

# CLOSE THE SKY



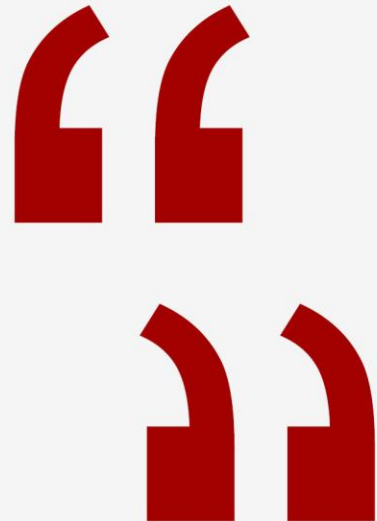
**THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES  
OF INACTION ON  
AVIATION FUEL IN MYANMAR**



8 January 2025  
Blood Money Campaign

## Executive Summary

It has been more than three years since the Myanmar military used various strategies and tactics to suppress the revolutionary people attempted coup. At the same time, the Myanmar military has seized the country's finances, Myanmar's economy and income from the country's natural resources along with the attempted coup in Myanmar. Commercial resources are also being used for military purposes. This includes our primary concerns towards the Myanmar military diverting commercial aviation fuel for military use to target civilians. These airstrikes have not only caused loss of life but have also disrupted livelihood opportunities, displaced communities, and destroyed infrastructure, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.



Weak monitoring mechanisms and insufficient sanctions have enabled not only the diversion of commercial aviation fuel for military use but also provide loopholes for the Myanmar military to import aviation fuel to Myanmar. Hence, the government of the United States, EU and ASEAN to take action on the Myanmar military's access to the supply chain of aviation fuel by working with civil societies, investigative research institutes, and human rights advocates to monitor the shipping routes and storage facilities in order to adopt due diligence processes for end-user certification. The vast population in Myanmar is displaced across the country and facing a humanitarian crisis as there is an increase in the number of IDPs at about 2.7 million across the country compared to the prior to the attempted coup in 2021. Therefore, it is crucial for the international companies to immediately cease all direct and indirect business relationships with Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) to prevent indiscriminate airstrikes that have devastating impacts on the lives of civilians including children, women and elderlies, destruction of basic infrastructure and dire consequences on their social services in conflict-affected areas.

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# Contextual Background

## A Tactic of Desperation and Impunity

It has been over three years since the Myanmar military ousted the civilian government in an attempted coup and mounting violence against civilians and gross human rights violations are occurring every day across Myanmar. Right after the attempted coup, the people of Myanmar marched peacefully to restore democracy and starting in March 2021, Myanmar military decided to repress the public with violence crackdown.<sup>1</sup> As a last resort, the Myanmar military increased its airstrikes against civilians to intimidate and suppress the ongoing resistance by all means, especially when their long standing grip on power is losing.<sup>2</sup> This accentuates that the Myanmar military is violating the International Humanitarian Laws (1949) by completely not complying with the conduct of war and chapter 2 and 3 of IHL where it articulated the "Distinction between Civilian Objects and Military Objectives" and "Indiscriminate Attacks" since Myanmar military is purposely targeting civilians on the ground with its indiscriminate air strike attacks.<sup>3</sup>



The international government has also been implicated in the violation of IHL by continuing its supply of aviation fuels to the Myanmar military albeit its airstrike attacks against civilians.



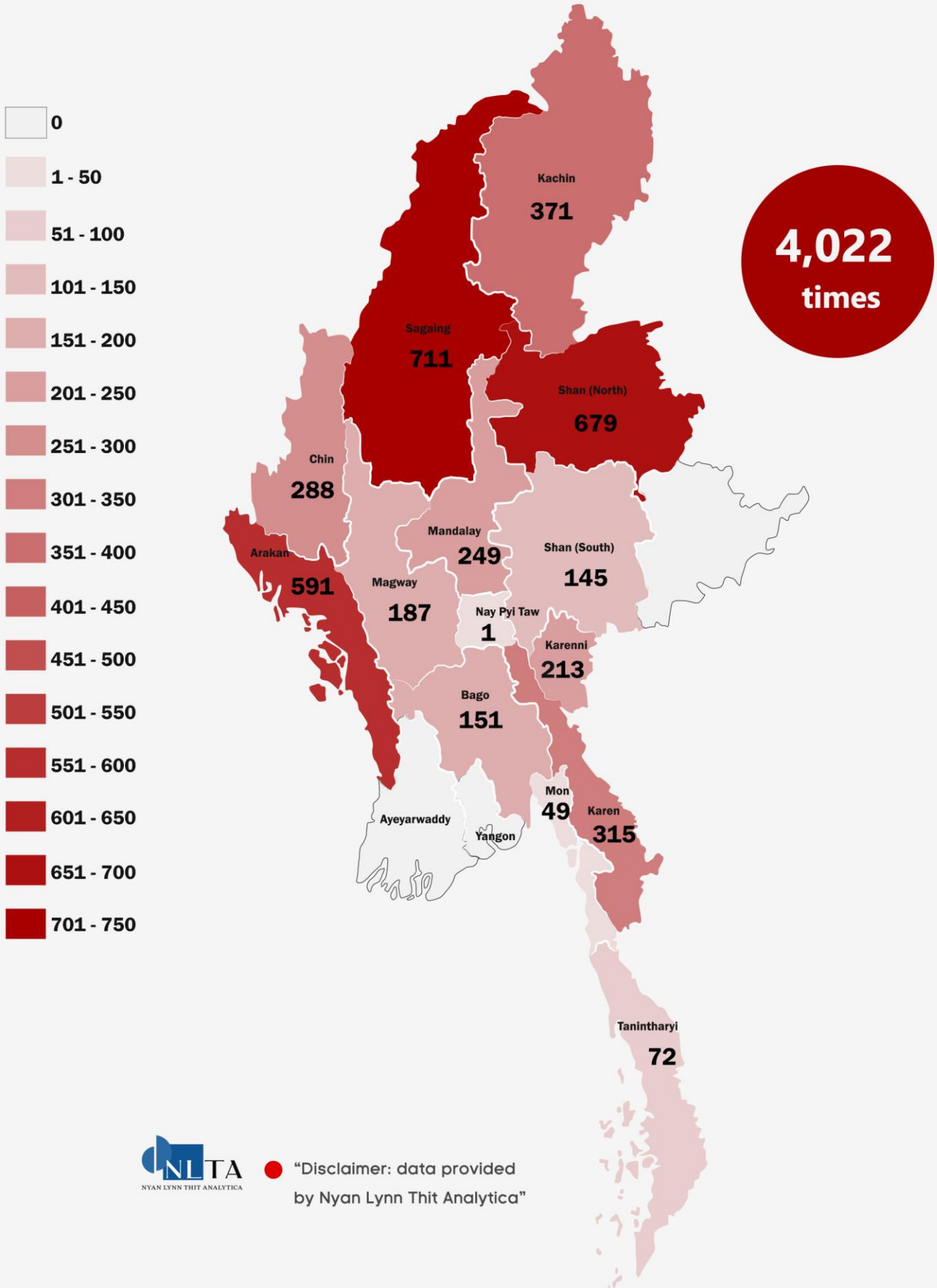
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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2021, Dec 02). *Myanmar: Protesters Targeted in March Massacre*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/02/myanmar-protesters-targeted-march-massacre>

<sup>2</sup> USIP. (2024, Apr 30). *Nine Things to Know About Myanmar's Conflict Three Years On*. Retrieved from: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/04/nine-things-know-about-myanmars-conflict-three-years>

<sup>3</sup> ICRC. (1949). *Customary IHL*. Retrieved from: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1>

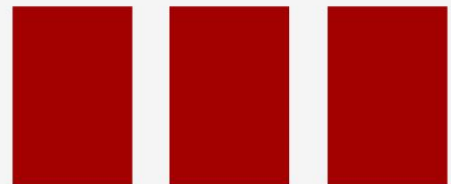
### ■ Nationwide Airstrike Incidents (Feb 2021 - Nov 2024)



# Urgency to Halt Airstrikes ■ ■ ■

While the Myanmar military, through the media they control, claims that they are targeting revolutionary armed forces yet evidence overwhelmingly shows that the targeting of civilians in military airstrikes and aerial bombardments. Various reports and evidence suggested that the Myanmar military is intentionally launching airstrikes against schools, medical facilities, and other civilian infrastructure as part of its attacks against the resistance.<sup>4</sup> Hence, this has led to not only loss of life and casualties but also severely affected access to public services and livelihoods due to constant displacement, the destruction of infrastructure and psychological distress.

Before the attempted coup in 2021, about 70 percent of Myanmar's population in rural areas relied on agriculture as a main source of livelihood.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, Agricultural economies and social services have been crippled by a series of atrocities committed by the Myanmar military. Moreover, the military will continue its indiscriminate airstrikes as long as it has access to aviation fuel. Hence, this ongoing supply of aviation fuel to the Myanmar military despite international sanctions is a concerning issue. The National Unity Government on the other hand, also stressed the importance of banning the sale of aviation fuel to Myanmar.<sup>6</sup> The urgency to prevent aviation fuel shipments from reaching the Myanmar military remains a priority for civil society since deadly airstrikes have increased each year since the 2021 coup attempt.



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<sup>4</sup> Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica. (2024, Oct 09). *Aerial Attacks Carried Out By The Military Council (5)*. Retrieved from: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bq3lD2e\\_Lrp1HK6p0pjUPG1nBe9WurmL/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bq3lD2e_Lrp1HK6p0pjUPG1nBe9WurmL/view); Myanmar Witness. (2024, Jan 03). *Healthcare denied: Medical facilities under attack*. Retrieved from: <https://www.myanmarwitness.org/reports/healthcare-denied%3A-medical-facilities-under-attack>; AP News. (2024, Jul 20). *Myanmar's civil war has seen a devastating increase in attacks on schools, researchers say*. Retrieved from: <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-school-attacks-increase-report-education-948442a05e07be006a4e79461f3551b6>; Sky News. (2023, Sep 20). *Myanmar military junta 'deliberately bombing medical facilities' with secret jungle hospital now being sought*. Retrieved from: <https://news.sky.com/story/myanmar-military-junta-deliberately-bombing-medical-facilities-with-secret-jungle-hospital-now-being-sought-12965090>

<sup>5</sup> UN News. (2020, Nov 08). *Myanmar's farmers battle climate and health uncertainty*. Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1076362>

<sup>6</sup> Aljazeera. (2023, Feb 03). *Why Myanmar's opposition wants a ban on jet fuel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/3/why-myanmars-opposition-is-calling-for-a-ban-on-jet-fuel>

<sup>6</sup> Aljazeera. (2023, Feb 03). *Why Myanmar's opposition wants a ban on jet fuel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/3/why-myanmars-opposition-is-calling-for-a-ban-on-jet-fuel>



# International Sanctions and its Enforcement Challenges ■ ■ ■

Following the awareness and advocacy campaigns from Myanmar's civil society, democratic forces, human rights defenders, and campaign and advocacy groups including the Blood Money Campaign, the international community has sanctioned the supply of aviation fuel to Myanmar including aircraft parts, aiming to limit the military's ability to conduct airstrikes.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the Myanmar military is still accessing the aviation fuel due to the weak monitoring mechanisms and lack of effective action on the sanctioning aviation fuel. The Myanmar military has seized the country's budgets, Myanmar's economy and income from the country's natural resources along with the attempted coup in Myanmar.<sup>8</sup> In addition to buying military equipment to oppress the civilians using above-mentioned revenues, commercial resources are also being used for military purposes.

Our primary concerns include exploitation of commercial resources using loopholes in which the Myanmar military diverting commercial aviation fuel for military use. For instance, The Myanmar military has been using Jet A-1 aviation fuel that is also used by the majority of commercial aircraft.<sup>9</sup> It is evident that the Myanmar military is likely to utilize alternative forms of aviation fuel for their military purposes. Therefore, it is crucial to impose sanctions on aviation fuel exports to Myanmar as it is impossible to ensure that aviation fuel intended for civilian use will not be diverted for military applications. Airfare on flights have become more expensive and certain flight routes are no longer running since the number of domestic commercial flights dropped by one-third in 2023.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the exploitation of commercial sources, Amnesty International revealed that the Myanmar military is still receiving aviation fuels at Yangon's Thilawa Port in 2023 and following in 2024 albeit a series of sanctions from certain international governments. Suppliers have evaded sanctions by using intermediaries to sell this deadly fuel, using storage facilities and ports in Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia.<sup>11</sup> While ASEAN nations are being accomplices in the value chain, Myanmar military is indiscriminately carrying out aerial bombing against civilians.

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International. (2024, Apr 04). *UN Human Rights Council: Resolution on Myanmar takes crucial stand against deadly jet fuel supply chain Responding to a decision by the United Nations Human*. Retrieved from: [https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/un-human-rights-council-resolution-on-myanmar-takes-crucial-stand-against-deadly-jet-fuel-supply-chain/#:~:text=Responding%20to%20a%20decision%20by%20the%20United%20Nations%20Human%20Rights; Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. \(2024, Oct 29\). UK, EU and Canada impose new sanctions targeting Myanmar military regime and its associates. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-eu-and-canada-impose-new-sanctions-targeting-myanmar-military-regime-and-its-associates](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/un-human-rights-council-resolution-on-myanmar-takes-crucial-stand-against-deadly-jet-fuel-supply-chain/#:~:text=Responding%20to%20a%20decision%20by%20the%20United%20Nations%20Human%20Rights; Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. (2024, Oct 29). UK, EU and Canada impose new sanctions targeting Myanmar military regime and its associates. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-eu-and-canada-impose-new-sanctions-targeting-myanmar-military-regime-and-its-associates)

<sup>8</sup> SIPRI. (2022, June). *Myanmar Budget Brief, 2022-2023 Citizen's Budget*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sipri.org/national-budget-report/myanmar/2022>

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International. (2022, Nov 03). *Deadly cargo: The supply chain that fuels war crimes in Myanmar*. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2022/11/myanmar-the-supply-chain-fueling-war-crimes/>

<sup>10</sup> RFA. (2023, Dec 21). *Domestic flights in Myanmar reduced as junta searches for jet fuel*. Retrieved from <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/domestic-flights-jet-fuel-12212023162043.html>

<sup>11</sup> The Myanmar military is still receiving aviation fuels at Yangon's Thilawa Port in 2023 and following in 2024 albeit a series of sanctions from certain international governments. This includes Malaysia's Pengerang Independent Terminals, Cai Mep Petroleum Terminal in Vietnam and Singapore' Vopak Singapore Banyan Terminal. See more information here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/myanmar-new-data-suggests-military-still-importing-fuel-for-deadly-air-strikes-despite-sanctions/#:~:text=New%20evidence%20suggests%20Myanmar's%20military,anniversary%20of%20the%202021%20coup.>

Moreover, the Myanmar military is using myriad other ways to purchase and import aviation fuel that need to be stopped immediately. Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE), a state-owned enterprise controlled by the Myanmar military still has access to the procurement, distribution and storage in collaboration with local crony conglomerates such as Asia Sun Group and its subsidiaries.<sup>12</sup> Insurance firms for vessels including but not limited to five British insurance firms are enabling the Myanmar military with the provision of insurance for deliveries of aviation fuel to Myanmar.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Chinese companies including but not limited to Aviation Industry Corporation of China's (AVIC) continued its supply of fighter jets, combat aircraft and military transport aircraft to the Myanmar military. Justice for Myanmar revealed that five different kinds of aircraft (JF-17, Hongdu K-8, Harbin Y-12, FTC - 2000G, Shaanxi - Y-8, J-7) have been used in military operations and its indiscriminate airstrikes on the civilian population.<sup>14</sup> Despite the withdrawal of other investors due to AVIC's support for the Myanmar military, the governments of Spain, Germany, and France remain significant investors and have equity in AVIC through Airbus, which has increased its collaboration and partnerships with AVIC.<sup>15</sup> Hence, this report delves into the overlooked adverse impacts of junta's aerial attacks on the access to basic services and livelihood, and the urgency to take action on ineffective enforcement in banning aviation fuel for Myanmar.

## Methodology

This report used both primary data along with secondary data to validate the findings. In order to understand the lived experience amidst airstrikes, we conducted 11 interviews with individuals directly impacted by airstrikes in the following locations (Chin, Karenni, Sagaing, Shan (North)). It is believed that by using primary data, the report can holistically examine air strike attacks that have a series of adverse effects on the basic social rights including access to people's livelihood and social services in Myanmar. As secondary sources, the report uses data from various reports, indexes, articles, and news. Hence, collected and analyzed secondary data has also been triangulated in regard to cross-examination and reflection on the on-ground realities of airstrike attacks. In terms of the time frame, this report analyzes the impact of airstrikes following the attempted coup up to November 2024.

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<sup>12</sup> Justice for Myanmar. (2023, Nov 3). *Myanmar military Jet Fuel Companies for Targeted Sanctions*. Retrieved from: <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/myanmar-military-jet-fuel-companies-for-targeted-sanctions>

<sup>13</sup> Burma Campaign Uk. (2023, May 23). *Five British Insurers Added to 'Dirty List' for Aviation Fuel Deliveries to Burma*. Retrieved from: <https://burmacampaign.org.uk/five-british-insurers-added-to-dirty-list-for-aviation-fuel-deliveries-to-burma/>

<sup>14</sup> Justice for Myanmar. (2024, Sep 16). *#Airstripped*. Retrieved from: [#Airstripped | Justice For Myanmar](https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/news/airstrikes)

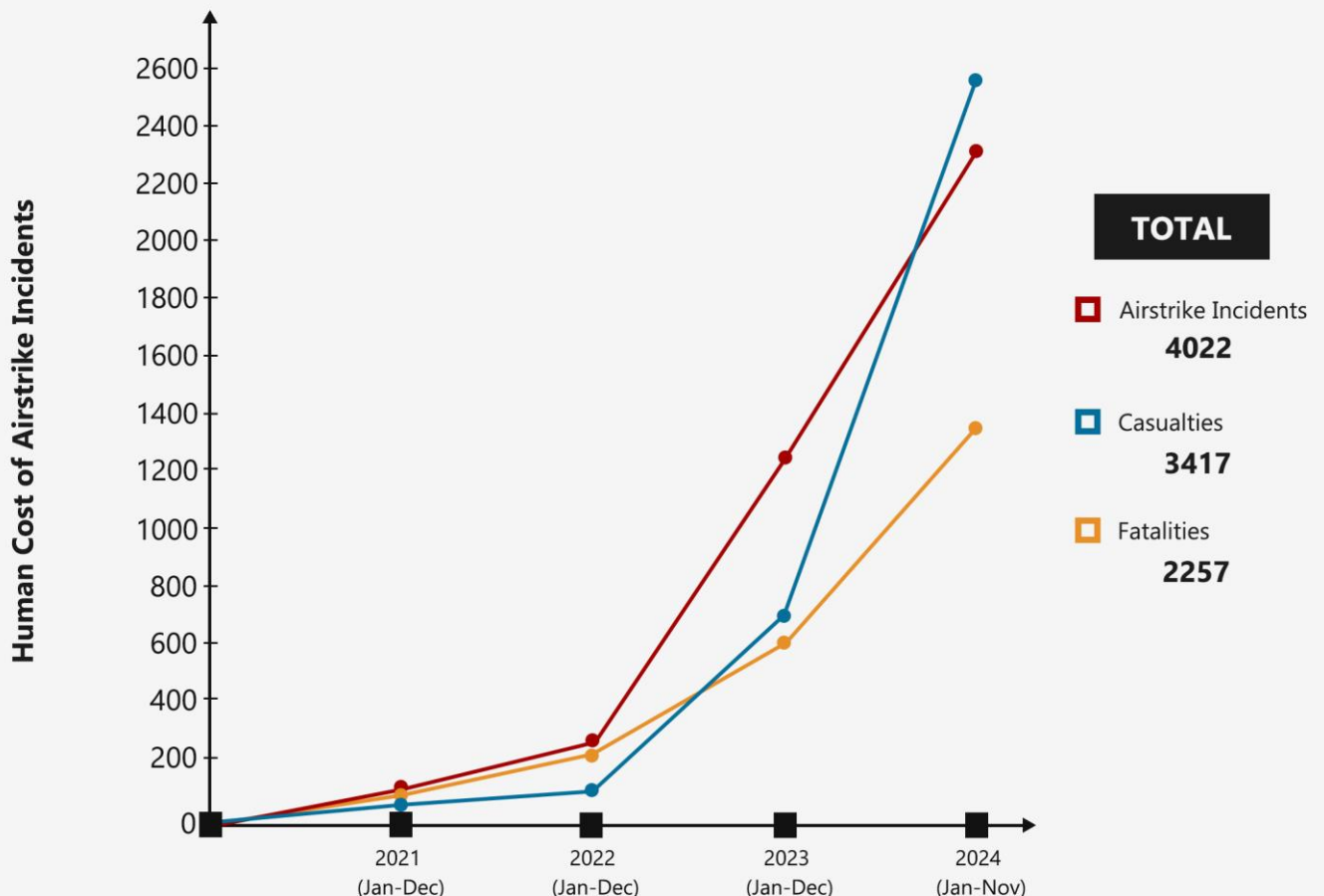
<sup>15</sup> Progressive Voice. (2024, Oct 13). *China's Complicity in Junta's Airstrikes*. Retrieved from: <https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2024/10/13/chinas-complicity-in-juntas-airstrikes/>



# Devastating Impacts of Airstrikes

Airstrikes against civilians have escalated over the past years since the Myanmar military staged a coup.<sup>16</sup> Recently in 2024, 17 civilians died including nine children while they were gathering at a church in Sagaing Region due to the indiscriminate airstrikes. Similarly, in early September 2024, Myanmar military warplanes significantly targeted schools, hospitals and dispensaries, bazaars, towns, and Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps in the contested area. It is clear that the Myanmar military is primarily targeting civilians to instill fear among the people and suppress any resistance against their dictatorship by destroying people’s lives, property, livelihoods, and basic necessities through airstrikes.

The country’s healthcare system faces destruction as the Myanmar military deliberately carries out airstrikes on hospitals, clinics, and medical facilities. In September 2024, Myanmar military launched airstrikes on a medical facility, built for prisoners of war (POWs), in Pauktaw Township of Rakhine State.<sup>17</sup> While medicine supplies in rural areas are already limited, the destruction of infrastructure by Myanmar military airstrikes has also disrupted the supply chain of medical equipment and other kinds of health support. IDPs are facing dire consequences of not only the airstrikes but also the constant hovering of fighter jets in the sky since airstrikes could happen anytime. This has forced people into temporary shelters with no proper health and education. In addition, children lose access to safe learning environments since schools cannot be run ordinarily due to airstrikes and the hovering of fighter jets in the sky.



<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2024, Jan 30). Myanmar: Military Abuses Against Civilians Intensify. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/30/myanmar-military-abuses-against-civilians-intensify>

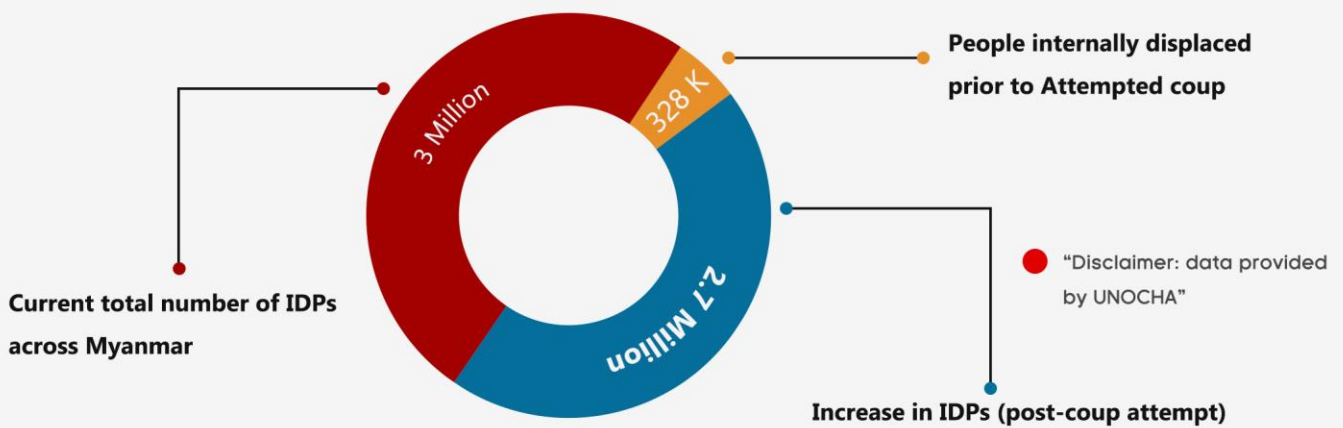
<sup>17</sup> BNL. (2024, Sep 09). Junta airstrike hits AA PoW medical centre. Retrieved from: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/junta-airstrike-hits-aa-pow-medical-centre>



# Voices from the Ground: Living Through Airstrikes in Myanmar

Based on our interviews with people volunteering closely on the ground in delivering aid, teaching, and providing medical treatment, IDPs, air strike survivors in Chin, northern Shan, Karenni states, and Sagaing region, the following sections will highlight numerous challenges faced by both host communities and IDPs in Myanmar due to indiscriminate airstrikes.

**Increase in IDPs Following the 2021 Attempted Coup**



At least 4,004,713 people are internally displaced following the attempted coup and facing myriad challenges, including but not limited to shelter, health, education and livelihood.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, key figures from the UN indicate the increase in number of IDPs at about 2.7 million across the country compared to the prior to the attempted coup in 2021.<sup>19</sup> IDP camps, villages, schools, hospitals, and even religious sites where IDPs have temporarily taken shelter have been bombed, forcing entire IDP communities to leave with no supply of food or access to markets. IDPs and people living in contested areas are living in fear of losing loved ones and their homes from the junta's aerial bombings.

“Now, I have this constant fear .... I want to take my son wherever I go. Because if I die during the airstrikes, my son would be left alone with no one in the world. If my son's place is bombed in my absence, I will never be able to forgive myself ....”



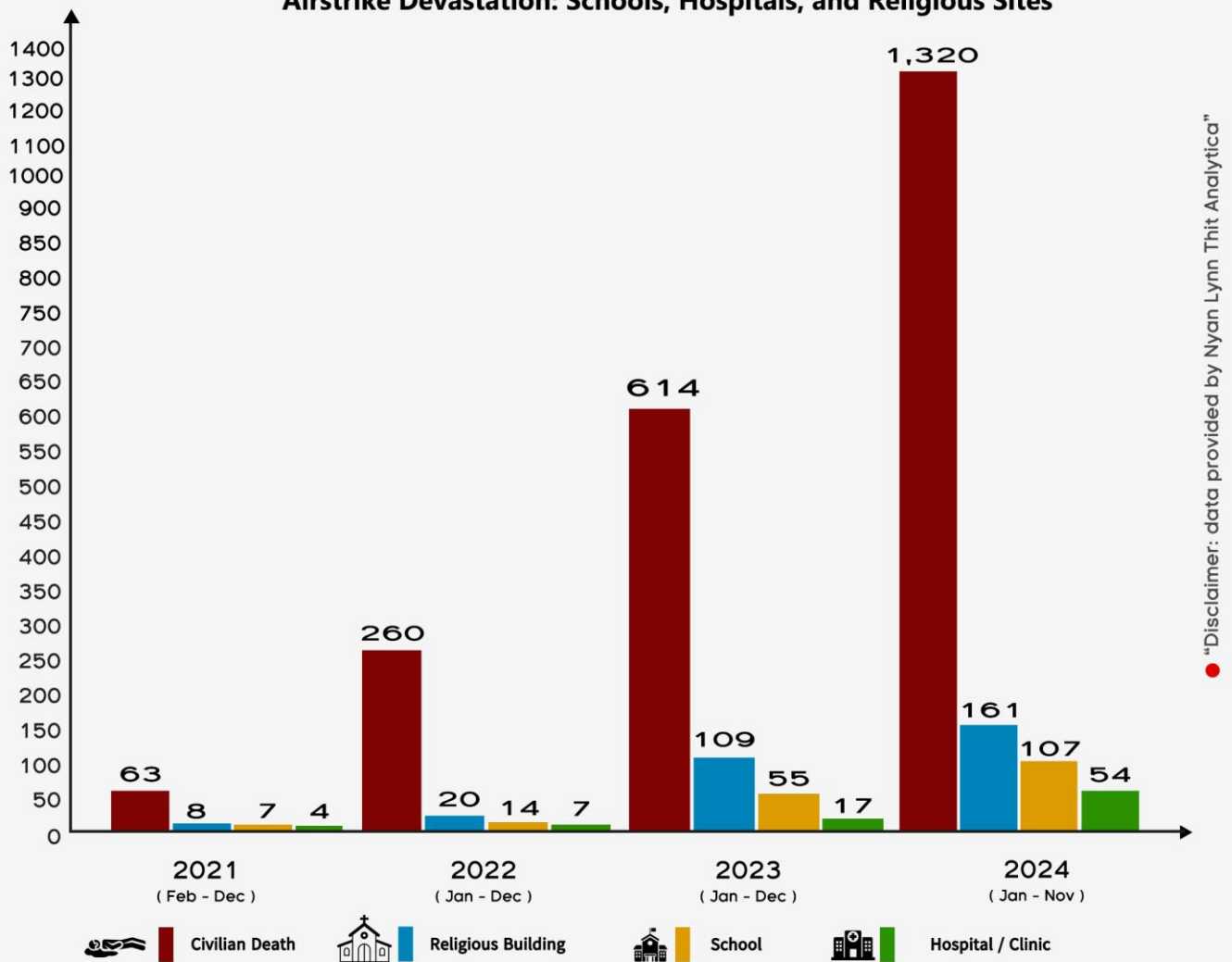
- A Mother of One from Sagaing Region

<sup>18</sup> ISP. (2023, Nov 28). *All Armed and on the Verge of Breakdown*. Retrieved from: <https://ispmyanmar.com/ie-28/>

<sup>19</sup> OCHA. (2024, Apr 05). *Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 37 | 5 April 2024*.

<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-37-5-april-2024>; OCHA. (2024, Oct 10). *Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 41*. <https://myanmar.un.org/en/280897-myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-41>

**Airstrike Devastation: Schools, Hospitals, and Religious Sites**



The number of airstrikes has dramatically increased across states and regions where ethnic resistance organizations (EROs) have come together with People’s Defense Forces (PDFs) to resist military dictatorship. The situation of access to shelter for IDPs has exacerbated since IDPs live in forests or remote areas, constantly on the move to avoid further military aerial attacks. Moreover, both IDPs and host communities in contested areas are prone to vast vulnerabilities and are often used as human shields by the Myanmar military.

**A Special Rapporteur** on the situation of human rights in Myanmar in 2022 also presented in his report on Myanmar military’s violent attacks against civilians including human shields.<sup>20</sup> In terms of long-term challenges, disruption of education, loss of livelihood and socio-economic marginalization have led disadvantaged groups to exploitation, and increased poverty. Human security of the people of Myanmar is at risk, especially women and children are highly exposed to human trafficking, drug smuggling and sex exploitation.<sup>21</sup> Frontier also reported the increased numbers of IDP human trafficking since the attempted coup.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> UNHRC. (2022, Mar 16). *A/HRC/49/76: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc4976-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-myanmar-thomas>

<sup>21</sup> UNHRC. (2024, Jul 02). *Courage amid crisis: Gendered impacts of the coup and the pursuit of gender equality in Myanmar - Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (A/HRC/56/CRP.8)*. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/courage-amid-crisis-gendered-impacts-coup-and-pursuit-gender-equality-myanmar-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-myanmar-ahrc56crp8>

<sup>22</sup> Frontier. (2023, Oct 24). *Desperate IDPs fall prey to human traffickers*. Retrieved from: <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/desperate-idps-fall-prey-to-human-traffickers/>

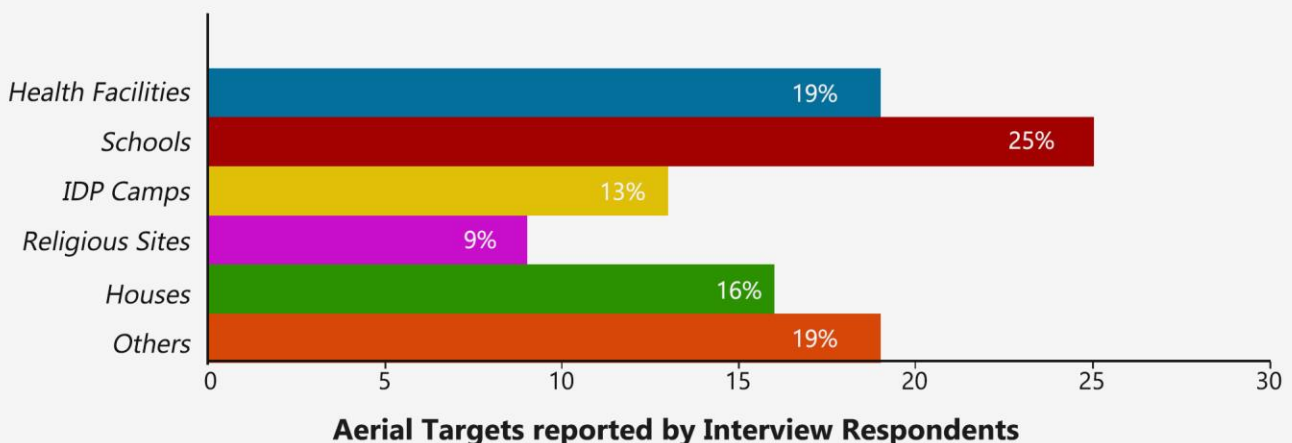


Respondents who lived and currently working on the ground in conflict-affected areas noted that one of the main reasons for displacement includes not only clashes but also airstrikes. When asked about the targets of military airstrikes in their area, respondents indicated that 25 per cent of the bombings targeted schools, 19 per cent targeted health facilities, and another 19 per cent targeted crowds, religious, and social events. One respondent from Chin State elaborated more on the aerial bombing on the school and hospital, accentuating the military indiscriminate attacks on civilians.

**“We have over 180 schools in our areas and the Myanmar military has already destroyed 24 schools through its aerial attacks..... Similarly, the military attacked Mindat hospital which both people from Chin State and nearby areas rely on ..... ”**



- An IDP and Airstrike survivor from Chin State



Moreover, these airstrikes have caused serious damage to the mental health of the people of Myanmar. When asked if they feel safe living in their current location, Ten respondents distinctly noted that they do not feel safe in their current location. They described how aerial bombs and heavy artilleries can fall on their heads at any time. For instance, an IDP from Northern Shan State shared his feeling of being terrified and shaking as he ran away from the plane, praying for his life. This fear follows the civilians everywhere they are displaced and hence, living in grief and loss due to life-threatening aerial attacks that disrupt their lives and impose various challenges to access basic needs.

“Even when I sleep at night, I sleep with fear. If I hear the sound of a plane, fear sets in my mind. There is no such thing as feeling safe for us at all.”



- an IDP who is helping the community with education and assisting doctors in providing medical treatment to the airstrike survivors from Karenni State

## Impact of Airstrikes on Rural Livelihoods and Food Scarcity

Widespread destruction of farmland and the loss of livestock such as buffaloes and cattle have become common in rural Myanmar due to the Myanmar military's airstrikes. According to the World Bank in 2023, Myanmar's rural population is about 67.89% of the total population, which indicates the significant majority of total population.<sup>23</sup> While the rural population mostly relies on agriculture, the constant fear of aerial bombings has forced many to be displaced frequently in temporary shelters and the forest. This has disrupted the food supply chain among communities who live in remote areas. Moreover, Interviews with locals emphasize that at least 200-600 villagers from big villages and at least 40-100 people from small villages are displaced due to the fighter jets hovering above the sky in their surrounding areas.

<sup>23</sup> The World Bank. (2023). *Rural Population*. Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=MM>



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**“ I went to a place where I saw 500-pound bombs fall on a farm through an aerial attack and then there was a huge hole in their farm.”**

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- An IDP and Airstrike survivor from Chin State

The displacement happened quite frequently since the respondents noted the fighter jets flew at least 15 minutes and sometimes extended to 2-7 times a day to their knowledge. Respondents were displaced from periods lasting one week to three months in temporary shelters due to airstrikes. Moreover, Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica (2024) revealed the average of six airstrike incidents per day, with 2,613 airstrikes in just the first four months of 2024. In light of the above-mentioned data, the impact of airstrikes extends not only to the destruction of farmland and livestock due to the bombs, but also the disruption of whole agribusinesses and its supply chains. For instance, one respondent from Chin State mentioned that the trucks are reluctant to transport agricultural equipment, including seeds, because they are threatened by unpredictable airstrikes targeting crowds.

Moreover, since the Myanmar military is targeting the food rations through aerial attacks, two respondents mentioned that the storage areas are also intentionally targeted by aerial bombs, resulting in the damage of agricultural supplies and agricultural products.

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**“Many people from this area who work as farmers sometimes lose their livelihood because of constant displacement where all the farms and possessions are frequently abandoned by them and they cannot farm well ..... What is worse is that they have to be displaced because of the airstrikes.”**

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- An airstrike survivor and CDM teacher from Karenni State

Respondents also highlighted airstrikes as one of the main challenges towards farming. Many farmers cannot proceed with sowing, fertilizing the ground and crops, mowing, harvesting, and planting with fighter jets flying over their heads. People frequently abandon their farms and are displaced under the threat of aerial bombardment which leads to the destruction of plants and crops in their absence. Moreover, the farmers who lost their capital invested in farm animals, crops, and fertilizer faced a major impact on their economic circumstances. Airstrikes have worsened and made it impossible for farmers who rely on seasonal crops. Five respondents from Chin State and Karenni State mentioned that airstrikes hinder the cultivation of seasonal crops to some extent due to constant displacement and the hovering of aerial jets above their heads.

“The impact of the Airstrikes are very obvious in the case of Mindat. People from Mindat Township had to flee for fear of airstrikes all the time. But this constant displacement caused huge disruption to seasonal cultivation.”



- An airstrike survivor and CDM teacher from Chin State

“As for the drivers who transport goods, they stop transporting goods if there are airstrikes going on in their area. If that happens, their income is also destroyed.”



- A person who works and helps with humanitarian aid organizations to deliver aids from Karenni State

Apart from agribusiness, the disruption of employment has worsened the economic instability for the people in rural Myanmar.

Offices, hospitals and schools are often closed due to Myanmar military's indiscriminate aerial attacks, leading to a loss of income for those in the medical profession, teachers and other kinds of professions. Hard labor including but not limited to manufacturing, or construction services is one of the common income-earning activities in rural Myanmar.<sup>24</sup> While employment opportunities in rural Myanmar are already scarce, continuous airstrikes targeting crowds threaten the few job opportunities that are left. Moreover, the logistics and supply chains face myriad disruptions as truck drivers have struggled amidst armed clashes and airstrikes. This has not only limited the availability of essential commodities but also affected the income of truck drivers. In addition, the fear of airstrikes forces market vendors to either close their businesses or relocate frequently, leading to instability and loss of income.

<sup>24</sup> The World Bank. (2018, Sep 04). *Myanmar's Future Jobs : Embracing Modernity : Main Report (English)*. Retrieved from: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/958621536141390299/main-report>



Loss of crops and little or no employment opportunities affect the income that has imposed threats to food security of the people in rural Myanmar. Moreover, assets such as livestock, and possessions such as money and basic commodities have been destroyed during airstrikes. While the Myanmar military is widely applying the “four-cuts” strategy in contested areas,<sup>25</sup> they incorporated their brutal strategy with indiscriminate airstrikes to disrupt the logistics and supply chain of goods. One respondent noted that six civilians died due to airstrikes during the transfer of goods at the border of Paletwa township and Mindat Township where goods and food commodities are distributed to the nearby towns.

Hence, this continuous targeting against good distribution hubs halt the flow of goods and disrupt the basic supplies. While there are myriad food supply chain challenges including but not limited to high commodity prices, poor road infrastructure and tight security checkpoints, intentional airstrike targeting crowds has also deterred civilians from selling goods in the market regularly. Moreover, one respondent reported the intentional military’s airstrike onto the place where basic food and necessities for IDPs are being stored. This has led to the damage of basic food and supplies which worsened the situation of humanitarian crisis.

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**“There is support for rice, oil, etc. from some organizations. Even in such cases, Myanmar military carried out airstrikes intentionally onto the places where the local organizations are supporting IDPs. So, there was a lot of damage to the basic necessities.”**

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- an IDP and airstrike survivor from Chin State

<sup>25</sup> UN Human Rights Office. (2023, Mar 03). *Military’s ‘four cuts’ doctrine drives perpetual human rights crisis in Myanmar*. Retrieved from: *Military’s ‘four cuts’ doctrine drives perpetual human rights crisis in Myanmar, says UN report | OHCHR*

# Destruction of Airstrikes in Conflict-Affected Area

## Education

When asked if there is any destruction of schools in their area due to airstrikes, respondents from the areas where the interview was conducted reported that airstrikes have destroyed between three and twenty schools in their regions. Moreover, Myanmar Witness (2024) documented 174 distinct incidents of violence targeting educational institutions since the February 2021 attempted coup.<sup>26</sup> The intentional and indiscriminate airstrikes have led to the significant destruction of infrastructure, stationary and school aid and the loss of innocent teachers and children's lives.

All of the respondents noted that the Myanmar military attacked schools at least one time in their area while children were inside the school. Among them, two respondents from Karenni State witnessed children being severely injured, with at least one child having died in their respective townships during the past two or three months due to the aerial attack. In addition, at least 11 children were found dead after the military's aerial bombardment in the Sagaing region.<sup>27</sup> UNICEF also issued a statement on junta airstrikes against a school in Karenni State, resulting in the death of four children and many injured, with more than 100 children in school at the time of the strikes.<sup>28</sup>

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**Myanmar military carried out airstrikes against two different schools on the same day and six children from one of the targeted schools were severely injured and died”**

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- an IDP who is helping the community with education and assisting doctors in providing medical treatment to the airstrike survivors from Karenni State

Due to these aerial attacks, trauma associated with witnessing or experiencing airstrikes can have a long-lasting psychological damage on children. The majority of respondents also noted the trauma and insecurity felt by children and families while studying at schools in conflict-affected areas. Moreover, there is the disruption of education due to airstrikes and clashes in which schools cannot be opened regularly due to constant displacement. Airstrikes have become one of the primary challenges for children to continue their studies safely and as a consequence, families stopped sending their children to schools or students dropped out.

<sup>26</sup> Myanmar Witness. (2024, Jul 20). *Schools caught in the crossfire*. Retrieved from: <https://www.info-res.org/myanmar-witness/reports/schools-caught-in-the-crossfire/>

<sup>27</sup> BBC. (2022, Sep 20). *Children killed after Myanmar army helicopters fire at school*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62967014>

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF. (2024, Feb 07). *Statement on the deaths of children in air attacks on schools in eastern Myanmar*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/press-releases/statement-air-strike-two-schools-myanmar>



One respondent from Chin State noted that it is hard to convince parents after every airstrike to send their children back to school. The significant interruptions in the educational journey of many children leads to lower educational attainment and higher school dropout rates in the long term.

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**“Both children and parents have been traumatized, and some parents don't even want to send their children to school anymore.”**

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- An airstrike survivor from Karenni State

## Healthcare



Similarly, the Myanmar military is also targeting healthcare facilities in order to intimidate and oppress civilians for resisting dictatorship. The National Unity Government (NUG) has documented that about 343 hospitals and clinics have been destroyed and 104 health workers have been killed by the Myanmar military.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, respondents reported that airstrikes have destroyed between one and ten healthcare facilities in their respective areas. While there are already limited medicines and medical equipment available in conflict-affected areas, airstrikes have destroyed what is available. Two respondents from Chin and Karenni State noted that clashes and transportation challenges have made it very difficult to purchase or import medicine and medical equipment. This has increased healthcare practitioners' concerns about airstrikes destroying these essential supplies. The destruction of healthcare infrastructure has limited the services which created myriad challenges for civilians to access services.

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**“Since airstrikes are completely unpredictable, health workers no longer dare to provide services. It is hard to open clinics in the village with proper infrastructure because of the airstrikes. That's why there is a loss of healthcare workers too”**

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- An airstrike survivor and CDM teacher from Chin State

<sup>29</sup> The Irrawaddy. (2024, May 08). 'Apocalypse': Myanmar Doctor Describes Deadly Junta Airstrike on Mindat Hospital. Retrieved from: [https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/apocalypse-myanmar-doctor-describes-deadly-junta-airstrike-on-mindat-hospital.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/apocalypse-myanmar-doctor-describes-deadly-junta-airstrike-on-mindat-hospital.html#google_vignette)

According to responses, the disruption of healthcare services lasts from one week to six months as healthcare facilities are reconstructed and medical equipment and medicine are repurchased. Since there are also financial constraints, it is hard to recover healthcare services in a short time. The psychological toll of living under the threat of airstrikes has also become one of the challenges for healthcare workers to continue their service in healthcare facilities. The Myanmar military's indiscriminate targeting of civilians has also deterred both patients and healthcare workers from receiving and providing medical treatment safely. Respondents noted that although healthcare workers tried to avoid airstrikes by providing healthcare services in remote areas, it has become a challenge for civilians to reach healthcare facilities. In some cases, healthcare workers have to stop their provision of services in order to recover from psychological distress imposed by airstrikes.

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**“There are always crowds when people come to receive medical treatment. For example, there are at least 10 - 15 people who come to the clinic from different villages. But people do not feel safe in the crowds due to airstrikes.”**

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- An airstrike survivor and  
CDM teacher from Chin State

## Recommendations

### State's Obligations

**International governments** must impose immediate sanctions on the export, sale, or transfer of aviation fuel to Myanmar. United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in April 2024, passed a resolution on Myanmar urging member states to abstain from exporting, selling, or transferring aviation fuel to the country. Hence, as member states of the United Nations, especially the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, the European Union (EU), ASEAN members, China, and India are obliged to stop assisting the Myanmar military in receiving aviation fuel.



**Establish international monitoring mechanisms** to track and impose sanctions on entities supplying aviation fuel to Myanmar despite sanctions. Because Amnesty International in their latest report revealed that at least seven shipments have been made with the help of intermediaries to evade sanctions. Hence, UN member states to expedite and make public ongoing investigations and monitoring to track international entities supplying aviation fuel to Myanmar despite sanctions.

**UN member states** should strictly follow and enforce existing sanctions that require any persons or entities to stop fueling blatant airstrikes against civilians by the Myanmar military junta. That being said, it is crucial to make sure that the existing sanctions are effectively executed to influence behavior or policy changes that will deter Myanmar military from accessing aviation fuel.

**EU governments**, especially French, Germany, Spain and Netherland governments should ensure that Airbus acts in accordance with its human rights responsibilities by using its leverage to stop AviChina's business with the Myanmar military. If the business continues, ensure that Airbus takes steps to divest from AVIC which continues to transfer AVIC aircraft or associated equipment.

**The government of the United States, the EU and ASEAN** to take action on the Myanmar military's access to the supply chain of aviation fuel by working with civil societies, investigative research institutes, and human rights advocates to monitor the shipping routes and storage facilities in order to adopt due diligence processes for end-user certification. This includes, but is not limited to, Chinese-flagged ship HUITONG78, Vietnamese petroleum storage terminal operator Hai Linh Co.Ltd, Chinese state-owned entity (SOE) CNOOC Trading (Singapore) Pte. Ltd., Singapore-based Sahara Energy International Pte. Ltd.

## Corporate Accountabilities

- **International companies** to Immediately cease all direct and indirect business related to the export, sale or transport of aviation fuel for Myanmar and their relationship with Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) that is controlled by Myanmar military and the pivot of the aviation fuel supply chain to the country.
  - **Ensure that** the insurance firms that provide crucial insurance for the transportation of aviation fuel, and other relevant international and local business entities are in compliance with sanctions imposed on aviation fuel to Myanmar.
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- **Due to the risks associated with AVIC's access to Airbus technology**, we recommend that Airbus SE (European aerospace corporation) investigate the end-use of Airbus technology and products to make sure there are no potential military applications of Airbus technology by AVIC.
- **Use Airbus' leverage over AVIC and its subsidiaries** so that they halt all ongoing and planned transfers of military aircraft, arms and associated equipment to the Myanmar military and cease any ongoing or committed maintenance, repair and overhaul on supplied aircraft.

## Conclusion

Access to social services and livelihood opportunities are facing dreadful impacts due to indiscriminate or intentional airstrikes has become one of the main factors following the attempted coup in Myanmar. According to ACLED (2024), airstrikes have increased each year since the attempted coup in 2021.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, this report aims to assess the on-ground realities of civilian life devastation in Myanmar caused by the Myanmar military's indiscriminate aerial attacks. Findings reveal that the Myanmar military is using its last resort to attack civilians in order to repress the resistance, which cost lives of the people of Myanmar including children and exposed to food scarcity, limited social services and little or no livelihood opportunities for the people in contested areas of Myanmar. Therefore, It is really important to take careful consideration of the devastating impacts of airstrikes on the people of Myanmar.

The disruption of public services evidently exacerbates the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. Junta airstrikes have caused widespread destruction to education and healthcare infrastructure, farmland, and houses, increasing vulnerability to people in conflict-affected areas who are already facing immense challenges. Hence, the airstrikes and constant hovering of fighter jets have not only caused immediate physical destruction but have also led to dire consequences for fundamental social rights for communities in Myanmar, such as access to social services and livelihood opportunities. Addressing these issues requires urgent sanctions on aviation fuel from the necessary international governments, implementing effective mechanisms to track and stop the transfer of aviation fuel to Myanmar, and encouraging businesses to collaborate with international bodies and governments to halt aviation fuel imports to Myanmar.

<sup>30</sup> ACLED. (2024). *Conflict Data (Myanmar)*. Retrieved from: <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>