar Junta Bombardments

<sup>143</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (12 Dec 2023) “ ကရင်နီနိုင်ငံရေး အကျဉ်းသားများအစည်းအရုံး” (KPPA) ကို ဖွဲ့စည်း

<sup>144</sup> NMG (14 Dec 2023) ကရင်နီ နိုင်ငံရေး အကျဉ်းသားများ အစည်းအရုံးက နွေဦးတော်လှန်ရေးတွင် တတပ်တအားပါဝင်မည်

<sup>145</sup> NMG (5 Dec 2023) ထိုင်းနယ်စပ် ကရင်နီ စစ်ရှောင်များ နေစရာ အတည်မရသေး

<sup>146</sup> NMG (14 Dec 2023) ထိုင်းနိုင်ငံက နယ်စပ်ပြေးလာသည့် စစ်ရှောင်များအား နေရပ်ပြန်ရန် ဖိအားပေးနေဆဲ

<sup>147</sup> Irrawaddy (15 Dec 2023) Myanmar Resistance Scents Breakthrough as Bodies Pile Up in Moebye

<sup>148</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (31 Dec 2023) Resistance Seize Crucial Regime Positions Outside Pekon Town

<sup>149</sup> SHAN (7 Dec 2023) IDPs in Southern Shan State Need Support Amid 1111 Operation

<sup>150</sup> KHRG (10 Dec 2023) Statement on International Human Rights Day

<sup>151</sup> Than Lwin Times (12 Dec 2023) More than 500 civilians killed in junta shelling, airstrikes in KNU territory in one month

Newt base near the town. On 1 Dec, the KNU warned all residents in the town to evacuate the area.<sup>152</sup> However, on 7 Dec, HURFOM reported that some locals remained trapped in the town.<sup>153</sup> During 30 Nov-20 Dec, continuous junta shelling of residential areas killed at least 20 civilians and destroyed around 100 houses. By 20 Dec, 30,000 locals had fled the town and 24 surrounding villages.<sup>154</sup> On 25 Dec, an unknown group burned down around 40 houses in **Kawkareik** during fighting.<sup>155</sup> Across **KNU-defined Duplaya District**, intense fighting between the junta and KNLA had displaced more than 90,000.<sup>156</sup> Fighting also temporarily suspended border trade along the Asia Highway, which passes through the town, and drove up food prices in the area.<sup>157</sup> Resistance groups stated that fighting continued in and around **Kawkareik** through the end of the December.<sup>158</sup>

**KNLA takes three-decade-old junta base:** Karen News reported that joint KNLA-PDF forces captured the Hteehta base in **KNU-defined Mutraw District** on 17 Dec after a 20-day long offensive. The base had reportedly been under regime control for almost 30 years prior to the offensive.<sup>159</sup>

## Bago Region

During 3-22 Dec, in **KNU-defined Nyaunglebin District**, junta shelling, strafing, and aerial bombing of over 21 villages killed at least 6 civilians and injured 20 others.<sup>160</sup>

**Resistance seizes bases, towns across Sittaung River Basin:** On 2 Dec, in **Kyaukkyi Township**, resistance troops attacked the junta's Light Infantry Battalions 590 and 560 and a police station in **Mone Town**. In response, the junta sent in reinforcements, carried out **32 aerial attacks during 2-3 Dec**, killed one civilian and destroyed a monastery, clinic, and several houses.<sup>161</sup>

On 4 Dec, The KNU announced that it and PDFs had seized all junta positions in **Mone Town**. They reported that **"large numbers" of junta troops had surrendered** during fighting, including a battalion commander. A KNU spokesperson stated that they focused on clearing junta forces from the area and that they would not occupy the town. Its proximity to Naypyidaw and its location along the Thai-Burma border road gave the town strategic importance.<sup>162</sup> On 7 Dec, the KNU stated that junta airstrikes and shelling in response to the seizure of junta positions in **Mone Town** had forced more than 68,400 people from 85 different local villages to flee. They also reported that 19 junta soldiers in total and 42 of their family members had surrendered and were in KNU care.<sup>163</sup>

On 13 Dec, a spokesperson from the Karen Civilian Emergency Assistance and Relief Team stated that, despite KNU control of the area, locals living near captured junta bases could not yet return home. Although the offensive had ended, junta and resistance forces still carried out ambushes near the seized bases. They added that the junta had also retaken enough territory for LID 599 to return to its former base.<sup>164</sup> On 21 Dec, the KNU reported that junta troops looted and burned down **Mone Town's** Myoma market. The junta arson attack destroyed 210 of 238 shops in the market.<sup>165</sup>

On 11 Dec, the KNU reported that resistance troops took control of Win Ka Lon and Kun Phae outposts in **Shwegyin Township** on 2 Dec and 7 Dec, respectively. On 10 Dec, resistance troops torched Kun Phae outpost.<sup>166</sup> On 13 Dec, in **Phyu Town**, joint KNLA-PDF forces overtook and torched a junta police station in **Nyaung Pin Thar village tract**, just 8 km outside of town. In response, the junta shelled the surrounding area and injured several civilians.<sup>167</sup> On 26 Dec, in **Kyaukkyi Township**, joint KNLA-PDF forces took control of **Nat Than Kwin village**, located along the Yangon-Mandalay Highway between

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<sup>152</sup> Than Lwin Times (4 Dec 2023) Fighting escalates in Kawkareik township

<sup>153</sup> HURFOM (7 Dec 2023) Residents from 20 villages flee homes due to heavy armed clash in Kaw Ka Rate

<sup>154</sup> HURFOM (20 Dec 2023) More than 30,000 residents flee and 100 homes damaged in Kaw Ka Rate battle

<sup>155</sup> Than Lwin Times (27 Dec 2023) Nearly 40 houses set ablaze in Kawkareik

<sup>156</sup> Than Lwin Times (23 Dec 2023) KNU provides emergency aid for IDPs in Kawkareik

<sup>157</sup> DMG (6 Dec 2023) Myanmar-Thai border trade halted amid fighting between junta and resistance forces

<sup>158</sup> Than Lwin Times (29 Dec 2023) Fighting continues in Kawkareik

<sup>159</sup> Karen News (19 Dec 2023) KNU Captures Heavily-fortified Base Held by the Tatmadaw for Three Decades

<sup>160</sup> Than Lwin Times (9 Dec 2023) Junta shellings kill 1 civilian, injuries 7 others in KNU territory; Than Lwin Times (16 Dec 2023) Junta air strike kills child, injuries seven others in KNU's Mone Township; Than Lwin Times (26 Dec 2023) One civilian killed, two others injured in junta shelling in KNU's Mone Township; Than Lwin Times (20 Dec 2023) Three civilians killed, four others injured by artillery strike in Kyaukkyi

<sup>161</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Dec 2023) Myanmar Resistance Fights to Seize Bago Town Near Yangon-Naypyitaw Road

<sup>162</sup> Irrawaddy (5 Dec 2023) Myanmar Resistance Seizes First Town in Bago Region: KNU

<sup>163</sup> KNU via Facebook (7 Dec 2023) <https://shorturl.at/bHL57>; Than Lwin Times (8 Dec 2023) Around 70,000 people displaced by fighting in Mone Township

<sup>164</sup> Myanmar Peace Monitor (13 Dec 2023) "It is true that the KNLA captured Mone and seized the military's arms and ammunition. However, the people are still not in a position to resettle there even after the KNLA held the town and cleared the entire area." Spokesperson of the Karen Civilian Emergency Assistance and Relief Team

<sup>165</sup> Than Lwin Times (22 Dec 2023) KNU says junta soldiers torch Mone Myoma market

<sup>166</sup> Than Lwin Times (13 Dec 2023) KNLA occupies three junta outposts in Shwe Kwin Town

<sup>167</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2023) Anti-junta forces overrun, torch police station in Bago Region

Kyaukkyi Town and Pe Nwe Kone village. Afterwards, junta airstrikes killed six civilians, including four children and one monk.<sup>168</sup>

**Junta raids west Bago Region villages, tortures civilians:** During 19-24 Dec, in **Nattalin Township**, junta troops raided five villages in the Bago Yoma mountain range, burned down several houses, and arrested 14 IDPs. The junta soldiers tortured and burned alive seven detainees, and released four. Three remained unaccounted for.<sup>169</sup>

### Mon State

On 12 Dec, HURFOM reported that, in Mon State, a total of 19 landmine explosions killed 4 people and injured 24 during Jan-Nov 2023.<sup>170</sup> On 31 Dec, in **Kyaikto Township**, a junta landmine in an orchard killed one civilian and injured another.<sup>171</sup>

**Junta arrests in Thanbyuzayat:** HURFOM reported that during 30 Nov-7 Dec, the junta arrested at least 70 **Thanbyuzayat village** residents and sealed off their homes. The regime accused them of funding PDFs.<sup>172</sup>

**Kyaikmaraw fighting rages on:** On 1 Dec, the junta carried out airstrikes on Mit Ka Tit, destroyed a monastery, and killed one monk. The attack forced 600 people from five surrounding villages to flee. In November, heavy fighting in the township had already displaced more than 20,000 people.<sup>173</sup>

On 12 Dec, local media organizations reported that residents displaced by fighting in **Kyaikmaraw Township** remained in urgent need of support as clashes in the township continued into December.<sup>174</sup> Independent Mon News reported that rental prices for December in **Mawlamyine** had increased as a result of the influx of displaced people from **Kyaikmaraw**.<sup>175</sup>

On 28-29 Dec, the junta sent in reinforcements and escalated their attacks on the **Chaung Hnit Khwa** police station, which resistance forces seized in November.<sup>176</sup> HURFOM reported clashes had taken place daily in around **Chaung Hnit Khwa** since early November. On 30 Dec, junta troops tortured and beat a local before dumping him in a rubber plantation. There were at least two similar cases in the area.<sup>177</sup>

### Tanintharyi Region

**Zee Kya village beating:** In **Yebyu Township**, resistance fighters set fire to the new Dawei prison under construction near Zee Kya village and detained six construction workers.<sup>178</sup> On 6 Dec, a column of junta troops arrested, beat, and interrogated a group of 100 residents in Zee Kya village about the arson and attack on a nearby toll gate that took place on 3 and 4 Dec respectively.<sup>179</sup>

**Junta loots, beheads, burns houses in Launglon:** On 6 Dec, in **Launglon Town**, joint resistance forces carried out a coordinated attack on a police station and the military security affairs office. Both sides exchanged fire for 30 minutes after the attack. Junta troops carried out inspections around the town afterwards.<sup>180</sup> On 13 Dec, junta troops raided Nyin Maw village, looted and destroyed 26 houses, and stole nearly 150g of gold and more than MMK 13 million in cash from residents.<sup>181</sup>

During 20-31 Dec, junta troops arrested two PDF members outside of **Launglon town**, killed them, and burned their bodies. Later that day, resistance troops carried out coordinated attacks on three locations in the township. During fighting, junta troops shelled a civilian house, killed two locals, and injured eight others.<sup>182</sup> On 21 Dec, junta troops raided Sit Pyea village, clashed with resistance forces, and stole valuables from several houses.<sup>183</sup> On 22 Dec, junta troops raided and looted Tha Byar village.<sup>184</sup> On 27

<sup>168</sup> Irrawaddy (27 Dec 2023) Myanmar Junta Loses Another Town in Bago Region, Kills Four Children in Airstrike

<sup>169</sup> Irrawaddy (28 Dec 2023) Myanmar Troops Butcher Seven Refugees in Bago: Reports

<sup>170</sup> HURFOM (12 Dec 2023) Coup forces civilians to become victims to landmine explosions

<sup>171</sup> Than Lwin Times (31 Dec 2023) Man killed in landmine blast in Kyaikto

<sup>172</sup> HURFOM (14 Dec 2023) At least 70 residents arrested within a week in Thanbyuzayat

<sup>173</sup> HURFOM (4 Dec 2023) Monk killed by artillery attack: Kyikemayaw Township Residents from five villages flee

<sup>174</sup> Than Lwin Times (6 Dec 2023) Kyaikmaraw IDPs in dire need of food, blankets, clothes; Independent Mon News (11 Dec 2023) Residents Escaping Conflict in Kyaikmaraw Township Seek Urgent Assistance

<sup>175</sup> Independent Mon News (11 Dec 2023) Due to battles, people flee village homes and relocate to town

<sup>176</sup> Than Lwin Times (30 Dec 2023) Both sides suffer amid intense fighting in Kyaikmaraw

<sup>177</sup> HURFOM (3 Jan 2024) Mell Ta Yo villager beaten and tortured by Burmese soldiers in Kyikemayaw

<sup>178</sup> Than Lwin Times (5 Dec 2023) Fire destroys construction site of new Dawei prison

<sup>179</sup> Than Lwin Times (8 Dec 2023) Junta arrests more than 100 residents from Yebyu's Zee Kya village;

<sup>180</sup> Than Lwin Times (7 Dec 2023) Police station, military security affairs office attacked in Launglon

<sup>181</sup> HURFOM (17 Dec 2023) Junta launches military operation in Nyin Maw and loots villagers' houses

<sup>182</sup> Than Lwin Times (22 Dec 2023) Two civilians killed, eight others injured in Launglon attack

<sup>183</sup> Than Lwin Times (26 Dec 2023) Two regime troops killed in attack in Launglon

<sup>184</sup> Than Lwin Times (24 Dec 2023) Launglon battle kills 6 junta soldiers, 2 PDF comrades



Dec, junta troops entered seven villages including Sit Pyea, burned down 12 houses, beheaded one villager, took several people as human shields, and forced the local villagers to flee.<sup>185</sup>

### Ayeyarwady Region

In **Kyaiklat Township**, junta forces arrested four young men after a 2 Dec resistance bomb attack on a junta police station that injured several policemen.<sup>186</sup>

### Mandalay Region

Junta forces' attacks targeting civilians escalated in **Madaya Township** in December. On 1-3 Dec, junta troops shelled Chaungmagyi (West), and Seik Thar villages, injured five civilians, including two children.<sup>187</sup> On 4 Dec, junta forces raided Hmaw Ni Kone village, torched eight houses, and a building in a monastery compound. They continued to raid neighboring Nyaung Bingyi Taw and Kyauk Thalake villages and torched an unconfirmed number of houses. Junta raids in the township's northeast forced three hundred civilians to flee.<sup>188</sup>

In **Madaya Township**, junta forces stationed at Yayso Hill shelled Thahpankaing village on 13 Dec, killed five civilians, including two children, and injured one other. Later that day, they shelled Thahpandaunt and Thanatkone villages and torched Sulaykone village.<sup>189</sup> On 20-21 Dec, junta forces raided Din Gar Kyun, Su Lay Kone, Shwe Baung, and Shwe Boe Gyi villages and torched 30 houses. On 21 Dec, amid continuous junta raids a thousand residents from the villages and six other nearby villages fled.<sup>190</sup> On 30-31 Dec, junta forces shot dead seven civilians, including a 70-year-old woman in Shwe Myaung village.<sup>191</sup>

In **Mandalay city**, resistance forces carried out simultaneous drone attacks on three police stations, Obo Prison, the houses of the commander and deputy commanders of the junta's Central Command, and property owned by the family of coup leader Min Aung Hlaing. On 21 Dec, junta forces arrested eight civilians in retaliation. Locals said that junta troops had tightened security across the town and some were patrolling in plain clothes.<sup>192</sup>

### Naypyidaw Union Territory

On 29 Dec, it was reported that junta forces in Naypyidaw Region had **relocated from their military outposts to temples and monasteries** across the region. A former police officer said that the junta had repurposed religious structures because they were stronger than bunkers.<sup>193</sup>

### Yangon Region

During 1-5 Dec, junta forces tightened inspections and deployed troops in response to resistance force shootings and bomb attacks in **Yankin, Thingyankyun, Kayan, North Okkalapa, and Ahlone Townships**.<sup>194</sup> Resistance attacks targeted a police station in **Shwepyithar Township** (13 Dec);<sup>195</sup> a junta's bunker and the junta-controlled Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection in **Mayangone Township** (24 and 28 Dec);<sup>196</sup> and the junta's administration offices and houses of junta administrators in six different locations of **Hlaingthaya Township** (31 Dec).<sup>197</sup> Bomb explosions across nine townships on 15-16 Dec killed one and injured 15.<sup>198</sup>

<sup>185</sup> Than Lwin Times (31 Dec 2023) Civilian beheaded by junta in Launglon

<sup>186</sup> DVB (15 Dec 2023) ကျိုက်လတ်မြို့မရဲစခန်းရှေ့ ဗုံးကွဲပြီးနောက် ဒေသခံလူငယ် ၄ ဦး ဖမ်းဆီးခံရ

<sup>187</sup> Myanmar Now (4 Dec 2023) မတ္တရာမြို့တွင် လက်နက်ကြီးကျည်ကျ၊ ဒဏ်ရာရသူများထဲတွင် ကလေး ၂ ဦး ပါဝင်

<sup>188</sup> Myanmar Now (5 Dec 2023) Hundreds flee military arson attacks in Mandalay's Madaya Township

<sup>189</sup> Myanmar Now (14 Dec 2023) မန္တလေးအနီး လက်နက်ကြီးကြောင့် ကလေးများအပါအဝင် ၄ ဦး သေဆုံး၊ ရွာမီးရှို့ခံရ

<sup>190</sup> RFA (21 Dec 2023) မတ္တရာမှာ ရွာလေးရွာ မီးရှို့ခံရပြီး ဒေသခံတစ်ထောင်ကျော် တိမ်းရှောင်

<sup>191</sup> Myanmar Now (1 Jan 2023) မတ္တရာဒေသခံ ၇ ဦးကို စစ်တပ်သတ်ဖြတ်၊ နေအိမ် ၅၀ ကျော်ကို မီးရှို့

<sup>192</sup> Irrawaddy (26 Dec 2023) Drone And Rocket Attacks on Junta Targets in Mandalay Unnerve Myanmar Junta

<sup>193</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2023) Military outposts in Naypyitaw shift to temples and monasteries

<sup>194</sup> DVB (6 Dec 2023) ရန်ကုန်တွင် ပစ်ခတ် ပေါက်ကွဲမှုများဖြစ်ပြီး လုံခြုံရေးတိုးမြှင့်

<sup>195</sup> DVB (15 Dec 2023) ရွှေပြည်သာမြို့နယ်ရဲစခန်း ဗုံးဖြင့်တိုက်ခိုက်ခံရပြီး လုံခြုံရေးတိုးမြှင့်ထား

<sup>196</sup> DVB (25 Dec 2023) မရမ်းကုန်းတွင် စစ်တပ်ဘန်ကာ ဗုံးပေါက်ကွဲ; DVB (29 Dec 2023) မရမ်းကုန်း စက်မှုကြီးကြပ်ရေးနှင့်

စစ်ဆေးရေးဦးစီးဌာနရုံးရှေ့ ဗုံး ၂ ကြိမ်ပေါက်

<sup>197</sup> DVB (1 Jan 2023) လှိုင်သာယာ နေရာ ၆ နေရာ၌ ဗုံးများပေါက်ကွဲ

<sup>198</sup> DVB (16 Dec 2023) ဒဂုံအရှေ့တွင် ဗုံးထပ်ပေါက်၊ ဗုံးပေါက်သည့်မြို့နယ် ၉ မြို့နယ်ရှိလာပြီး ၁ ဦးသေ ၁၅ ဦးဒဏ်ရာရ

On 8 Dec, junta forces shot dead two protesters and arrested two others after they barricaded a street and set tires on fire in **Tamwe Township**.<sup>199</sup>

## Rohingya

### Over 500 more Rohingya refugees arrive in Aceh

During 2-13 Dec, four boats carrying approximately **504 Rohingya refugees** arrived in Aceh province. Boats landed on Sabang Island, and in Pidie and Aceh Besar regencies.<sup>200</sup> The UNHCR stated that **75% of new arrivals were women and children**.<sup>201</sup> Passengers from two of the boats reported having no food or water left when they disembarked their heavily damaged boats.<sup>202</sup> The boat which arrived in Aceh Besar had reportedly been **adrift for 1.5 months**. In Sabang, a local head stated that they gave the Rohingya refugees aid, but would push them back unless they were resettled to a different area.<sup>203</sup> Police moved 135 refugees to the office of the provincial governor, after the local communities **prevented them from placing the Rohingya elsewhere**.<sup>204</sup>

On 6 Dec, the Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, Mohammad Mahfud MD, said that Indonesia would discuss with the UNHCR how to **return the Rohingya refugees to Burma**. Meanwhile, Ma'ruf Amin, the Indonesian Vice President, suggested that Rohingya refugees could be **housed on Galang Island**, where Indonesia had previously housed Vietnamese and Laotian refugees in the 1970s-1990s. A representative from Indonesian NGO Suaka noted that Indonesia was bound by the **principle of non-refoulement** as it had ratified the 1998 anti-torture convention and that placing Rohingya on Galang island would limit their right to free movement.<sup>205</sup>

On 8 Dec, Indonesian President Jokowi said that Indonesia “will take firm action against” people trafficking Rohingya. He added that Indonesia will give temporary humanitarian aid and collaborate with the UNHCR, but will **continue to prioritize local residents**.<sup>206</sup> On 16 Dec, police **arrested a Rohingya individual** for human trafficking and detained and questioned 11 other Rohingya.<sup>207</sup>

### Anti-Rohingya hate surges, leads to protests

On 6 Dec, in Sabang, police blocked **150 protestors from breaching a gate** into an area sheltering refugees.<sup>208</sup> On 18 Dec, 200 locals in Sabang protested again and called for the **removal of all Rohingya refugees on Sabang Island**.<sup>209</sup> In Banda Aceh, protesters hung a banner outside of a government building that read “We, the residents of Kota Baru village, reject Rohingya refugees.”<sup>210</sup>

On 20 Dec, AFP noted a **sharp uptick in negative posts, rumors, and misinformation on social media** about Rohingya through December.<sup>211</sup> A number of viral posts on X and Tiktok demanded the **deportation of Rohingya refugees** and called them colonizers. The official UNHCR Indonesia account called for all to follow the official UNHCR account for accurate information.<sup>212</sup>

On 27 Dec, a **mob of university students** in Banda Aceh stormed a community hall sheltering 137 Rohingya refugees, demanded the “**immediate removal of all Rohingya refugees from Aceh**”, threw out the refugees' belongings in the hall, and **forced them onto two nearby trucks to relocate them**.<sup>213</sup> After the mob attack, police took the refugees to a nearby government office.<sup>214</sup> Afterwards, the coordinating minister for political, legal, and security affairs stated that the government planned to move

<sup>199</sup> DVB (9 Dec 2023) တာမေ့တွင် တာယာမီးရှို့ဆန္ဒပြသည့် လူငယ်များကို စစ်တပ်က ပစ်ခတ်ဖမ်းဆီး၊ ၂ ဦးသေဆုံး

<sup>200</sup> Straits Times (2 Dec 2023) Over 100 Rohingya refugees land in Indonesia, 2 more boats at sea; Al Jazeera (10 Dec 2023) Tensions rise as two more boats with over 300 Rohingya land in Indonesia; Jakarta Post (20 Dec 2023) Rohingya refugee named human trafficking suspect

<sup>201</sup> Al Jazeera (10 Dec 2023) Tensions rise as two more boats with over 300 Rohingya land in Indonesia

<sup>202</sup> Reuters (10 Dec 2023) About 400 Rohingya land in Indonesia, adds to surge of recent arrivals

<sup>203</sup> Straits Times (2 Dec 2023) Over 100 Rohingya refugees land in Indonesia, 2 more boats at sea

<sup>204</sup> AP (11 Dec 2023) Rohingya Muslims in Indonesia struggle to find shelter. President says government will help for now

<sup>205</sup> Benar News (6 Dec 2023) Indonesia faces criticism over plan to deport Rohingya to Myanmar

<sup>206</sup> Benar News (8 Dec 2023) Indonesia's president promises crackdown on human smugglers amid backlash against Rohingya

<sup>207</sup> Jakarta Post (20 Dec 2023) Rohingya refugee named human trafficking suspect

<sup>208</sup> AFP via Myanmar Now (7 Dec 2023) Indonesians protest against Rohingya refugees, clash with police

<sup>209</sup> AP (18 Dec 2023) Hundreds of residents on Indonesian island protest the growing arrival of Rohingya refugees by sea

<sup>210</sup> AFP via Myanmar Now (20 Dec 2023) Rohingyas in Indonesia face uncertain future as local anger rises

<sup>211</sup> AFP via Myanmar Now (20 Dec 2023) Rohingyas in Indonesia face uncertain future as local anger rises

<sup>212</sup> Benar News (8 Dec 2023) Indonesia's president promises crackdown on human smugglers amid backlash against Rohingya; UNHCR via X (7 Dec 2023) <https://shorturl.at/frEJ3>

<sup>213</sup> AP (28 Dec 2023) Students in Indonesia protest the growing numbers of Rohingya refugees in Aceh province

<sup>214</sup> AFP via Myanmar Now (28 Dec 2023) Rioting students force Rohingya refugees out of shelter in Indonesia

the refugees to the Indonesian Red Cross headquarters and the Aceh Foundation building, both in Banda Aceh. A top minister later added that the refugees would be guarded by security forces.<sup>215</sup>

In response to the attacks, the UNHCR stated they were “deeply disturbed” by the incident and that the attack was the product of a “**coordinated online campaign of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech against refugees**”.<sup>216</sup> Benar News reported that human rights activists and observers expected the incident was part of a larger hate campaign. A project coordinator at a local NGO stated that the protesters' **accusations against the Rohingya refugees were unsubstantiated**. They also stated that refugees placed no financial burden on Indonesians, since the Indonesian state had made no budgetary allocation for refugee management. A researcher and law lecturer at a local university added that the protests were not typical of Acehnese student protests and that **students might have been “instructed”**. Another researcher suggested that political actors were likely trying to **stir up anti-Rohingya sentiment before the general elections** in February and were driving the disinformation campaign.<sup>217</sup>

### **Indonesian Navy pushes away Rohingya boat**

On 14 Dec, the Indonesian Navy Western Fleet Maritime Security Task Force met in Sabang to discuss “ways to overcome the influx of Rohingya”. During 14-17 Dec, the Indonesian air force sent aircrafts on patrol missions along the Acehnese coast in order to monitor “illegal boats and other illegal activities around Aceh”.<sup>218</sup>

On 27 Dec, the Indonesian navy released a statement saying **it had spotted and “turned away”** a wooden boat carrying Rohingya refugees off of Weh Island in Aceh province. It said that they “ensured the boat did not return to Indonesian waters.”<sup>219</sup> After removing the statement from their website, an Indonesian military spokesperson said on 29 Dec that the **Navy had simply “shadowed”** a vessel carrying “Rohingya victims of human trafficking” and lost track of it after it left Indonesian waters.<sup>220</sup>

### **Governments pledges allow for WFP food voucher increase**

On 4 Dec, the Bangladesh government said they would seek **USD 535 million in loans** and **USD 465 million in grants** from the **World Bank and Asian Development Bank**, in part to support Rohingya refugee management.<sup>221</sup> On 8 Dec, the World Bank stated they would only provide Rohingya-focused funding to Bangladesh as grants, not loans.<sup>222</sup>

On 14 Dec, the **US Agency for International Development (USAID)** announced that it would provide **USD 87 million in additional funding for Rohingya refugees** and host communities in Cox’s Bazar and Bhasan Char.<sup>223</sup> Afterwards, the **UN World Food Programme (WFP)** announced they would **increase monthly per person food vouchers from USD 8 to USD 10** on 1 Jan due to the USAID funding contribution. The WFP had cut food assistance from USD 12 per person per month to USD 8 in Jun 2023. As of Nov 2023, 90% of the refugee population in Cox’s Bazar did not have adequate food consumption, up from 79% in Jun 2023.<sup>224</sup>

On 16 Dec, the Australian government pledged **AUD 235 million** to support Rohingya in Bangladesh and Myanmar. They also affirmed their commitment to expanding third country resettlement.<sup>225</sup>

### **Rohingya child brides trafficked to Malaysia face violence, misery, abuse**

On 13 Dec, AP published a report outlining the conditions endured by trafficked Rohingya child brides in Malaysia. Constant exposure to **violence and abduction, poor living conditions, and a lack of income in camps** pushed families to marry their children off to third countries. Rohingya men paid for the passage of their young brides and financial support to the girls’ families in Cox’s Bazar. Malaysia-based advocates reported that there had been a **spike in trafficked child brides in the past two years**. AP carried out interviews with 12 child brides in Malaysia, the youngest of whom was 13. The interviewees relayed **stories of rape and beatings** at the hands of smugglers, starvation, frequent rape,

<sup>215</sup> Benar News (28 Dec 2023) Disinformation campaign spurred student attack on Rohingya shelter, Indonesian activists say

<sup>216</sup> UNHCR (27 Dec 2023) UNHCR disturbed over mob attack and forced eviction of refugees in Aceh, Indonesia

<sup>217</sup> Benar News (28 Dec 2023) Disinformation campaign spurred student attack on Rohingya shelter, Indonesian activists say

<sup>218</sup> Jakarta Post (20 Dec 2023) Rohingya refugee named human trafficking suspect

<sup>219</sup> AP (28 Dec 2023) Indonesia’s navy pushes a boat suspected of carrying Rohingya refugees out of its waters

<sup>220</sup> Benar News (29 Dec 2023) Indonesia navy loses track of Rohingya boat after ‘shadowing’ it at sea

<sup>221</sup> The Business Standard (4 Dec 2023) For the first time, Bangladesh seeks foreign loans to support Rohingyas

<sup>222</sup> World Bank (8 Dec 2023) Statement on World Bank support under discussion for the Displaced Rohingya Population and Host Communities in Chattogram Division

<sup>223</sup> USAID (14 Dec 2023) USAID Announced Additional \$87 Million to Support Rohingya Refugees

<sup>224</sup> WFP (13 Dec 2023) WFP’s Rohingya Refugee Operation in Bangladesh Receives Major Funding Boost of US\$ 87 Million from the United States

<sup>225</sup> Australia Minister of Foreign Affairs (16 Dec 2023) Enhanced support for refugees globally

**verbal and physical spousal abuse, and forced pregnancies.** The girls were less likely to report their assaults as Malaysia was not signatory to the UN Refugee Convention.<sup>226</sup>

### **Conflict in Arakan hits Rohingya hardest**

On 14 Dec, Narinjara reported that junta blockades of transport routes in Arakan State had **led to food shortages and left many Rohingya IDPs starved.** IDPs had also not received money from WFP since Oct. An IDP camp in Pauktaw Township could no longer receive food shipments from Pauktaw and Sittwe due to the blockades. IDPs in another Pauktaw camp reported they were unable to access healthcare or find work due to blockades.<sup>227</sup>

On 14 Dec, in **Buthidaung Township**, junta forces shelled Wahcheelah village and injured a Rohingya local.<sup>228</sup> Locals reported that shelling in and around villages had occurred daily. On 27-28 Dec, junta troops shelled Rohingya-majority Zay Di Taung village, killed six Rohingya locals, and injured seven others.<sup>229</sup> After the 28 Dec seizure of a base in **Mrauk-U**, the junta reportedly took four Rohingya villagers as human shields after they fled the police station. Earlier junta shelling and airstrikes in Mrauk-U had killed four Rohingya civilians and injured 16 others.<sup>230</sup>

On 1 Jan, a junta mouthpiece stated, in 2023, the junta had **arrested 221 Rohingya refugees** returning to Arakan State for illegally crossing the border. 65 were women and 39 were children.<sup>231</sup>

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

On 6 Dec, it was reported that since 1 Feb 2021, the junta has **killed at least 664 women**, arbitrarily detained 2,441 others, and unjustly convicted 706. In November alone, the junta killed 38 women.<sup>232</sup>

On 24 Dec, it was reported that large numbers of women had **joined the armed resistance** in Burma. Women including health professionals, teachers, housewives, and government employees **trained and fought alongside men.** The Mandalay PDF had around 100 female fighters and staffed a third of its **drone unit with women.** The Karenni Nationalities Defense Force had around 600 women fighters and established a **“women’s unit”** in 2022 to emphasize women’s participation.<sup>233</sup>

### **Junta targets woman civil society leaders**

On 4 Dec, a junta court in Sittwe Township (Arakan State) arraigned Daw Nyo Aye, **chairwoman of the Rakhine Women’s Network.** During the hearing, the **judge demanded evidence of her innocence** after she pled not guilty. The junta had withheld medical care in prison since her indictment, despite her **deteriorating health.**<sup>234</sup>

On 16 Dec, the junta arrested Daw Saw Su Su Htwe, **chairwoman of the Shin Tan Chin Twelve Lat Social Welfare Association** in Thaton Township (Mon State). Pro-junta Telegram channels reported her for **commenting on a post** of a PDF member who was an ex-member of her association.<sup>235</sup>

### **Junta road blockades in Arakan kill unborn babies**

On 28 Dec, it was reported that junta blockades and continuous shelling prevented women in labor from going to hospital and forced them to **give birth at home.**<sup>236</sup> In Ponnagyun Township, an IDP **mother and her child died** after a home birth on 6 Dec.<sup>237</sup> On 15 Dec, it was reported the travel restrictions were preventing rural **pregnant women and children under the age of two** from receiving **vaccines.**<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> AP (13 Dec 2023) ‘I feel trapped’: Scores of underage Rohingya girls forced into abusive marriages in Malaysia

<sup>227</sup> Narinjara via BNI (14 Dec 2023) Junta Blockades Push Muslim IDP Camps to the Brink of Starvation

<sup>228</sup> DMG (15 Dec 2023) Junta shelling injures Muslim child in Buthidaung Twsp

<sup>229</sup> DMG (29 Dec 2023) Junta shelling blamed for killing five, injuring four in Buthidaung Twsp village; DMG (27 Dec 2023) Shelling injures three locals in Buthidaung Twsp; RFA (29 Dec 2023) Junta raid kills 10 Rohingyas, injures 17 in Myanmar’s Rakhine state

<sup>230</sup> Narinjara (30 Dec 2023) 4 killed, 16 injured in Myaung Bway conflict: Three Brotherhood Alliance

<sup>231</sup> DMG (1 Jan 2024) Over 200 Muslim refugees arrested in 2023 for illegally crossing border into Arakan: regime mouthpiece

<sup>232</sup> Irrawaddy (6 Dec 2023) Over 660 Women Killed by Myanmar Junta Forces Since Coup

<sup>233</sup> Straits Times (24 Dec 2023) ‘I’m a Mandalay girl’: Teenage soldier fights on Myanmar’s front lines; Nikkei Asia (31 Dec 2023) In Pictures: The women soldiers of Myanmar’s resistance

<sup>234</sup> DMG (4 Dec 2023) Prominent Arakanese women’s activist arraigned in incitement trial

<sup>235</sup> Rehmonnya (21 Dec 2023) Junta arrests Chair of a social welfare association for social media comments

<sup>236</sup> Narinjara (28 Dec 2023) Road closures by the Junta prevent pregnant women in Rakhine from accessing healthcare

<sup>237</sup> Narinjara (7 Dec 2023) IDP woman, new born die without medical care in Ponna Kyunt

<sup>238</sup> DMG (15 Dec 2023) Pregnant women, infants can’t get vaccination due to junta travel restrictions in Arakan State

## COVID-19, Health, Education (more at [COVID-19, healthcare, and education tracker](#))

### Junta pilot confesses to airstrikes on hospitals, schools, IDP camps

On 7 Dec, Insecurity Insight reported the junta carried out **19 attacks** on Burma's healthcare system during 15-28 Nov. There had been **323 attacks during 1 Jan-31 Oct** which killed **29 health workers** and damaged **123 healthcare facilities**.<sup>239</sup>

On 20 Dec, the Karenni Interim Executive Council reported that **junta pilot Khaing Thant Moe**, captured on 19 Nov after his fighter jet crashed, had **confessed** to conducting **airstrikes on civilian targets** such as hospitals, schools, and IDP camps in Hpruso and Demoso Townships (Karenni State).<sup>240</sup>

### Junta blockades hinder healthcare and education

On 6 Dec, it was reported that around **25% of the 20,000 Karenni IDPs** in Pinlaung Township (S. Shan State) had caught the seasonal flu, particularly the elderly and children.<sup>241</sup> In Pinlaung and Kalaw Townships, on 11 Dec, aid workers said that junta roadblocks had prevented any transport of food, medicine, or clothes.<sup>242</sup> On 23 Dec, UNICEF Myanmar reported that **12.1 million people** in Burma lacked **primary healthcare services**. One million children were at increased **risk of vaccine-preventable diseases** due to **missed basic immunizations**.<sup>243</sup> On 9 Dec, it was reported that despite universities being officially open in Arakan State, few, if any, students were attending school due to junta **road blockades, fuel shortages, and safety concerns**.<sup>244</sup>

On 11 Dec, it was reported that junta **blockades of land and water routes** in Arakan State since 13 Nov had hindered medicine transport in rural areas and caused **inflated medicine prices** in urban areas. The **medicine shortage** particularly affected those with **chronic diseases**.<sup>245</sup> The Irrawaddy reported that junta soldiers at checkpoints had turned around at least two ambulances traveling between **Sittwe** and **Mrauk-U** during the first week of Dec.<sup>246</sup> On 16 Dec, it was reported that junta road blockades in Arakan State since 13 Nov had severely **restricted healthcare services** for thousands of IDPs and even led to the deaths of at least **10 IDPs**. On 27 Dec, a teenager died of suspected dysentery after junta troops blocked him from traveling to **Kyaukphyu** for treatment.<sup>247</sup>

### Junta fakes support with stuffed classrooms

On 11 Dec, the **Arakan Students Union** called for a **boycott of educational institutions** under military rule. The union claimed the regime had instructed junta-controlled schools and universities in Arakan State to force students to attend classes to **create an impression of popular support** for the junta and had abducted students and other civilians for ransom.<sup>248</sup> On 28 Dec, it was reported that the regime had **detained** at least **30 university students** from various townships in Arakan State since fighting with the AA resumed on 13 Nov. A social activist claimed that the regime deliberately **targeted students** to discourage young people from getting involved in politics.<sup>249</sup>

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

### Junta release of chokehold on forex drives up fuel prices

On 5 Dec, the junta announced that the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) **would no longer set fixed exchange rates** on its online trading system for authorized dealers (AD) and would allow banks and dealers to set rates themselves. According to Australian economist Sean Turnell, this move was an indication of the **junta's urgent need for foreign currency** as it showed that the junta did not have enough USD in reserve to sell USD to fuel and cooking oil importers at their inflated fixed rate.<sup>250</sup> The CBM had sold USD on 40% of the value of fuel imports at an average rate of MMK 2,920, but importers now had to buy the entire 100% at market rates (MMK 3,400). The junta had effectively been subsidizing fuel and cooking oil imports.

<sup>239</sup> Mizzima (7 Dec 2023) 19 attacks on Myanmar healthcare in last two weeks of November

<sup>240</sup> Irrawaddy (20 Dec 2023) Captured Pilot Admits Myanmar Military is Targeting Schools, Hospitals and Camps

<sup>241</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (6 Dec 2023) ပင်လောင်းမြို့နယ်ထဲက ကရင်နီစစ်ရှောင်ပြောင်းကျော်အတွက် ရိက္ခာသယ်ယူခွင့်မရ

<sup>242</sup> Kantarawaddy Times (11 Dec 2023) ပင်လောင်းမြို့ရောက် ကရင်နီစစ်ရှောင်တွေရဲ့ ၅ ရာခိုင်နှုန်းမှာ ရာသီတုပ်ကွေးအဖြစ်များနေ

<sup>243</sup> DMG (23 Dec 2023) Over 12 million lack access to primary healthcare services in Myanmar

<sup>244</sup> DMG (9 Dec 2023) Students not attending universities in southern Arakan State

<sup>245</sup> DMG (11 Dec 2023) Medicine shortages reported in Arakan State

<sup>246</sup> Irrawaddy (5 Dec 2023) As Shelling Intensifies, Myanmar's Rakhine State is Running Out of Food

<sup>247</sup> Irrawaddy (28 Dec 2023) Myanmar Troops Blockade Kyaukphyu as China Hits Accelerator on Rakhine SEZ

<sup>248</sup> DMG (11 Dec 2023) Arakan Students Union calls for boycotting classrooms

<sup>249</sup> DMG (28 Dec 2023) Regime arrests at least 30 university students in Arakan State since Nov. 13

<sup>250</sup> Myanmar Now (6 Dec 2023) Military council abandons fixed foreign currency exchange rates

As a result, the Supervisory Committee on Fuel Imports, Storage, and Distribution **raised the retail prices** of 92 Ron octane and 95 Ron octane to MMK 2,510 and MMK 2,640, respectively, in Yangon up from MMK 2,170 and MMK 2,300 on 30 Nov.<sup>251</sup>

On 15 Dec, ISP-Myanmar reported **widespread fuel shortages in 83 townships (75%)**, with long queues in 67 townships (61%), some lasting overnight. Additionally, **80 townships (73%)** across the country experienced **gas station closures** due to price fluctuations and fuel stock shortages.<sup>252</sup> On 22 Dec, the junta announced it would detain and prosecute individuals who exceeded their official fuel purchase quota or who resold fuel at inflated prices.<sup>253</sup>

### **World Bank economic outlook bleak**

On 12 Dec, the World Bank (WB) forecasted that **Burma's economy would only grow 1%** before Mar 2024. Conflict, trade and logistics disruptions, currency volatility, and high inflation were expected to keep per capita GDP about **10% lower than it was in 2019**. WB also stated that armed conflict following the beginning of Operation 1027 had blocked major transport routes and trade channels, and led to heightened economic uncertainty. Even if conflict slows in 2024, WB expected Burma's economic growth to **remain poor in 2024-25** because of a broad-based slowdown in agriculture, manufacturing, and trade sectors.

WB also expected **inflation to persist at around 20%** until Mar 2024, given that the **MMK had depreciated by 18%** against USD during Jun-Sep 2023. Citing the Myanmar Household Welfare Survey, the report also expected a **10% decline in average household incomes** in Apr-Jun 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Additionally, World Food Programme data showed a **16.6% annual increase in prices of major food items** between 2017 and Jun 2023. This was in part because the junta's attempts to control fuel and food prices at non-market levels proved unsustainable and led to several disruptions in supply.<sup>254</sup>

### **Burma "rises" to world's top opium producer**

On 12 Dec, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that **Burma had become the world's biggest opium producer in 2023**, overtaking Afghanistan. UNODC said that the economic, security, and governance disruptions in Burma following the attempted coup had led farmers in remote areas to turn to opium cultivation.

From 2022 to 2023, **opium cultivation in Burma increased by 18%**, from 40,100 to 47,000 hectares. This marked the third consecutive annual increase in cultivation since the attempted coup. Moreover, the **"opiate economy" in Burma grew to between USD 1 billion and USD 2.4 billion**, equivalent to 1.7-4.1% of the country's 2022 GDP. Opium poppy farmers in Burma now earn about 75% more than in 2022, with an average price of USD 355 per kilogram of dry opium.

UNODC also revealed that, between 2022 and 2023, opium cultivation in **N. Shan State increased by 20%**, 10% in Chin State, and 6% in Kachin State. Although poppy crops contributed nearly a third of Burma's total agricultural production value in 2022, the cultivation area decreased from 233,000 hectares in late 2022 to 10,800 hectares in 2023. Furthermore, the average **opium yield per hectare increased to 22.9 kilograms**, indicating **increased investments in irrigation and fertilizers** and the **use of more advanced farming practices**. The UNODC report also highlighted the growth of Southeast Asia's larger illicit economy and urged ASEAN countries to collaborate on solutions.<sup>255</sup>

### **Cash-hungry junta extorts money from undocumented migrants**

On 16 Dec, the junta began implementing a new tax law requiring citizens from Burma working abroad **to pay 2% of their monthly wages** to the junta. The new taxation scheme was first announced in Oct 2023. Junta-controlled embassies in Singapore, Bangkok, and Japan declared on 11, 13, and 21 Dec, respectively, that they **would not process renewal applications** without proof of income tax payment.<sup>256</sup> On 17 Dec, migrant workers from Burma in Thailand **protested against the 2% tax** at the UN office in Bangkok. A protester revealed that, on 6 Dec, junta embassy staff visited a fish cannery in Samut Sakhon Province **to pressure employees from Burma to pay the tax**.

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<sup>251</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Dec 2023) Myanmar Regime Runs Low on Dollars, Increasing Fuel Prices

<sup>252</sup> ISP-Myanmar (15 Dec 2023) A Sustained Economic Decline in Myanmar

<sup>253</sup> Myanmar Now (25 Dec 2023) Junta cracks down on people buying petrol above rationed amount

<sup>254</sup> World Bank (12 Dec 2023) Myanmar Economic Monitor: Challenges amid Conflicts

<sup>255</sup> UNODC (12 Dec 2023) Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023: Cultivation, Production, and Implications

<sup>256</sup> Irrawaddy (16 Dec 2023) Junta Watch: Cash-Strapped Regime Milks Myanmar Expats With New 'Passport Tax'; and More; DVB (22 Dec 2023) Burma embassy in Japan latest to order income tax; Number of IDPs reaches 2.6 million



The junta also reportedly pressured employment agencies to transfer 25% of migrant worker wages through junta-approved financial institutions. UN Development Programme data indicated that there were around 2.5 million migrant workers from Burma in Thailand, earning a basic monthly salary of THB 7,500. At this monthly rate, workers would be expected to pay the junta THB 150 per month, **earning the junta at least THB 375 million from workers in Thailand alone.**<sup>257</sup>

On 22 Dec, the junta expanded its new **2% wage taxation policy to include undocumented migrants** working in Thailand and other neighboring countries. In Thailand, undocumented migrant workers are now required to pay taxes to obtain a certificate of identity (CI) from Burma's embassies and consulates. A tax expert commented that this new policy is a form of extortion, not taxation.<sup>258</sup> The Burmese embassy in Bangkok plans to issue CIs for 900,000 undocumented migrant workers, all of whom would be nominated by Thai employers. Each migrant seeking a CI must pay THB 600 in taxes for four months, potentially **generating up to USD 1.5 million for the junta.**<sup>259</sup>

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

### **Organ trafficking and abuse of women refugees in India**

On 3 Dec, it was reported that Delhi's Apollo Hospital, part of **India's largest private hospital** chain, had facilitated the **illegal sale of kidneys** from Burma nationals. Wealthy Burma nationals reportedly paid Apollo's Burma offices to fly Burma villagers to Delhi for a kidney transplant using **forged documents**. 80% of transplants facilitated in Burma were **between strangers** despite this being **illegal in both countries**. A kidney transplant at Apollo would total GBP 17,100 and the "donor" would receive up to GBP 3,110. A village near Yangon was nicknamed "Kyaut Ta Lone", which translates to "one kidney" because so many residents had sold their kidneys. The cash for kidney trade had been **profiting from poverty** in Burma. Apollo Hospitals denied any involvement. India's federal government ordered Delhi's health department to investigate the allegation.<sup>260</sup>

During 17-18 Dec, prison authorities in Manipur State **beat 36 imprisoned Burma women refugees** until their longyi (skirts) came off and forced them to sleep outside in the snow. The women had gone on **hunger strike** on 16 Dec to protest the **authorities' refusal to release** them from prison on 15 Dec. Authorities had fined and sentenced the women to five months in prison under the Foreigners Act.<sup>261</sup>

### **Thailand works with junta to "aid" refugees**

On 3 Dec, Thai Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara said that Thailand would **build shelters** along the border to **receive refugees** if fighting escalated. He said that a refugee influx was "unlikely." The commander of Thailand's 3rd army also **denied that the crisis** in Burma had already **impacted Thailand** and claimed the junta would prevent any refugees from crossing the border.<sup>262</sup>

On 7 Dec, Parnpree met with junta FM Than Swe at the 8th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation FMs' Meeting in Beijing. The Thai Foreign Ministry afterward announced it would **cooperate with the junta** to create a **humanitarian aid task force for IDPs and refugees** along the Thai-Burma border "in line with the implementation of ASEAN's 5-Point Consensus". It hoped this would lead to **"constructive engagement"** between the junta, ASEAN, and the international community.<sup>263</sup>

### **Record meth haul at border**

On 12 Dec, Thai authorities seized an estimated 50 million **methamphetamine** tablets, the **second biggest known haul in Asia**, at a police-military checkpoint in Kanchanaburi near the Burma border. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime stated that militias and traffickers in northern Burma produced an **extreme supply** and had distribution networks as far as Japan and New Zealand.<sup>264</sup>

On 15 Dec, **Thai state prosecutors indicted Senator** Upakit Pachariyangkun on six charges involving narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and association with a transnational criminal organization. Thai

<sup>257</sup> Myanmar Now (20 Dec 2023) Migrant workers protest in Thailand as Myanmar regime enforces new income tax

<sup>258</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2023) Junta imposes new tax on undocumented migrant workers from Myanmar

<sup>259</sup> Than Lwin Times (31 Dec 2023) Junta seeks to collect more than 1 million dollars as taxes from Myanmar workers in Thailand

<sup>260</sup> Telegraph (3 Dec 2023) Revealed: Global private hospital group embroiled in 'cash for kidneys' racket; Reuters (6 Dec 2023) New Delhi investigating alleged illegal transplants at Apollo hospital in city

<sup>261</sup> RFA (20 Dec 2023) Escaping war in Myanmar for prison in India

<sup>262</sup> Irrawaddy (4 Dec 2023) Thailand Says Ready to Receive Myanmar War Refugees

<sup>263</sup> Thailand MoFA (7 Dec 2023) DPM/FM meets with his Myanmar counterpart, underlining support for Myanmar's peace process and readiness to work together to scale up humanitarian aid; Irrawaddy (9 Dec 2023) Thailand, Myanmar to Form Joint Task Force to Cope With War Refugees

<sup>264</sup> AP News (13 Dec 2023) Thai police seize a record haul of 50 million methamphetamine tablets near border with Myanmar; Reuters (13 Dec 2023) Thai authorities seize record haul of meth tablets near border with Myanmar

authorities arrested Upakit in Sep 2022. He and **US-sanctioned Tun Min Latt**, an arms broker for the junta, reportedly had shared interests in several companies.<sup>265</sup>

On 27 Dec, Thai Army Lt. Gen. Jakkapong Janpengpen met with junta chief Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyidaw to discuss **potential joint efforts against scam operations** along the Thai-Burma border, especially in Myawaddy Township (Karen State). He requested the **junta take urgent action**.<sup>266</sup>

### **UN abandons Karenni volunteers in war zone**

On 4 Dec, it was reported that the **WFP** had **excluded local long-term paid volunteers** from the agency's **evacuation plan from Loikaw** (Karenni State) in mid-November. A former volunteer who fled to a temporary camp without help said there were around 60 other volunteers, **mostly Karenni**, and that the **WFP staff** who were allowed to safely evacuate were **largely Bamar**. The Myanmar Accountability Project stated that this had **"eroded further the UN's credibility** among Myanmar people" and called for an investigation into the decision to abandon local volunteers.<sup>267</sup>

On 18 Dec, the **UN General Assembly** adopted the UN Credentials Committee's 6 Dec resolution to **delay a decision** on Burma's Ambassador to the UN. As a result, **Kyaw Moe Tun continued** in his position as Burmese Ambassador to the UN.<sup>268</sup>

### **More international sanctions**

On 8 Dec, the **UK** announced sanctions on Saw Chit Tu, She Zhijiang, and Saw Min Min Oo for human trafficking, forced labour, and human rights violations linked to the **Shwe Kokko** Yatai New City development in Myawaddy (Karen State). Karen civil society such as the Karen Peace Support Network had taken great risks to warn about the dangers presented by Shwe Kokko.<sup>269</sup>

The same day, **Canada** sanctioned for the second time junta chief **Min Aung Hlaing** as the person responsible for attacks against pro-democracy supporters and civilians under the country's Magnitsky Law, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act.<sup>270</sup>

On 11 Dec, the **EU** announced sanctions targeting **four junta officials** and **two of its arms suppliers**: Star Sapphire Group of Companies and Royal Shune Lei Company Ltd. Royal Shune Lei was reportedly linked to junta arms purchases from Russia, Serbia and possibly North Korea.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> AP News (15 Dec 2023) A Thai senator linked to a Myanmar tycoon is indicted for drug trafficking and money laundering

<sup>266</sup> Myanmar Now (29 Dec 2023) Thai officials call on Myanmar regime to crack down on fraud, trafficking gangs on Thai-Karen State border

<sup>267</sup> Myanmar Now (4 Dec 2023) Local UN volunteers 'abandoned' in evacuation from besieged Karenni State capital

<sup>268</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Dec 2023) Coup Opponent Continues as Myanmar's Ambassador to the United Nations

<sup>269</sup> Irrawaddy (9 Dec 2023) UK Hits Myanmar Border Guard Force Colonel, Two Others, With Sanctions; Burma Campaign UK (8 Dec 2023) New UK Burma Sanctions Welcomed by Burma Campaign UK

<sup>270</sup> Government of Canada (8 Dec 2023) Backgrounder: Sanctions in response to long-standing human rights violations in Russia, Iran and Myanmar; Justice for Myanmar (12 Dec 2023) JfM welcomes latest Canadian, EU and UK sanctions on the Myanmar junta and its associates, and calls for further measures to end mass atrocities

<sup>271</sup> EUR-Lex (11 Dec 2023) Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2789 of 11 December 2023 implementing Regulation (EU) No 401/2013 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Myanmar/Burma; Justice for Myanmar (12 Dec 2023) JfM welcomes latest Canadian, EU and UK sanctions on the Myanmar junta and its associates, and calls for further measures to end mass atrocities