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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Around 6,000 villagers forced to flee township in Myanmar's Sagaing region

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's military is carrying on its campaign to seize control of townships in northern Sagaing region, torching buildings and forcing around 6,000 locals to flee Khin-U, residents told RFA on Monday.

An official of Khin-U township's Right Information Group told RFA that a total of 15 villages in the township were raided by two military columns.

The man, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said nearly 3,500 residents in the northeastern part and 2,500 in the southwestern part of Khin-U township abandoned their homes ahead of the military raids.

A resident of Khin-U's Ah Lel Sho village told RFA troops killed livestock and captured locals.

"Four cows and two pigs were slaughtered, and five people were arrested. I think they have to carry the packs. Three people were in their 20s and two in their 60s," said the local who declined to be named for fear of reprisals.

"Now, the junta troops are burning down Yauk Thwar Aing village to the south of Ah Lel Sho. I can see the smoke in the distance but I can't get close because of the troops."

Residents of Chan Thar Kone village said a 60-year-old man, Than Win, was shot and injured while he bumped into a military junta column on July 1.

Meanwhile, residents of neighboring Shwebo township said troops shot dead two local men. They said the bodies were discovered after a column of around 40 troops withdrew on Saturday.

"Two people were shot dead near a rest tent in Kawt village in the eastern part of Shwebo. That was the route the junta took when it carried out its offensive," said a local who didn't want to be named for security reasons,

"It's not yet known who they were or where they were from. The bodies were still there on Monday morning."

RFA called the junta spokesperson for Sagaing region, Saw Naing, on Sunday and Monday regarding the arson attacks and killings, but he did not answer.

More than 1.5 million civilians have fled their homes since the Feb. 1, 2021 coup, according to the United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). It said around 765,200 were from Sagaing region.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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Sagaing region: Military continued its campaign to seize control of townships in the region, torching buildings and forcing around 6,000 locals to flee

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Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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Document #2094550

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

International aid groups still unable to deliver supplies to Cyclone Mocha victims

By RFA Burmese

Nearly two months after Cyclone Mocha devastated Myanmar's Rakhine state, international organizations are still unable to travel to affected areas to provide humanitarian aid.

The acting head of the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Danielle Parry, met with the junta's minister of relief and resettlement on Tuesday in the capital Naypyidaw to discuss delivery of relief supplies.

The meeting followed a U.N. announcement on June 22 that relief activities for cyclone victims have been delayed because of the junta's decision earlier in June to stop giving practical assistance and permission to travel to humanitarian aid groups, according to the junta-controlled Myanma Alinn Daily.

The announcement from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also said that they are negotiating with junta authorities in Naypyidaw and state level government officials to get a wide range of access to Rakhine.

Cyclone Mocha – one of the worst cyclones to hit Myanmar in a decade – made landfall on May 14 with sustained winds reaching over 220 kilometers per hour (137 mph), killing more than 400 people and leaving widespread destruction.

In the weeks after the storm, aid workers told Radio Free Asia that more than 90% of houses and buildings in northern Rakhine were damaged by the storm.

The U.N. said last month that it's prepared to provide shelters and relief materials for 1.6 million people in Rakhine, but has so far only been able

to assist 110,000 people.

A Rohingya refugee in the Dar Paing refugee camp said there has been no international support in the camps.

"Nothing has been done about the shelters in the IDP camps so far. They are also facing food shortages," the refugee told RFA. The news that international support will come does not reach this area. Their support has not reached this side of the state yet."

'We do not expect that the help will arrive'

In early June, junta officials issued a blanket ban on transportation for aid groups operating in Rakhine. A June 7 announcement mandated that all international humanitarian aid, including U.N. assistance, be donated through the junta.

Cyclone victims are going to have to try to survive on their own now, a person in charge of a local help group in Rakhine's capital, in Sittwe, told RFA.

"Many of our people have lost hope in international aid," he said. "We do not expect that the help will arrive to us."

RFA called junta spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun regarding whether organizations will be able to provide direct international aid to the cyclone victims, but he did not respond.

It is customary for outsider organizations to communicate with the government that is currently in power before providing assistance inside the country, said Thein Tun Oo, executive director of the Thayninga Institute for Strategic Studies, which is made up of former military officers.

"In the shortest and simplest terms, the military is the ruling government of the country that holds these sovereign powers," he said.

The junta is intentionally preventing humanitarian aid from reaching those who really need it, said Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of the shadow National Unity Government.

"The military council treats the refugee people as their enemies and has no compassion for them as humans," he said.

Translated by Myo Min Aung. Edited by Matt Reed.

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Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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Document #2094815

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta planning to build 2 new prisons for political activists

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's ruling junta is building two new prisons for political prisoners, an indication it could be planning for more arrests of pro-democracy activists and others who oppose the military regime.

One of the new prisons is under construction in Mawlamyine township of Mon state and is nearing completion, a junta official who refused to be named told Radio Free Asia. The other will be built in Patheingyi township of Ayeyarwady region, according to top military officials and sources close to the prison department.

The Mawlamyine prison is located in a sparsely populated area with dense forest, which could make it easier to conduct torture, according to an official of the anti-regime Mon State Revolutionary Organization, or MSRO, who refused to be named for security reasons.

"The junta is building new prisons as a threat to the people," he told RFA. "I believe that the junta intentionally chose the remote places that would be good for keeping the news in the dark and covering its tracks."

The Mawlamyine prison will likely include revolutionary activists, political prisoners, innocent citizens who have been arbitrarily detained and people charged under a broad and vague anti-state provision of the country's Penal Code that penalizes "incitement" and "false news," the MSRO official said.

Three layers of security

The junta has arrested and jailed thousands of pro-democracy activists since taking power in a coup d'état on Feb. 1, 2021. Currently, most political prisoners are mixed in with other prisoners at facilities run by the regime's prison department.

There have been three prison breaks since the coup – including an escape in May in which 10 prisoners broke out of Taungoo Prison in Bago region.

After two political prisoners ran away from Kayin state's Hpa-An Prison last year, the junta built a new brick wall, a new watch tower and military bunkers.

The two new prisons will be run by the military, sources close to the prison department said.

The junta's Mon state prime minister, Aung Kyi Thien, said in a statement on June 23 that he recently visited and inspected the new two-story Mawlamyine prison, which had dining halls, staff quarters and three layers of security.

Officials plan to transfer youth prisoners from two other prisons to Mawlamyine, according to a person close to the prison department, who asked not to be named for security reasons.

"The junta is going to systematically tighten its control of the political prisoners in the newly built prison," he said "The military is going to directly run the prison so that the political prisoners cannot have any leniency."

Transfers and possibly more arrests

Four local residents in Ayeyarwady region, including a former political prisoner, told RFA that the Patheingyi prison will be built with a 5.4 meter-high (18-feet) brick fence and a security tower near the southwest military headquarters.

The land plot to build them on is already being cleared, a local resident said.

An official from a mailing group that assists political prisoners told RFA that there could be more arrests after the new prisons begin operating.

"The construction of a new prison is, in my personal opinion, not just to keep politicians in isolation. I think they've built a new prison to transfer prisoners from other prisons, for example from Insein or Obo prisons," he said, referring to facilities located in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar's two largest cities.

RFA contacted the junta's Mon state spokesman, Toe Win, and Ayeyarwady region spokesman Maung Maung Than by telephone to ask about the prison projects, but they did not respond.

Prison department spokesman Naing Win also didn't answer RFA's telephone call.

Since the 2021 coup, the junta has released more than 70,000 prisoners in 12 announced prison amnesties. But just 2,000 of those released were political prisoners, according to statistics compiled by the Thailand-based monitoring group, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

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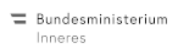
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Austrian Centre for
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Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar's junta accuses People's Defense Force of killing 15 civilians

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's junta has accused a Sagaing region People's Defense Force of killing 15 civilians in an attack on a village, a state news agency reported Thursday.

Locals confirmed to RFA that fighting between junta troops and the local defense force broke out on Wednesday morning at Ngwe Twin village in Ayadaw township.

People Media, a news agency of the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, said the defense force fired hand-made mortars, killing 15 locals – including a 12-year-old – at a monastery. It said seven people, including three monks, were also injured.

The report did not give the names and ages of the alleged casualties but said the injured were being treated at the Monywa Military Hospital.

RFA has not been able to confirm the report.

Ngwe Twin village is occupied by several junta-backed militia groups and residents say the local People's Defense Force often attacks because the army is also stationed there.

When RFA asked the defense force based in Ayadaw township about alleged deaths, the information officer confirmed the attack on Ngwe Twin village but said it targeted a Pyu Saw Htee militia base.

"There could have been [civilian] casualties," said the man who declined to be named for security reasons.

"There was some resistance against us when fighting broke out at the monastery. Almost all of them were Pyu Saw Htee. But some unrelated people may have been affected. We expected this and moved elderly

people into their homes to minimize [civilian casualties] when we entered the village.”

He declined to confirm the reported mortar attack, citing the need for security.

The People’s Defense Force did issue a statement claiming responsibility for a June 20 attack on the village and Pyu Saw Htee camp in which it used drones to drop bombs.

More than 8,000 people have been killed across Myanmar due to armed clashes following the February 2021 military coup according to reports last month by independent research group ISP (Myanmar) and the Oslo Peace Center.

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Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar military shoots street vendors in Sagaing region township

By RFA Burmese

Junta troops opened fire on street vendors in Sagaing region's Wetlet township, killing seven and critically injuring another six, locals told RFA Friday.

An army convoy opened fire on market stallholders as they headed to Shwe Pan Kone village around dawn Thursday according to a resident who didn't want to be named for security reasons.

"They are ordinary civilian vendors who come to Shwe Pan Kone village," said the local.

"They came by cars and motorbikes which were fired on by a junta column ... between Shwe Pan Kone and Tha Ma Yoe villages. They were brutally murdered."

The local said he didn't know why the column opened fire on civilians.

Residents identified the dead – four women and three men – as 57-year-old Hnin Hlaing; 46-year-old Pwe Li; 40-year-old Aye Nu Win, 30-year-old Phyu Phyu San; 62-year-old Thein Hlaing; 55-year-old Poe Lwin; and 27-year-old Lwin Moe.

The six critically injured included a 29-year-old pregnant woman and a 65-year-old man.

The daughter of Hnin Hlaing, told RFA she was shocked by the attack.

"My mother sold vegetables, Losing my mother is a great loss," she said.

"An innocent civilian was shot, not just one gunshot, she was hit by many bullets."

The dead were cremated on Thursday, locals told RFA.

They said the injured are being treated at the clinics set up by the shadow National Unity Government, which has given the equivalent of U.S.\$50 to families of the dead and \$25 to the injured.

Residents said the army column continued onto Tha Ma Yoe village, capturing around 30 locals, who had not been heard from as of Friday afternoon.

Tha Ma Yoe was also raided by the junta in March this year, with troops torching many of the houses there.

The junta has not issued a statement on the latest attack and RFA's calls to its Sagaing region spokesperson, Saw Naing, went unanswered Friday.

At least 3,750 pro-democracy activists and civilians have been killed since the February 2021 coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

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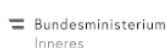
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Austrian Centre for
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Jet attack kills 3 civilians in Myanmar's Chin state

By RFA Burmese

Junta jets dropped bombs on a village in Chin state, in the west of Myanmar, killing three people including a nine-year-old girl, the Mindat township People's Administration Group told RFA Monday.

Group spokesman Yaw Man said jets attacked Vung Khung village repeatedly on Saturday morning.

"They shot three times with fighter jets, dropped two 500-pound bombs, and fired with other weapons, sending the villagers running like the world was about to end," he said.

"There was a nursing mother who had left her baby behind and fled to another place. She was killed by a bomb that was dropped on the place where she was sheltering on the way home to pick up her baby. Her neighbor's nine-year-old child died next to her.

"The locals don't dare to live in the village anymore, so they are fleeing to their hill farms and other villages."

Yaw Man said a 65-year-old woman was also killed and a 50-year-old man injured in the attacks.

Locals said there was no reason for the raids because the junta had not been fighting with the Chinland Defense Force.

As well as attacking by air, infantry regiment 274, based in Mindat, fired long-range artillery at the village destroying the school and damaging 10 homes.

The junta has released no statement on the attack and junta Deputy Information Minister Major Gen. Zaw Min Tun did not answer his phone

when called by RFA on Monday.

Last month air attacks on Mindat and Thantlang townships destroyed a monastery and four houses.

RFA data show that 44 civilians have been killed by junta air attacks in Chin state since the February 2021 military coup.

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Chin state: Junta airstrikes on a village killed 3 people, among them a nine-year-old girl

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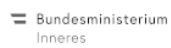
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(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2094811

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Prison chief 'died during interrogation' in Myanmar's Bago region

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's junta has arrested the head of Daik-U Central Prison in Bago region, along with seven of his staff, for allegedly helping inmates contact People's Defense Forces, sources close to the prison told RFA Tuesday.

Some of the sources said the warden died during interrogation but RFA was unable to confirm this.

The sources – who declined to be named for fear of reprisal – said the warden, Lt. Myo Htike, was arrested at the end of June for helping prisoners communicate with outsiders. He is being interrogated at the prison, along with the other arrested staff which include his deputy Yan Naing Tun, one of the sources said.

"Lieutenant Myo Htike is good-natured and is also willing to help, so he helps political prisoners with some issues," he said.

"Other workers were arrested for not knowing what the lieutenant was doing," said the source, adding that it's not yet known when the eight will appear in court.

RFA Burmese called Naing Win, the deputy director general of the junta prison department, regarding the arrests but he did not answer the phone.

On June 27, guards took 37 political prisoners out of the prison, saying they were being transferred elsewhere. Relatives and friends said seven of the prisoners were killed.

And in May, guards beat three Daik-U Central Prison inmates to death during the violent interrogation of 24 prisoners, accused of

communicating with members of the Bago People's Defense force, sources close to the prison told RFA at the time.

They said the injured, some in a critical condition, were put in a dark room with no food for four days.

Since May several more political prisoners at Thayarwady Prison in Bago region and Myingyan Prison in Mandalay region were also beaten to death during interrogation, while others have been critically injured according to family members and sources close to the prison, who all requested anonymity to protect prisoners and their relatives.

There was speculation that the interrogations took place in retaliation for a prison break at Taungoo Prison in Bago region on May 18. Inmates grabbed guns from prison guards and nine managed to escape into the jungle where they were met by members of a local People's Defense Force.

One of the escaped prisoners later told RFA they were originally trying to free Win Myint, the deposed president who is being held at Taungoo.

Almost 24,000 people have been arrested by the junta since the February 2021 military coup, with over 19,000 still in detention, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma).

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Bago region: Junta arrested the head of Daik-U Central Prison along with 7 of his staff for allegedly helping inmates contact People's Defense Forces (PDF); according to unconfirmed sources, the warden died during interrogation

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Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Junta airstrikes kill 2, injure 4 in Myanmar's Kayah state

By RFA Burmese

A junta fighter jet repeatedly strafed a village in Myanmar's Kayah state, killing an 11-year-old boy and injuring two more locals, local People's Defense Force Officials told RFA Wednesday.

The plane attacked Kyauk Su village three times on Tuesday night, said an information officer of Hpasawng township People's Defense Force who did not want to be named for security reasons.

"A jet fighter came and bombed at night," the official said.

"The injured are not seriously hurt. A Christian church and around six homes were also destroyed."

On Wednesday a jet attacked the Daw Noe Khu displaced people's camp on the Thai-Myanmar border, killing a 32-year-old man and injuring two women.

More than 4,000 people were sheltering at the camp, according to Karenni Progressive Party Joint Secretary, Aung San Myint.

"The jets came around 1:00 a.m. and dropped bombs four times," he said, adding that a school was destroyed by the bombing and a medical clinic and some houses were damaged.

People's Defense Force officials said that the junta is launching an offensive from Hpasawng township in order to fully control Mese township and is sending its forces to the region by air.

Hpasawng People's Defense Force said the army has had no opportunity to launch ground offensives so it relies on airstrikes and heavy artillery to attack civilian targets.

The junta has not released a statement on the attacks.

RFA called junta spokesperson for Kayah state Aung Win Oo by phone, but nobody answered.

On July 4, three civilians, including a two-year-old child were injured when the air force bombed a displaced people's camp in the western part of Demoso. The founder of the Karenni Human Rights Group, Ba Nyar, said that the attack was a war crime.

The junta has carried out 527 airstrikes in Moebye (Moe Bye), Pekon and Pinlaung townships in southern Shan state and Kayah state since the February 2021 coup, according to the latest figures released by Progressive Karenni People's Force.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095120

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Two days of junta attacks in Myanmar's Sagaing region leave 4 dead

By RFA Burmese

Junta forces targeted three Sagaing townships this week, killing four civilians and injuring 17, as they continued to try to impose martial law in the region, locals told RFA Friday.

On Wednesday the army turned its heavy artillery on Shwebo township, bombarding Tet Tu village twice, killing a man and injuring 11 people including a four-year-old child.

"The child was hit in the abdomen and another seven people were critically injured," said a local, who didn't want to be named for fear of reprisals. "The other three were slightly injured."

On Thursday the guns turned on Kale township, killing two people and injuring six.

"A heavy artillery shell hit a house in See San village, killing a couple in that house," said a local, who didn't want to be named for safety reasons. "A child and a woman near her house were also injured."

The other locals were injured in attacks on two neighboring villages.

Locals said troops shell their villages nearly every day, and mine explosions are also common.

The junta also sent ground troops into Wetlet township Thursday, burning around 100 homes. Locals said an elderly man died in his home in Thone Sint Kan village.

"The column spent the night in Thone Sint Kan village Wednesday night and troops torched the houses when they left on Thursday morning," said

a local, who also requested anonymity for safety reasons. "An old man who was paralyzed died in the fire."

Around 40 homes are still standing but residents have fled the village and say they are afraid to return home until troops have left.

The junta has released no statement on the incidents and junta spokesperson for Sagaing region, Saw Naing, did not return RFA's calls.

The junta placed Shwebo and Wetlet under martial law last February but has struggled to seize control of the townships.

Junta leader Senior Gen.Min Aung Hlaing told a military council meeting in Naypyidaw Thursday that he needed to step up security due to serious violence in Sagaing region, Chin and Kayah states.

The continuing violence has brought widespread international condemnation and calls on this year's Association of Southeast Nations chair Indonesia to put more pressure on ASEAN member Myanmar to end the fighting and restore democracy.

The latest came from U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Speaking on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Jakarta Friday, he said Myanmar's military rulers must be pushed to stop violence and implement the "five-point consensus" peace plan they agreed with the rest of the 10-member grouping two years ago.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: 4 civilians killed and 17 others injured in junta attacks

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(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095121

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Fighting between Myanmar's military and ethnic rebels in Kachin rages 13 days

By RFA Burmese

Fierce fighting between Myanmar's military junta and an ethnic rebel group in the country's northern Kachin state has raged for 13 days in a village close to the rebels' headquarters, people living near the area told Radio Free Asia.

The headquarters of the Kachin Independence Army, or KIA, is in Lai Zar, and the military attacked Nam Sang Yang village, roughly 9.6 kilometers (six miles) away, on July 2.

The ethnic army has been aiding anti-junta local militias and publicly supporting the shadow National Unity Government – made up of former civilian leaders and other junta opponents – since the Feb. 1, 2021 coup that overthrew the democratically elected government.

The fighting is the latest spasm of violence in Myanmar's civil war, which pits the country's military against an array of ethnic armies and civilians-turned-fighters that call themselves the People's Defense Force.

Sources told RFA that the fighting has been a daily occurrence, as junta forces attempt to take Nam Sang Yang, while the KIA defends it. They are waiting for forces from another armed ethnic group, the Arakan Army, or AA, to enter the fray.

Nam Sang Yang lies at about the halfway point between the cities of Myitkyina and Bhamo, and taking it is the key for the junta to regain control of the road that connects them, Col. Nawbu, a KIA soldier in charge of news and information, told Radio Free Asia's Burmese Service.

"The fighting started in early July, and the junta troops got reinforcements from Bhamo and Myitkyina," he said. "I think they are about a hundred

strong, but that's not an exact number. We cannot say for sure what strategies the enemy is using."

Nawbu said that he thought the junta's aim was to retake the section of the road, but had no idea if they also had plans to try to also take Lai Zar the KIA headquarters.

"Anything is possible," he said. "That's the nature of war. That's why we are on high alert."

10 battles

At least 10 separate battles have been fought over the past 13 days, with junta troops employing heavy artillery on a daily basis, Nawbu said. Casualties have occurred on both sides, but he was not able to confirm exact details.

Nawbu expects the fighting to intensify and continue for several more days as the military reinforces its troops.

Fighting along the road will be fierce, as members of both the AA and KIA are stationed there to defend against the junta, residents said.

Since July 3, the road has been closed by soldiers on either side, and resources are running low in Lai Zar, where the KIA makes its headquarters, a resident of the town, who refused to be named, told RFA.

"Many goods are out of stock here... there will be no food and essentials left in my store by the end of this month," she said. "I have to try to make sure I have something to sell."

Prices in Lai Zar are rising as items are harder to come by, the resident said.

Due to the fighting, people traveling to and from Myitkyina and Lai Zar have been trapped, and more than a thousand Nam Sang Yang residents have fled to Myitkyina, Waingmo and Lai Zar since the fighting began.

Airstrikes

Residents said the junta launched air strikes on nearby Ma Dee Yang village on the night of July 7, and they also fired heavy artillery in areas around Lai Zar.

"I think the fighting will get more intense according to what I recently heard," a resident of Lai Zar said on condition of anonymity for safety reasons. "They are still fighting now."

The Lai Zar resident said that he could hear gunshots and heavy artillery

shelling targeting the areas surrounding the town.

"These are sounds that are terrifying elderly people, children and pregnant mothers," he said.

We often hear the sound of heavy artillery shelling areas near Lai Zar. We hear gunshots off and on. The sounds of those shelling are terrifying for elderly people, children and pregnant mothers."

Win Ye Tun, social affairs minister and the junta's spokesman for Kachin state, told RFA that he did not know the situation of the fighting.

"I don't know about the battle. As I said before, we are helping people who have fled from there ... providing them with rice, oil, money and we also visit them to check on them," he said.

Meanwhile, Hla Kyaw Zaw, an expert on Myanmar affairs, said that the junta is focusing on KIA-controlled areas because they suspect that the KIA is helping militia groups called People's Defense Forces, or PDFs, formed by citizens opposed to military rule.

"Since the junta troops took a beating in Sagaing and other fronts, they might think that KIA is strongly backing the PDF in those regions," he said. "But I think [the junta] won't be able to besiege Lai Zar."

Having the areas near its border controlled by ethnic groups could be strategically beneficial to China, he said.

"China is trying to influence both sides to solve the problems by peaceful means as much as it can. It is the way I see it. Especially the ethnic areas next to its border, China won't let them down."

Translated by Myo Min Aung. Edited by Eugene Whong and Malcolm Foster.

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ecoi.net description:

Kachin state: According to locals, fierce fighting between the military junta and an ethnic rebel group has raged for 13 days in a village close to the rebels' headquarters

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Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095122

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta blames 'terrorist drones' for Sagaing bombing

By RFA Burmese

A bomb blast in Myanmar's Sagaing region injured eight locals, junta-backed messaging channels reported Monday.

Pro-military Telegram groups said "terrorist drones" attacked a market in Shwebo township on Sunday morning. They said three children were among the injured.

They said an eight-year-old girl was severely injured after bomb fragments hit her in the neck.

But a local, who didn't want to be named for fear of reprisals, told RFA junta troops fired heavy artillery at the market.

"There is U Aung Zeya Palace to the west of Shwebo Market. Kha Ma Ya-42 Battalion was stationed there. They opened fire," said the local.

"One shell exploded outside the market; the other exploded in the market stall of a greengrocer.

"Two people were hit in the waist and chest. They were sent to Mandalay Hospital," the local said, adding that those with minor injuries were taken to Shwebo's public hospital.

Locals said that the market had been temporarily closed and junta troops were searching the neighborhood.

RFA could not confirm either of the reports and Sagaing region's junta spokesperson, Saw Naing, did not return calls on Monday.

Motorcycle bomb

In another attack Saturday, 12 Shan state residents were injured by a bomb blast outside a jewelry store in Lashio's township's market.

A local, who also requested anonymity, said the bomb was planted in a motorbike outside the Zwe Htet store.

"Of the 12 people injured, 11 are jewelry store employees," the resident said.

"Among them, two men and two women were seriously injured."

Residents say aid groups took the injured to the local hospital.

They said many stores in the market are closed as the junta has stepped up security in Lashio.

In April a bomb went off near a water festival pavilion in Lashio, killing four people and injuring 11 after People's Defense Forces warned people not to take part in Water Festival celebrations sponsored by the junta.

Nobody has claimed responsibility for Saturday's blast.

Junta-media was silent on the bombing and Shan state junta spokesperson, Khun Thein Maung, didn't return RFA's calls.

Junta leader Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said on July 13 that there had been 489 explosions nationwide since the start of this year, resulting in 782 fatalities.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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Sagaing region: Bomb blast at a market injured 8 people, including 3 children; while the junta blames "terrorist drones" for the bombing, locals report that junta troops fired heavy artillery at the market

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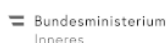
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(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Conflict in Myanmar's Kayah state traps hundreds in town

Aid workers say 6 people were shot dead as they returned from the Thai border.

A three-week battle has left six people dead and around 600 civilians trapped in Kayah state's Ywathit township, local aid groups told RFA Tuesday.

Banyar, director of the Karenni Human Rights Organization, told RFA that junta troops detained some villagers in a monastery and wouldn't let them leave.

"According to the list we received, there are more than 1,200 people in Ywathit town," said Banyar, who goes by one name.

"Because of the battle, more than 600 people were able to flee.

"There are still roughly 600 people. No one is allowed to leave the town. Six people were shot dead," said Banyar, adding that the killings happened on June 27.

He said Ywathit had been under junta control since June 27 and the town's exit roads had been closed.

A member of the aid group told RFA that the victims were killed after being turned back at the Thai border.

"A woman was killed. The rest were men from ... Hpasaung township and Ywathit township who escaped to the Thai border during the fighting," said the aid worker, who didn't want to be named for security reasons.

"However, the Thai side rejected them. Many of them were detained and

killed while they were returning. Some people are also missing.”

Junta media have not mentioned the three-week battle and Kayah state’s junta spokesperson Aung Win Oo didn’t return RFA’s calls.

The combined Karenni National People's Liberation Front and Karenni People's Defense Forces said on June 13 they captured a junta outpost on the Thai border.

However, the junta announced on June 27 that the military base had been taken back.

According to Banyar, there are about 2,000 people seeking shelter near the border and another 9,000 people who have fled to Thailand as a result of the ongoing conflict.

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Kayah state: 6 people dead and around 600 civilians trapped in Ywathit township after 3 weeks of battle

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Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095123

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

In Myanmar, nearly 2 million people have been displaced by civil war, UN says

By RFA Burmese

Nearly 2 million civilians in Myanmar have been displaced from their homes by the civil war raging in their country, with 40,000 displaced in the past month alone, according to the U.N.'s humanitarian agency, which appealed for food and other supplies.

Myanmar has been wracked by violence since the military overthrew the democratically elected government in a Feb. 1, 2021, coup. Junta forces have faced stiff resistance from various ethnic armies that have teamed up with local anti-regime People's Defense Forces — civilians who have taken up arms to fight the military.

Of the total 1.9 million internally displaced persons, the largest number — nearly 800,000 — are in Myanmar's northwestern Sagaing region, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, said in an update on the situation on July 15.

"Countrywide, restrictions on humanitarian access have increased in multiple states and regions, notably in the Southeast and Kachin [state], further impeding timely and efficient aid delivery to affected and displaced communities," the report said.

"Sustained support, including financial assistance, from the international community is crucial to allowing partners to stay and deliver in challenging circumstances," it said.

The humanitarian situation remains urgent as families continue to grapple with the devastating aftermath of Cyclone Mocha, resulting in significant ongoing needs for shelter and food, OCHA said. The tropical cyclone in the North Indian Ocean hit western Myanmar's Rakhine state and parts of Bangladesh in May.

"After a brief suspension, humanitarians have been able to restart their regular programs in Rakhine, but the humanitarian cyclone response remains paused by the SAC," the report said, referring to the State Administration Council, the ruling junta's official name.

The strictness of junta authorities on humanitarian aid is tightening throughout the country and the situation is worse in the southeast of the country and Kachin state, according to OCHA's statement.

Food shortages worsen

Displaced people in Sagaing, Chin and Kayah states complain that food shortages are getting worse as military authorities restrict humanitarian aid access.

A day after OCHA published the figure, military troops raided Sagaing's Khin-U township, prompting roughly 10,000 residents from about 20 villages to flee to safety.

A resident of the township's Inn Pat village told Radio Free Asia that the soldiers unexpectedly raided his community at 5 a.m., putting elderly people who could not flee in imminent danger.

"It caused a great deal of trouble," said the person granted anonymity to ensure his safety. "Elderly people and the disabled who couldn't run, had to remain in the village, hiding in the alleys between houses."

Civilians living in villages where military troops and pro-junta Pyu Saw Htee militias have been stationed cannot return to their homes, he added.

More than 50,000 internally displaced people, or IDPs, are in western Myanmar's Chin state, according to OCHA's report.

Civilians there also fled their homes because of fighting and face life-threatening challenges on a daily basis because of the junta's heavy artillery shelling and airstrikes, said a management committee official for the IDP camps in Chin's Mindat township.

"Many people have been injured by the shelling," said the official who declined to be named for fear of his safety. "The junta planes fly over the area every night. That's why everyone is panicking and can't sleep well. It's a pretty bad situation."

Mounting casualties

Three civilians, including a nine-year-old girl and a breastfeeding mother, were killed by an airstrike by junta forces on Mindat's Wun Khone village on July 8.

A resident of Moebye township in southern Shan state, where junta troops and ethnic Karenni joint forces engaged in fierce clashes, said IDPs are having a hard time getting food because military troops have banned the transportation of rice to the area.

"We can buy only dry food and gasoline in small quantities," the local said. "The rice transportation routes have been totally blocked by the junta."

Aid and relief groups said 28 civilians were killed during the 40 days of fighting in Moebye from May 25 to July 4.

The armed assaults on civilians, forcing them to flee their homes, are a crime against humanity, said Banyar Khun Aung, executive director of the Karenni Human Rights Group.

"The junta intentionally planned their attack to force them out of those places that they call home," he told RFA. "It's not just in one location. They junta attacked many places using many different strategies to force the local residents to leave their homes."

RFA could not reach junta spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun for comment.

Armed conflicts continue in 255 of 330 townships in Myanmar, according to the latest annual report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued on March 3.

The U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution last Dec. 21, calling for the immediate cessation of violence, the release of all political prisoners, including State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, and the unrestricted flow of humanitarian aid in Myanmar.

Translated by Myo Min Aung for RFA Burmese. Edited by Roseanne Gerin and Malcolm Foster.

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According to the UN, nearly 2 million civilians have been displaced from their homes by the civil war since the military coup in February 2021

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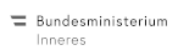
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095124

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar military kills villagers, burns houses in Sagaing region

By RFA Burmese

Junta troops killed eight civilians and burned down more than 600 homes in Myanmar's Sagaing region in 11 days of raids, locals told RFA Wednesday.

Residents of Myinmu township said four people were arrested and killed by troops between July 6 and July 17.

"A father and son from Na Be Kyu village, one from Ma Gyi Kan village, and one from Nyaung Myit village, were killed in Ma Gyi Kan village," said a local, who didn't want to be named for fear of reprisals.

"The one from Nyaung Myit village is a People's Defense Force member."

He identified the PDF member as 20-year-old Aung Zaw Htet.

Locals said troops also captured and shot two people from Nyaung Pin Kan village and two more from Khwet Khwin village.

The army also burned homes in Mu Mandalay, Gon Hnyin Seik and three other villages.

"There are nearly 300 houses in the village. I think there may have been around 100 homes destroyed," said a Mu Mandalay resident, who also requested anonymity for fear of reprisals.

"The junta column is not far away. So, we had to put out the fire and come back out."

RFA called the junta's Sagaing region spokesperson, Saw Naing, but nobody answered.

On June 6, junta Deputy Information Minister Major Gen. Zaw Min Tun told RFA that junta troops do not set fire to civilians' homes, blaming People's Defense Forces for the arson attacks.

Locals said the raid on Mu Mandalay and nearby villages forced around 2000 residents to flee their homes.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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Sagaing region: Junta troops killed 8 civilians, burned down more than 600 homes and forced 2,000 people to flee their homes

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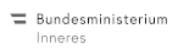
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2096560

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Destructive blasts in towns across Myanmar, but no one claims responsibility

Villagers blame junta troops, but the military says rebels are behind the blasts.

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar is experiencing a rising number of explosions in cities and towns across the country, but no group is claiming responsibility.

This month, the blasts, which appear to be mostly homemade bombs, have injured more than 20 civilians and killed one, data compiled by Radio Free Asia shows. They have gone off in Yangon, Mandalay, in the northern Sagaing region as well as in Shan state.

They come amid intensifying fighting between the junta, which took over the country in a 2021 coup, and armed rebel groups.

On July 15, a homemade bomb exploded in front of the Zwe Htet jewelry store in Lashio, Shan state killing a man in his twenties and injuring at least 10 others. The survivors were treated as emergency patients at Lashio General Hospital, residents told RFA's Burmese Service.

"No one can say whether it was done by the junta, the PDF, or an armed organization," said a Lashio resident on condition of anonymity. PDFs, or public defense forces, are small citizen militias that emerged after the military took over the country in a coup in February 2021.

"What I want to say as a citizen is that we don't want this to happen again. Bombs exploded in front of a hotel and a jewelry store in Lashio where people were passing. We don't want things like that," the resident said.

The city of Lashio is a hotbed of covert activities for both local armed groups and junta troops, and bomb explosions have become more frequent after the military coup, he said.

One day after the Lashio blast, eight people, including a monk, were injured when a bomb exploded in Shwebo Myoma market in the Sagaing region. It is reported that a seriously injured woman in her twenties has been sent to Mandalay General Hospital.

Residents blamed this particular blast on junta troops stationed at U Aung Zeya Palace, west of Shwebo market. But the military council's propaganda channels have accused the PDFs of attacking the area with drones.

'Scared to go out'

A Shwebo resident told RFA that there were no such incidents before the military took over and people now are no longer safe.

"It's not easy to make a living here," the Shwebo resident said. "Although livelihood is difficult, we dare not go to work safely. I am too scared to go out as there is no sense of security for us."

A Shwebo PDF official said that the organization does not harm the public.

"The main reason why we are rebelling is because we cannot accept dictatorial rule," he said. "We want to gain independence and a true federal democracy for the people. We are fighting because we love the people, and we only focus on the interests of the people."

RFA called the junta's spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun for comment on the explosions but his phone rang unanswered.

Armed organizations should avoid injuring civilians who are not military targets, said Ye Tun, a political analyst.

"Civilians who are not military targets cannot avoid this kind of accidental injury," he said. "Such things often happen. However, deliberate targeting of these innocent civilians is a war crime. I think both sides of the revolution should abstain from doing so."

Harming innocent civilians is a war crime, no matter which side is responsible, said Kyaw Win, director of Burma Human Rights Network.

"If the tension has reached the level of an armed revolution, it can be said that this is the worst situation in a country," he said.

Translated by Myo Min Aung. Edited by Eugene Whong and Malcolm Foster.

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20 civilians injured and one person killed in explosions, no group claimed responsibility

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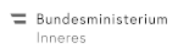
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(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095863

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar military dumps bodies of 4 civilians in river, lake

By RFA Burmese

Junta troops in Myanmar's Mandalay region tortured and killed four carpenters before dumping their bodies in a river and a lake, residents told RFA Friday.

Locals found the remains of 28-year-old Ye Naung Soe and 46-year-old Kyaw Myo from Madaya township, and 30-year-old Aye Soe Kyi from Singu township in a tributary of the Ayeyarwady River on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, they found the body of the unknown man, believed to be in his thirties, in a lake near Madaya's Sa Kyin village.

The men had been arrested by a column of around 50 troops who raided Nyaung Oke village in Madaya township on July 14.

Ye Naung Soe was tortured by the troops in front of villagers, according to a resident who didn't want to be named for security reasons.

"He was dragged along by a rope tied around his neck. He was also beaten with wooden sticks," said the local.

"Two of them were tortured to death on the day of their arrest. The other two were arrested and taken to the monastery in Nat Gyi Sin village, Madaya township, where the junta troops stopped.

"On July 15, they were tortured to death and thrown into the river. When we found the bodies, there were many injuries."

Another local said a fisherman who tried to retrieve the bodies was beaten by the troops. Villagers had to wait until the column had left before retrieving the badly decomposed bodies.

They were cremated on Wednesday.

RFA's calls to the Mandalay region junta spokesperson, Thein Htay, went unanswered Friday.

Nyaung Oke village has more than 300 homes and more than 1,000 residents. Locals told RFA there has been no fighting recently and they didn't know why the four men were arrested and killed.

More than 3,800 pro-democracy activists and civilians have been killed since the February 2021 coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Mandalay region: Junta troops tortured and killed 4 civilians before dumping their bodies in a river and a lake

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

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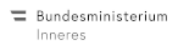
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095865

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Village raid by Myanmar forces leaves 14 civilians, resistance fighters dead

By RFA Burmese

More than a dozen civilians were killed by Myanmar junta forces, with some brutally tortured before being executed, during a six-hour raid on a village in northwestern Sagaing region on July 21, residents said on Monday.

In all, 14 people, including four teenagers and six members of an anti-junta People's Defense Force, lost their lives during the assault in Yinmarbin township, leaving residents who witnessed the murders in deep distress, the sources said.

The killings occurred when a 100-strong army column raided Sone Chaung village at 2 a.m. on July 21. Among the minors killed were Lwin Moe Tun, Sai Htoo Hseng, Nay Min Tun and Pho Chit, residents said.

Myanmar soldiers also killed four civilians in their 30s — Naing Min, Myo Myint Swe, Pho Aung and Kyaw Zin Tun. The six PDF members executed were Myo Myint Oo, Kyaw Soe, Yan Naing Soe, Htay Zaw, Aung Win Swe and Zaw Win.

The victims were tortured before being killed, said a village resident who found the bodies and who spoke to Radio Free Asia on condition of anonymity, citing security concerns.

The 10 adults were tied in pairs and shot dead in the southern part of the village, he said.

"It was a horrible scene," the local said. "Faces were disfigured, and their [chest]s were covered in blood."

The villager went on to say that soldiers had torn off the skin on one of the PDF member's legs, hit him in the chest with rifle butts, and appeared

to have shot him in the temple at point-blank range.

Myanmar has been wracked by violence since the military overthrew the elected civilian-led government in a February 2021 coup.

Sagaing region has been an anti-junta stronghold and cradle of resistance for local PDFs — civilians who have taken up arms to fight the military's brutal rule. Junta forces have swept through villages across the region to find and punish suspected resistance fighters and their civilian supporters.

Sone Chaung has four communities with more than 2,000 houses and over 7,000 residents who mostly farm to make a living.

'We are inconsolable'

The military column entered Sone Chaung village from the south and left around 8 a.m., residents said.

Villager Phyu Nu said she believed soldiers were firing into the air when she heard gunshots from the south end around 6:30 a.m.

"Later, we found dead bodies," she told RFA. "They didn't fire into the air, but they killed the youths. It's too cruel. And it's even more painful because the people who were not involved in the revolution were also killed. The victims were not simply shot dead. We are inconsolable since they were horribly disfigured."

The villagers said they buried the bodies of eight civilians, who were Sone Chaung residents, near Kyauk Hmaw village to the north on the same day.

Following the raid, junta-controlled state media reported that Myanmar forces killed seven, not six, PDF members and seized weapons during the village raid.

Villager Tin Oo told RFA that the junta forces made a false accusation about the presence of a PDF camp in Sone Chaung.

"They did this because it is likely that someone such as an informant told them about the village," he said. "People are frustrated because [the military] did such a thing though there is no PDF."

The State Administration Council, as the junta regime is known, has not issued a statement on the raid.

RFA could not reach junta spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun for comment.

A member of the Chindwin PDF who survived the raid said junta forces intercepted PDF communication signals and were waiting to shoot at

them.

"After being shot and arrested, four of our members were left behind, and the other four escaped with chest wounds," he said.

The PDF members did not have time to fight back as they tried to move residents to a safe place amid continuous fire by junta troops.

More than 30 residents who could not escape and were detained by the soldiers were later released when the military column left, villagers said.

Some Sone Chaung residents who successfully fled have not yet returned because of the killings, they said.

More than 3,800 civilians have been killed across Myanmar since the military coup, according to the Association for the Assistance of Political Prisoners, a Thailand-based rights group.

Translated by Htin Aung Kyaw for RFA Burmese. Edited by Roseanne Gerin and Matt Reed.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: 14 people, including 4 teenagers and 6 members of a local People's Defense Force (PDF), killed in village raid by junta forces

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/sagaing-raid-07242023164642.html>

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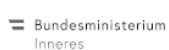
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
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Document #2095866

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta raids force 5,000 residents of Myanmar's Sagaing region to flee township

By RFA Burmese

A junta raid on Tuesday forced nearly 5,000 residents from 10 villages in Sagaing region to flee, locals told RFA.

They said a junta column raided a village in Salingyi township this morning, prompting locals from other villages in the area to abandon their homes.

"In the past people normally returned to their villages if the junta column left and went away," said a villager who didn't want to be named for security reasons.

"But now it's raining and hot, so the roads are bad and it's hard for people [to move around]."

The local said the junta had been carrying out systematic raids on villages almost every day since July 21.

Residents said they are also scared to return home because they fear junta gunboats will come up the river firing heavy artillery.

RFA reached out to the junta's Sagaing region spokesman, Saw Naing, for comment but he did not answer calls on Tuesday.

Nearly 800,000 Sagaing region residents have been forced to flee their homes due to the conflict since the junta staged a February 2021 coup, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn and Joshua Lipos.

ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: Junta raids forced nearly 5,000 residents from 10 villages to flee

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

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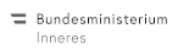
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
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Document #2095870

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta shelling kills man, forces residents to flee village in Myanmar's Shan state

By RFA Burmese

Myanmar's military shelled a village in Shan state, killing a man and forcing most residents to flee, locals told RFA Wednesday.

The local killed in Tuesday's attack on Muse township's Hseng Hkawng village was identified as 40-year-old Aik Lau by a villager who goes by the name Cherry.

"He was sitting outside the house and his face and back were hit when the heavy artillery shell landed and exploded," Cherry told RFA.

"Another house was hit and one person was injured in the thigh."

The village has around 200 residents, most of whom fled after the explosion.

Locals said most of the villagers are from the Ta'ang (Palaung) ethnic group. A resident of a nearby village said there was a battle between junta troops and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army in the township on Tuesday morning.

They said troops fired a 60-millimeter heavy weapon from a bridge next to Nam Aum village, damaging some houses in Hseng Hkawng.

The troops then raided Kawng Wein village, 0.8 kilometers (half a mile) from Hseng Hkawng and interrogated locals.

The ethnic army has been active near those villages, fighting with about 200 soldiers in the last few days, and the military junta has been shelling villages since Monday, according to locals.

Some shops and houses in Nam Aum village were destroyed by shelling and troops sent an attack helicopter to fire on the village on Tuesday,

residents told RFA on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

RFA's calls to junta council spokesperson for Shan state, Khun Thein Maung, went unanswered Wednesday.

A Ta'ang National Liberation Army information officer, who declined to be named for security reasons, told RFA he did not know the exact situation on the ground.

Fighting across Myanmar since the junta extended the state of emergency on Feb. 1, 2023 has left 383 civilians dead, according to data from the BNI-Myanmar Peace Monitor, a group that compiles data on the military conflict.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) announced on July 15 that nearly two million people have fled their homes due to armed fighting and insecurity across the country since the Feb. 1, 2021 coup.

Edited by Mike Firn and Taejun Kang.

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ecoi.net description:

Shan state: Military shelled village, killing a man and forcing most residents to flee

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Original link:

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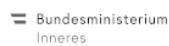
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
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Document #2095873

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Landmine kills 4 children in Myanmar's Bago region

By RFA Burmese

Four children died when a landmine exploded as they played in a field in Myanmar's central Bago region, residents told RFA Thursday.

They said the mine went off in Phyu township's In Pin Thar village on Tuesday, killing five-year-olds Poe La Pyae, Wa Than Moe and Nga Pauk, and 12-year-old Aye Chan Maung.

Six-year-old Htein Lin and 50-year-old Min Naing were injured in the blast.

"Right at the top of In Pin Thar village, there is a small library," said a resident who didn't want to be named for fear of junta reprisals.

"The children were hit while they were playing behind the wall where there are bushes and a drinking water pot."

The local said junta troops often enter In Pin Thar village which is about 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) from their base in Hpa Yar La Har village

He said the landmine was planted and left behind when the junta troops were last in the village, but RFA has not been able to confirm this independently.

RFA's calls to the Bago region junta spokesperson, Tin Oo, went unanswered Thursday.

Myanmar's youngsters continue to be the victims of indiscriminate shelling and landmine blasts.

On July 22, three people, including a 12-year-old child, were critically injured when a junta shell exploded in a village in Bago region's Kyauktaga township, according to locals.

The fighting is also leading to an increasing number of internally displaced people. Nearly 100,000 residents of eastern Bago have fled their homes since the Feb. 1, 2021 coup, according to the United Nations Office for the Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Edited by Mike Firn and Taejun Kang.

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ecoi.net description:

Bago region: Landmine explosion killed 4 children

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Original link:

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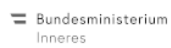
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32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2095878

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Explosion kills 1, injures 12 in Myanmar's Kayin state

By RFA Burmese

An early morning explosion near a checkpoint in Myanmar's eastern Kayin state killed a civilian and injured 12 people, the junta told RFA Monday.

Saw Khin Maung Myint, the junta's state spokesperson, said most of the injured were staffing the checkpoint in Hpa-An township.

"The explosion happened at 6:48 this morning," he said.

"Ten personnel providing security at the gate and three civilians were injured. A civilian died on the way to the hospital. I cannot say yet what kind of bomb it was."

The spokesperson said the injured were all being treated at the emergency department of Hpa-An Hospital. He said Thanlwin Bridge – which links Hpa-An to Mawlamyine township – had been sealed off and security tightened while the junta searched for those responsible.

A Hpa-An resident, who did not want to be named for security reasons, told RFA that junta troops are carrying out a stop-and-search operation in the township.

"Security patrol vehicles are patrolling all the crowded places, including Hpa-An market," he said.

"People everywhere are being searched by the troops.

"The blast was so loud that the entire Hpa-An town could hear it. I can't yet confirm what type of blast it was."

No group has claimed responsibility for the explosion.

RFA called the spokesperson for the state's leading ethnic army, the Karen National Union (KNU), but nobody answered.

There have been more than 5,000 clashes between junta troops and armed groups, including the KNU, in Kayin state since the Feb. 1, 2021 military coup, according to a May report by independent researchers the Institute for Strategy and Policy-Myanmar. That's the highest number of battles of any state or region in Myanmar,

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn and Taejun Kang.

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ecoi.net description:

Kayin state: Explosion near a checkpoint killed one civilian and injured 12 people

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Myanmar

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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

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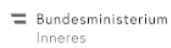
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
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Document #2096921

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Hundreds in need of aid at Indian border after junta airstrike in Myanmar

By RFA Burmese

Some 2,000 villagers displaced by two consecutive days of junta airstrikes on a township in Myanmar's Sagaing region are in dire need of basic necessities after being refused refuge by authorities across the border in India, according to the villagers and aid workers.

The situation in Khampat, a 2,000-home township located around 8 kilometers (5 miles) southeast of the border with India's Manipur state, highlights the plight of internally displaced persons in Sagaing.

Fighting between the military and anti-junta forces in the region has forced nearly 800,000 people to flee their homes since the Feb. 1, 2021 coup d'état, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

A man who was among more than 1,000 people from Khampat who fled the July 25-26 airstrikes to nearby Kale township told RFA Burmese that the conditions for displaced there are among the worst he had faced in the nearly 30 months since the coup.

"I've faced many difficulties as an internally displaced person," said the man who has had to flee fighting in the region before and who, like others interviewed for this report, spoke on condition of anonymity citing security concerns.

"There are several sick people and others who had to run [from the fighting] with only the clothes on their backs, who are dealing with extreme difficulties," he said. "Since we all have to stay together in one shelter, it's very crowded and inconvenient."

A person assisting the displaced in Kale said they are sheltering in three or four Christian churches there.

"They number more than 1,000, which is almost the entire population of Khampat," he said. "They had no choice but to flee here."

In addition to those in Kale, more than 700 from Khampat's Kanan and Kamagyi villages have fled across the border into Manipur since July 21, when clashes between military troops and anti-junta People's Defense Force, or PDF, paramilitaries intensified in the township.

Hundreds ordered home

Myanmar shares a border of more than 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) with eastern India. More than 60,000 people have crossed into India's Manipur and Mizoram states since the coup, according to UNOCHA, but Indian authorities in Manipur have been dealing with violence between the majority Meitei community and the tribal Kuki minority there since early May and say they no longer have the resources to accommodate refugees.

The Manipur state government recently ordered the Indian Border Guard to send the 700 Myanmar nationals – including more than 300 children and 200 women – who have fled since July 21 back across the border. Many of those who have been forced to leave India and others fleeing the fighting in Khampat now have no option other than to shelter in the jungle, with few resources.

Salai Dokhar, the founder of India for Myanmar, an India-based pro-democracy group, told RFA that there are security challenges in seeking refuge for Myanmar nationals, who risk being "driven back" across the border.

"We've learned that India doesn't let Myanmar refugees enter ... due to the Manipur conflict," he said. "Some refugees in Manipur who were found out to be Myanmar nationals were even driven back, too."

Dokhar said that "more than a few hundred" have been returned to Myanmar since the order was given.

He added that authorities in Manipur have cut off the internet in the conflict area and communication is limited.

"As telephone services have been irregular, we can't get accurate information every day," he said.

Tensions high

Meanwhile, a member of the PDF in Khampat told RFA that the military situation there remains "tense."

"Our People's Defense Forces have no plans to retreat," he said. "The [military] doesn't want to lose control of the town either. So it's a tense situation between the two sides."

Reports that the ethnic Kachin Independence Army, or KIA, is also involved in the fighting against junta troops in the area could not be immediately confirmed, as the group's military command is located far away.

"That's not our active area, which is why I haven't heard that we have military bases there," said KIA news and information officer Colonel Naw Bu. "I can't say that we are involved in the fighting there, nor can I confirm that we are. It's a little far from us [at] the military headquarters."

Attempts by RFA to contact the junta's spokesman for Sagaing region by telephone went unanswered.

Translated by Myo Min Aung. Edited by Joshua Lipes and Matthew Reed.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: According to aid workers, about 2,000 villagers displaced by 2 consecutive days of junta airstrikes on a township are in dire need of basic necessities after being refused refuge by authorities across the border in India

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Myanmar

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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

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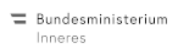
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Document #2095879

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar junta announces fourth extension of emergency rule

By Joshua Lipes for RFA

Myanmar's military junta extended a state of emergency on Monday on the eve of a deadline, delaying elections it had vowed to hold by the end of the year, according to media reports.

The National Defense and Security Council, Myanmar's top decision-making body, ordered the extension at a meeting convened by the junta in the capital Naypyidaw, Bloomberg reported, citing junta Deputy Information Minister Major Gen. Zaw Min Tun.

The announcement marks four consecutive six-month extensions of emergency rule in Myanmar since the military seized power in a Feb. 1, 2021, coup d'état, citing ongoing instability in the country. The latest period was set to expire on July 31.

The military regime had announced plans to hold an election this year, in what analysts say is part of a bid to crush the opposition and legitimize its rule through the polls. Opponents have dismissed the planned election as a sham because it appears rigged to exclude parties ousted by the coup and keep junta officials in power.

The fourth extension of emergency rule would postpone the election, which Myanmar's Constitution mandates must be held within six months after a state of emergency is lifted.

The renewed state of emergency announced Monday was not unexpected.

On July 13, junta chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing hinted at a possible extension of emergency rule during a meeting of the Tatmadaw, or Myanmar's Armed Forces, in the capital Naypyidaw, calling for greater security in Sagaing region, as well as Chin and Kayah states. The three

regions are centers of resistance to military rule and have seen an uptick in violence in recent months.

'Extraordinary situation'

According to Myanmar's military-drafted constitution, emergency rule can only be extended twice "in normal situations."

In announcing the last extension on Jan. 31 this year, junta leaders cited the "extraordinary situation" created by resistance against the military regime for stymieing efforts to hold a general election.

At the time, Min Aung Hlaing, faulted "terrorist groups" formed by deposed lawmakers and officials – the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the National Unity Government – as well as the numerous local militias known as People's Defense Force, or PDF, that have fought the junta across Myanmar since 2021.

Min Aung Hlaing was the leader of the coup that ousted and jailed leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy government about two months after their landslide election victory.

Civilians under threat

After the last extension, the junta declared martial law in 40 townships in Sagaing, Magway, Tanintharyi and Bago regions, as well as in Kayin, Chin and Kayah states. The military embarked on a brutal campaign against the armed resistance, but the resistance grew stronger.

Military clearance operations have claimed the lives of civilians on a near daily basis in Myanmar.

According to Burma News International's Myanmar Peace Monitor, which compiles data on military conflict in the country, at least 383 civilians were killed throughout the country during the latest extension of emergency rule, from Feb. 1 to July 15. Most were arrested and killed or died in military shelling and airstrikes.

According to a July 15 statement by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, nearly 2 million people have been displaced by armed conflict across Myanmar since the coup. Of those, nearly 800,000 people have been displaced in Sagaing region alone.

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Military junta announced fourth extension of emergency rule delaying the elections it had vowed to hold by the end of 2023

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Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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F.A.Q.
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