

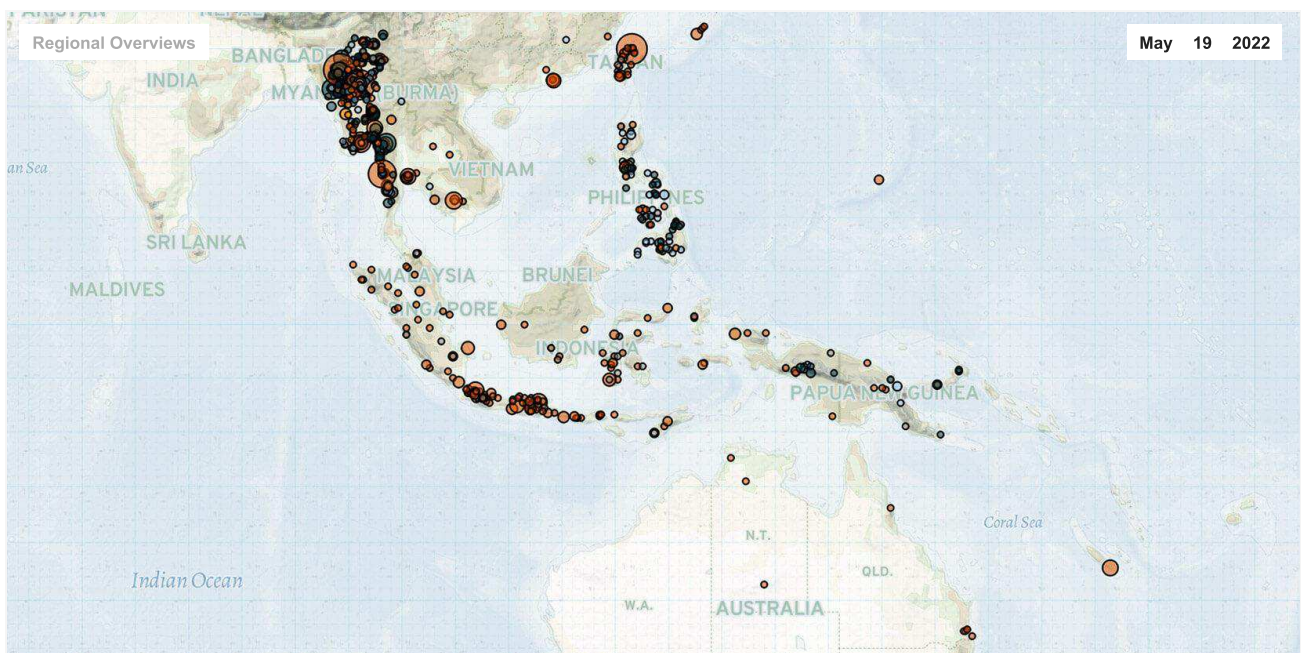
Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	425
Land:	Myanmar
Kilde:	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)
Titel:	ACLED. Regional Overview: East Asia Pacific 7-13 May 2022
Udgivet:	19. maj 2022
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	26. oktober 2022

Regional Overview: East Asia Pacific

7-13 May 2022

Posted: 19 May 2022 | Region: East Asia Pacific | Category: Regional Overviews



Last week in the [East Asia Pacific](#) region, fighting continued between the Myanmar military and local resistance groups in Myanmar. North Korea conducted two missile tests. In the Philippines, Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr. and Sara Duterte won the national elections as president and vice-president, respectively, amid a surge in political violence and demonstrations related to the elections. In Indonesia, there were armed clashes between the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) and state forces, while ethnic Papuans continued to demonstrate against the proposed creation of new provinces in Papua. In Papua New Guinea, Nomali and Aiyala clans in Enga province engaged in a shootout. In China, riots in response to stringent COVID-19 lockdowns continued in Shanghai. In Thailand, pro-democracy demonstrations continued in Bangkok. In Australia, health workers demonstrated in Western Australia and Queensland.

In **Myanmar**, fighting continued between the Myanmar military and local resistance groups. On 12 May in southern Shan state, the military and the Pa-Oh National Organization/Pa-Oh National Army (PNO/PNA) suffered casualties when combined forces of the Southern Shan Revolution Youth (SSRY), Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF), Pekon People's Defense Force, and Inle People's Defense Force attacked their outpost in Hti Ri village, Nyaungshwe township. The PNO/PNA signed a ceasefire agreement with the military in 1991 and has been criticized by Pa-Oh ethnic youth

groups for fighting alongside the military after the coup ([Myanmar Now, 13 May 2022](#)). While the military conducted airstrikes during the clash, the combined forces captured five soldiers, including three PNO/PNA members, and seized their weapons. Violence in Shan-South is both common and highly volatile; it is considered an area of 'extreme risk' by [ACLED's Volatility and Risk Predictability Index](#).

In northern Shan state, fighting between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed organizations (EOs) intensified across multiple townships. On 8 May, the military clashed with the Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party/Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNTJP/MNDAA) in three separate townships. In Hseni township, the military fought against the Northern Alliance (NA-B), which includes the MNTJP/MNDAA. In Mabein township, they fought combined forces of the MNTJP/MNDAA, Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA), and an unreported local defense group, and in eastern Kutkai township, they fought the MNTJP/MNDAA on its own. The Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA) also clashed with the military on 12 May, with military soldiers based in Kutkai town firing artillery rounds.

Meanwhile, the military and police tightened security in many states and regions last week. Several civilians in Yangon and Magway regions were arrested for anti-coup social media posts and claims they had connections with or were supporting People's Defense Forces (PDFs). In Sagaing region, military troops raided Mon Taing Pin village in Ye-U township and arrested nearly three dozen civilians, including monks and young novices, beating them to death and burning their bodies between 10 and 13 May ([Radio Free Asia, 17 May 2022](#)).

North Korea conducted its 15th and 16th test missile launches in 2022 last week. On 7 May, a suspected submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) was test-fired from waters around Sinpho City in South Hamgyong province towards the ocean off the country's east coast ([Channel News Asia, 7 May 2022](#)). On 12 May, three short-range ballistic missiles were test-fired from Sunan of Pyongyang, also toward the ocean off the country's eastern coast ([AP, 13 May 2022](#)). This came amid the 10 May inauguration of the new South Korean president, Yoon Suk-yeol. Experts say the missile tests intend to send a message to South Korea's new conservative administration and to strengthen North Korea's internal solidarity as Pyongyang officially confirmed the first case of COVID-19 just hours before the launch ([VOA, 12 May 2022](#)).

In the **Philippines**, the general election was held on 9 May. Filipino voters overwhelmingly chose to support the candidates aligned with outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, presidential candidate Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr., the son of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, and vice-presidential candidate Sara Duterte, Rodrigo Duterte's daughter ([Rappler, 2022](#)). The two gained decisive victories over their closest challengers. Marcos's election represents a remarkable political rehabilitation for the Marcos family, who were driven to exile in 1986 after the elder Marcos was ousted in a popular revolt. Meanwhile, the incoming administration has indicated to provide legal cover from international prosecution for the outgoing president ([Inquirer, 27 January 2022](#)), who is facing an investigation into crimes against humanity before the International Criminal Court in relation to his government's war on drugs (*for more, see this ACLED report on the drug war in the Philippines*).

The elections triggered a surge in political violence in the Philippines, with increasing attacks and armed clashes largely involving supporters of rival local politicians. Attacks on voters, poll workers, candidates, or candidates' families, and looting of vote-counting machines or ballots were reported, as well as numerous casualties. This violence contributed to the 165% increase in violence in the Philippines last week relative to the past month flagged by [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#), which first warned of increased violence to come in the country in the past month.

Meanwhile, Marcos's and Duterte's election triggered large demonstrations in major cities across the country ([Philippine Daily Inquirer, 11 May 2022](#)). The demonstrators also accuse the Commission on Elections (Comelec) of alleged incompetence, after problems affecting voting on election day, such as malfunctioning vote-counting machines ([Manila Bulletin, 9 May 2022](#)).

In **Indonesia**, the TPNPB shot a truck driver dead in Wako village, Gome district, Puncak regency, Papua province, on 11 May ([Antara News, 11 May 2022](#)). Two days later, the rebels fired shots at a commercial airplane in Ilaga district in the

same regency during the evacuation of the truck driver ([JPNN, 13 May 2022](#)). *ACLED's Conflict Change Map* first warned of increased violence to come in Indonesia in the past month.

Meanwhile, there was an increase in nationwide demonstrations by ethnic Papuans against the proposed creation of new provinces in Papua. Demonstrators also demand a referendum on Papua's independence. In Jayapura, a demonstration turned violent, as ethnic Papuans threw rocks and engaged in scuffles. Police responded by firing water cannons and teargas ([Kompas, 11 May 2022](#)).

Meanwhile, *ACLED's Emerging Actor Tracker* flagged several emerging communal militia groups in **Papua New Guinea** over the past month that have engaged in civilian targeting, including Engan ethnic militia, Nomali clan militia, and Aiyala clan militia. This is largely attributable to the recent fights between local clans in Enga province during 4 – 7 May, which caused 17 deaths and burned down dozens of houses ([Post Courier, 9 May 2022](#)). The presence of emerging actors indicates a change in the conflict environment, with civilians often bearing the burden of such new activity.

In **China**, riots continued in Shanghai last week amid China's stringent COVID-19 lockdown. Residents under stay-at-home orders clashed with government lockdown enforcers wearing white hazmat suits, called the 'Big White' army ([Bloomberg, 26 April 2022](#)). Some rioters were pinned to the ground during a clash in Minhang district in Shanghai on 7 May ([Deutsche Welle, 9 May 2022](#)). Violence in Shanghai has become increasingly volatile, resulting in a shift from a place of 'low risk' to being considered an area of 'growing risk' by *ACLED's Volatility and Risk Predictability Index*.

In **Thailand**, demonstrations demanding the release of detained pro-democracy demonstrators were held last week in Bangkok. The demonstrators stood still for one hour and 12 minutes, symbolizing the lèse-majesté law, Article 112 – a criminal act that prohibits defamation of the monarch of Thailand ([The Diplomat, 7 March 2022](#)). Demonstrations calling for release of political activists on bail saw a slight uptick last week as several pro-democracy activists' cases have been denied bail in court ([UCA News, 17 May 2022](#)). Meanwhile, members of Thalugaz, People's Party, and United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship organized a rally in Bangkok on 13 May, marking the 12th anniversary of the death of Major General Khattiya Sawasdipol, who was shot dead during a Red Shirt protest in 2010 ([Prachatai 13 May 2022](#)).

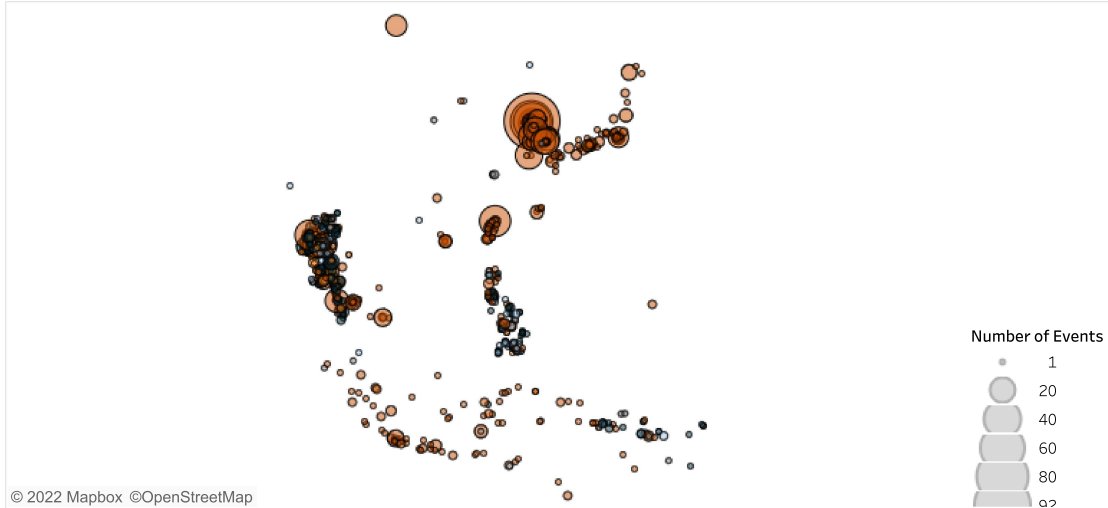
In **Australia**, health workers took strike action and held demonstrations organized by the United Workers Union (UWU) across Western Australia and Queensland last week, while marking International Nurses Day on 12 May. Hundreds of health workers marched through Perth and Brisbane on 10 and 11 May, calling for higher wages and better working conditions ([ABC News, 10 May 2022](#)). Aged care workers demonstrated in solidarity in Adelaide and Launceston. Meanwhile, hundreds of National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) members held demonstrations in Sydney, demanding wage increases and improved job security ([Solidarity, 13 May 2022](#)). As Australia's federal election is scheduled for 21 May, labor demonstrations have erupted since the May Day rally that began on 30 April against government labor policies and calling for changes in the upcoming election.

East Asia Pacific

Regional Overview

Date: Country: Event Type:

Custom Start Date: Custom End Date:



- Battles
- Explosions/Remote violence
- Violence against civilians
- Protests

Key Figures

Number of Events

2,405

Reported Fatalities

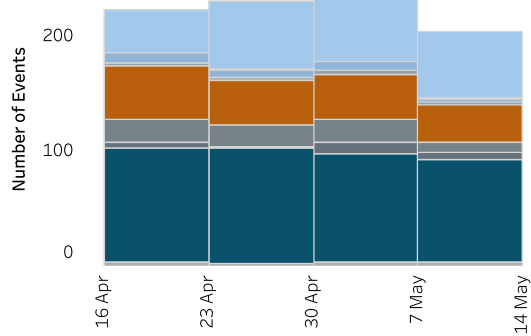
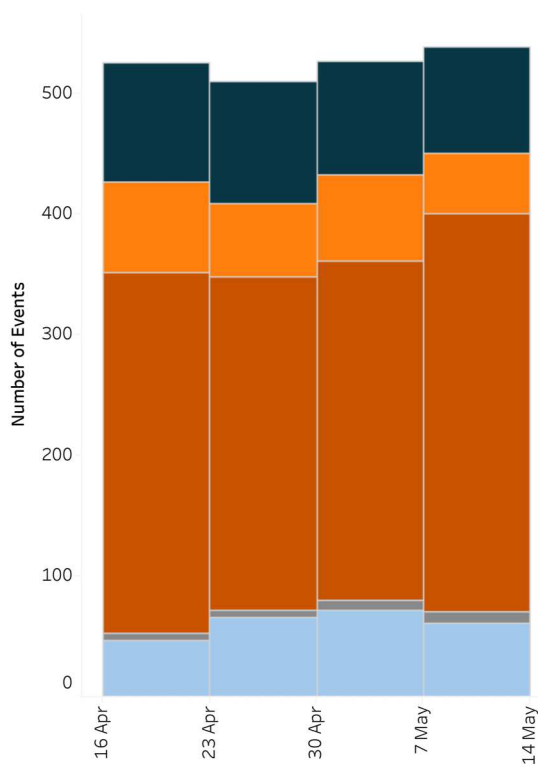
1,951

Political Violence Sub-event Type

(All)

Political Violence

Battles, Explosions/Remote Violence, Violence Against Civilians, and Mob Violence

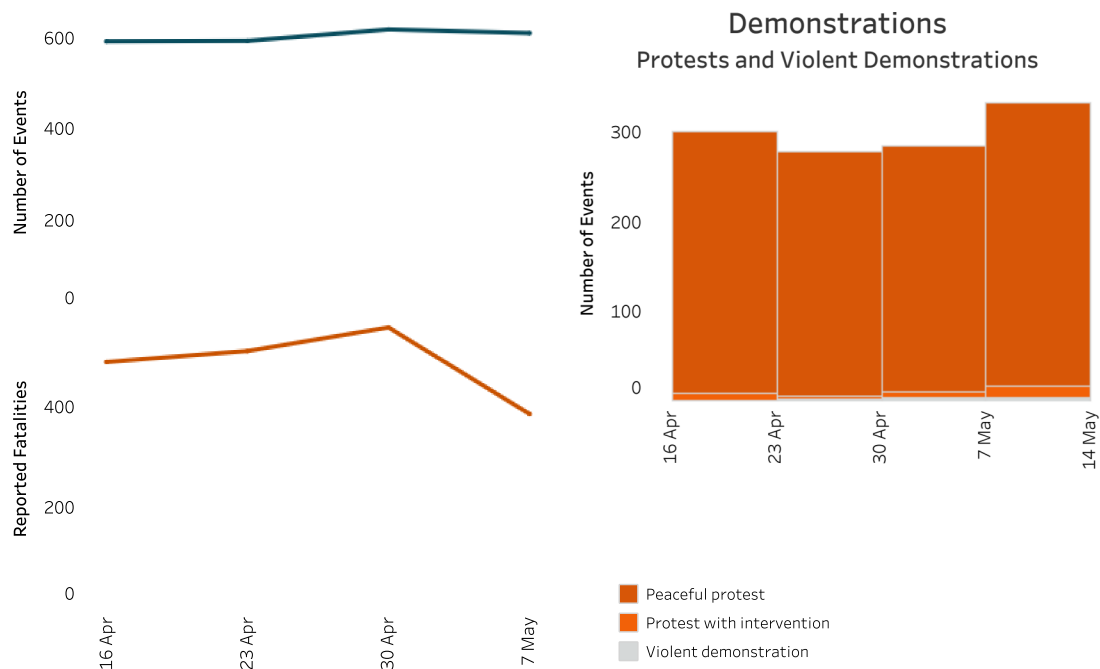


- Mob violence
- Armed clash
- Air/drone strike
- Shelling/artillery/missile attack
- Remote explosive/landmine/IED
- Grenade
- Abduction/forced disappearance
- Sexual violence
- Attack

Demonstrations Sub-event Type

(All)





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Laura Sorica is a Research Manager at ACLED's East Asia Pacific desk and has been with the organization since August 2019. She is currently overseeing political violence and protests in the East Asia Pacific region, including in Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, East Timor and throughout Oceania. Laura holds an MA in International and Advanced Japanese Studies and two BAs, one in Political Science and one in Linguistics. Her previous experiences include working in the private sector, the Romanian Embassy in Tokyo, and as an academic researcher in Japan working on security policy.

Su Mon Thant

Su Mon Thant is East Asia Pacific Assistant Research Manager at ACLED and has been with the organization since June 2021, originally hired as a Myanmar researcher. She monitors violent conflict, political unrest and significant political developments and integrates feedback into ongoing coding efforts, data work and methodology updates. Su Mon holds an MA in Politics and International Relations from Keele University, England. She has been researching politics and society in Myanmar for over a decade.

Hangyu Lee



Hangyu Lee is an East Asia Pacific Research Manager at ACLED and has been with the organization since March 2020. Hangyu currently manages several countries for the East Asia Pacific research desk. He holds a BA in Global Communication and Culture and an MA in Global Studies from Albert-Ludwigs-Universitaet Freiburg and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. His research interests include political polarization in South Korea and the role of social media in politics. He is fluent in Korean, English, and Spanish.

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Myung-Gyun Lim is a Research Manager of the East Asia Pacific desk at ACLED. Previously, he managed the ACLED's Oceania and Canada expansion project, and worked at the North America and East Asia desks as Assistant Research Manager and Researcher respectively. His research interest centers on the effects of threat inflation on inter-state conflicts.

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The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project.

ACLED is the highest quality and most widely used real-time data and analysis source on political violence and protest around the world. Practitioners, researchers, journalists, and governments depend on ACLED for the latest reliable information on current conflict and disorder patterns.

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