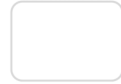


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Document #2101879

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Tens of thousands flee intensifying clashes in Myanmar's Rakhine state

By RFA Burmese

An intensification of fighting between ethnic Arakan Army fighters and junta troops in western Myanmar's Rakhine state has caused tens of thousands of villagers to flee four major townships in anticipation of additional clashes, residents said Friday.

The fighting follows a Nov. 13 attack by the Arakan Army, or AA, on two junta police outposts which broke a [ceasefire](#) between the two sides that had been in place since November 2022.

Military forces are now shelling towns in the state with heavy artillery before taking up positions and arresting inhabitants, said sources in the region who, like others interviewed for this report, spoke to RFA Burmese on condition of anonymity citing security concerns.

Ahead of the arrival of junta troops, residents of Pauktaw, Sittwe, Ponnagyun and Minbya – townships with a combined population of around 150,000 – are fleeing in droves, they said.

"More than 99% of people have fled their homes, leaving less than 1% in town," said a resident of Minbya. "Many houses are now empty as they fear that the junta will attack the town."

On Nov. 24, a military vessel on the Kaladan River fired artillery on Ponnagyun, setting the township's main market ablaze, one resident told RFA. Since then, nearly everyone has packed up and left, he added.

"We don't feel safe in town – we were attacked with heavy weapons and the market was set on fire," the resident said. "People are concerned about their safety. Only one-tenth of the population remains in the town. Most have fled to safer areas."

Fighting in Pauktaw township has intensified since Nov. 16, when the Arakan Army, or AA, seized control of a junta police station, residents said. Houses have been destroyed in fires started by military shelling and junta troops are taking up positions on the top floors of the township's tallest buildings, they said.

And while the capital Sittwe has yet to become the site of clashes between the junta and the AA, the military recently fired artillery on the town and arrested civilians on suspicion of ties to the ethnic army, one resident said.

"The military shelled the town and arrested people, so they became afraid and fled to other areas," he said.

Those who remain are unable to leave their homes during a strict nightly curfew from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., and are living in fear of the junta troops, he added.

Military blames AA

Calls by RFA to junta Deputy Information Minister Major-General Zaw Min Tun for comment on the civilian exodus went unanswered Friday. However, on Nov. 27 the junta spokesman told state media that the "AA forced residents of Pauktaw and Ponnagyun townships to flee their homes."

RFA inquired to AA spokesman Khaing Thu Kha about the junta's claims, but received no response as of the time of publishing.

But Pe Than, a veteran ethnic Rakhine politician and former lawmaker, confirmed to RFA that residents had fled from the military.

"The junta troops have brutally attacked civilians in towns and villages, using artillery attacks to destroy their livelihoods," he said. "Such attacks took place in Pauktaw to preempt AA control, so people had no option but to flee their homes and take shelter in remote areas."

According to population data released by the Ministry of Union Government Office in 2019, Pauktaw township is home to nearly 20,000, Ponnagyun township to more than 10,000, Minbya to more than 20,000, and Sittwe to more than 100,000.

Sources said that while nearly the entire populations of Pauktaw, Ponnagyun and Minbya have fled, only some in Sittwe have left their homes. RFA could not independently verify the number of people displaced from the four townships.

Since the end of the year-long ceasefire in Rakhine state, at least 17 civilians have been killed and some 70 injured, according to RFA reporting.

Widening displacement

Reports of residents fleeing their homes in Rakhine state came as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or UNOCHA, said that some 500,000 people have been displaced from their homes in Myanmar since the end of October, amid an intensification of clashes between junta troops and the armed resistance in recent months.

On Oct. 27, the “Three Brotherhood” Alliance of the AA, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, or MNDAA, and the Ta’ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, launched an offensive against the military in northern Shan state dubbed “Operation 1027.”

The rebels say they have made notable gains against the military in several key cities in Shan and claim to have captured more than 170 military outposts since the start of the campaign.

But the intensification of fighting has caught civilians in the crossfire, contributing to the huge increase in displaced communities nationwide. The 500,000 newly displaced across the country since the end of October adds to the 2 million displaced by fighting before the current escalation began, according to the UNOCHA – some three-quarters of whom have fled their homes since the military seized power in a Feb. 1, 2021, coup d’etat.

In its flash update on Friday, the U.N. said that an estimated 50,000 people have been displaced in northern Shan’s Laukkaing township, along the border with China, since the start of Operation 1027, and “have only been able to receive minimal assistance” from aid groups.

Meanwhile, key transport routes in townships experiencing active fighting throughout the country have been blocked by both the military and the armed resistance, “restricting people’s movements to safer locations and hampering humanitarian access,” it said.

The UNOCHA called for an urgent injection of funding to enable aid groups to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis.

Translated by Aung Naing. Edited by Joshua Lipos and Malcolm Foster.

ecoi.net description:

Rakhine state: Intensification of fighting between ethnic Arakan Army fighters and junta troops forced tens of thousands of villagers to flee 4 major townships

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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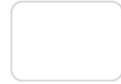
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

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Document #2101878

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar junta arrests minors, elderly and disabled villagers

By RFA Burmese

Junta troops arrested nearly 50 villagers in central Myanmar, locals told Radio Free Asia on Friday. After a junta officer was killed in a clash Wednesday, officials from the battalion entered the village in Sagaing region.

Min Ga Lar Kone village in Monywa township is located near the site of the battle and close to where junta troops store artillery, locals said.

A troop of about 50 soldiers entered Min Ga Lar Kone firing weapons and arrested the villagers around 5 pm, said a resident, who did not want to be named for security reasons.

"There were shootings nearby and people from the village were arrested. They were of all ages, from about 15 years old to the elderly," he said. "It is quite a large number but it is not clear who they are. A mentally ill man from the village was also arrested."

Currently, officials are detaining and investigating them at a police station in Monywa township for association with local People's Defense Forces, locals said.

Roughly 30 of the arrested villagers are civilians from Min Ga Lar Kone, according to a Telegram channel owned by the Monywa People's Administration Team, a local civilian administration under the National Unity Government.

Troops raided and burned down two houses in the village, according to the administration team, which added it is still trying to identify those arrested.

RFA called Sagaing region's junta spokesperson Sai Naing Naing Kyaw seeking comment on the raids, but he did not reply by the time of publication.

More than 25,000 people, including pro-democracy activists, have been arrested since the 2021 coup, according to the Thailand-based [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners](#).

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: According to locals, junta troops arrested nearly 50 villagers after a junta officer had been killed in a clash

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/monywa-arrests-12012023045720.html>

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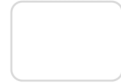
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32, 1041 Wien
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F +43 1 589 00 589
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Document #2101880

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar villagers find 18 burnt bodies after junta raid

By RFA Burmese

Villagers uncovered 18 charred bodies after junta forces burned homes in a village in central Myanmar, residents and defense forces told Radio Free Asia.

Junta soldiers and the military-backed Pyu Saw Htee militia attacked a village in Monywa township on Saturday morning. Roughly 80 soldiers stationed nearby stormed Kya Paing village and began torching houses, causing locals to flee, Kya Paing residents said.

On Saturday evening, villagers returned to the area and found the bodies of 18 people badly burned near Kya Paing, a member of Monywa township defense forces said.

"We are now cleaning up the fire debris in the village," he said, declining to be named for security reasons. "The bodies are deformed and only the bones remain. We're still cleaning and I am praying that we will not find another body again. Up to 170 or 180 houses were burned."

Because of how badly the bodies were damaged, it is not possible to identify the victims, he added. However, all of them are men between the age of 20 and 50 years old.

Taw Pu village, which is adjacent to Kya Paing, has one military camp occupied by Pyu Saw Htee soldiers. On Friday, a People's Defense Force attacked the camp, leading some to believe soldiers attacked Kya Paing in retaliation, said a person in charge of the Monywa district People's Defense Force No. 5 Battalion.

The incident was extremely cruel, said one villager whose house was set on fire, adding he had lost several friends in the attack.

"The bodies were damaged. They were charred. I feel sorry that my friends are among the dead. It was indescribable," he told RFA on Sunday, declining to be named for fear of reprisals. "This action was extreme and cruel. All the families are split up and have no place to live."

Junta and Pyu Saw Htee forces left on Saturday afternoon after torching the houses. Villagers found the burnt bodies of 10 men in a centrally-located house after entering the village and extinguishing a fire later that evening. Eight more bodies were found the next day.

Local organizations are helping families who have lost someone come to identify the men using pieces of clothing and other evidence, said a member of the Monywa- Ah Myint Road Information Group.

"There were some people who were caught by junta troops while working on a farm as the soldiers entered the village. Ten bodies were found in a closed house," he told RFA, speaking anonymously to protect his identity. "It's still unknown whether those 10 bodies were burned after shooting them or whether they were burned without being shot."

About a fifth of the homes in Kya Paing village were burned, locals said.

RFA called Sagaing region's junta spokesperson Sai Naing Naing Kyaw seeking comment on this incident, but calls went unanswered.

As of the start of this month, 4,218 civilians have been killed across the country since the military coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: According to residents and defense forces, villagers uncovered 18 charred bodies after junta forces burned homes in a village

Country:
Myanmar

Source:
[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/sagaing-burnt-bodies-12042023045452.html>

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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 #2101882

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar militia arrests and shoots villagers near India border

By RFA Burmese

Junta-backed Pyu Saw Htee militia members shot four villagers on the Myanmar-India border, locals told Radio Free Asia.

Over the course of two days, soldiers raided the village in Sagaing region's Tamu township, burning down houses and a Christian church, residents of Htan Ta Pin said. They also arrested roughly 100 locals and later released them.

"We have been fleeing from the village for a long time. The rest of the villagers, about a hundred, were taken to [the military's] Four Mile Camp by the Pyu Saw Htee group," said one villager, declining to be named for security reasons. "Villagers were sent to Tamu from there. Detainees were released in Tamu."

Some of the released villagers went back to check on their houses and gather the remainder of their belongings, he added.

"Four villagers were shot dead when they came across Pyu Saw Htee members at the village," he said. "The village was torched on Sunday and Monday. I can see the smoke from a distance."

The identity of the four victims could not be confirmed by residents, as they have not been able to return due to the militia's continued presence. RFA could also not confirm the extent of the fire damage, as villagers have fled.

RFA reached out to Sagaing region's junta spokesperson Sai Naing Naing Kyaw for more information on the attacks, but he did not answer calls.

Nearly all Htan Ta Pin residents have sheltered near the Indian border, locals said. Those released from junta custody have fled to churches or

relatives' homes in Tamu township.

Htan Ta Pin village has fewer than 300 houses and is roughly 1.6 kilometers (one mile) from the Indian border. Fighting between local defense groups and Pyu Saw Htee militia in Htan Ta Pin on Nov. 21 is believed to be part of the reason for the attack, locals said.

During the November battle, local defense forces killed two Pyu Saw Htee members and arrested four others. The arrested included Myint Aung, a former member of parliament for the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party and a leader of Pyu Saw Htee group.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: According to locals, junta-backed Pyu Saw Htee militia members shot 4 villagers on the Myanmar-India border

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/sagaing-arrests-and-killings-12052023045421.html>

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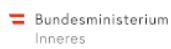
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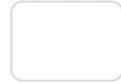
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Wiedner Hauptstraße
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T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
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Document #2102242

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta kills 3 during raid in central Myanmar while torching a village

Three people are dead and nearly 30 houses have been burned down following a junta raid, residents told Radio Free Asia on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, a junta battalion with roughly 100 members from Sagaing city's 33rd Division entered Pan Chi village, locals said.

One victim was a civilian and the other two were members of local People's Defense Forces, one man added, asking to remain anonymous for security reasons. The civilian was 40-year-old Lin Lin, who returned to the village to help his parents.

"The junta troops entered the village with loud gunfire. They started burning a house that they thought belonged to the village chief. One man, who has since died, returned to the village to rescue his parents," he told RFA. "He planned to carry them on his back, as his parents were not able to run during the raid. But he was shot in the chest before he reached his parents. He was cremated immediately on Tuesday."

Later that day, two resistance group members were also shot dead near the village. About 10 villagers were arrested and interrogated in the village monastery, the local added. They have since been released.

Junta troops raided Pan Chi village because a captain and a soldier from battalion No. 6005 went missing on Monday evening, another resident told RFA.

"I heard that [the missing soldiers] wanted to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. They linked up with the defense forces and rode along with the car while they went shopping in Ohn Taw village," he said, asking to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals. "But from [the junta's] point of view, they thought it was an arrest by the People's Defense Forces. They

saw that the car was driven towards the road leading to Yae Myet village. [Junta troops] went to check in Yae Myet village, but they were not there.”

On Wednesday morning following the attack, junta troops arrested 15 men sheltering in two monasteries with other villagers in Ohn Taw village on suspicion of being associated with resistance groups, he said, adding that the entire village had fled.

Nearly 5,000 residents from Sagaing’s Pan Chi, Ohn Taw, and Yae Myet villages ran to safety as a result of the arrests and killings.

Calls to Sagaing region’s junta spokesperson Sai Naing Naing Kyaw by RFA to learn more about the attacks went unanswered.

In May 2022, a defense camp near Pan Chi village was torched and eight members of the defense forces were killed, according to the residents and defense forces.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: 3 people, including one civilian, killed in junta raid in Pan Chi village; around 25 villagers were later arrested in Pan Chi and Ohn Taw villages

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/junta-kill-3-in-sagaing-12132023052058.html>

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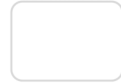
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Document #2102244

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Shelling kills 3, including a child, in Myanmar's Mandalay region

Heavy weaponry in central Myanmar killed three civilians, residents told Radio Free Asia on Thursday.

Junta troops fired a shell at Mandalay division's Tha Hpan Kaing village on Wednesday night, killing two women and a child, locals said. The victims are eight-year-old Su Su Nway, 17-year-old Nadi Hlaing, and 45-year-old Ma Nwe, all from Tha Hpan Kaing village.

Two people were also injured, including Ma Nwe's son, one resident said, asking to remain anonymous for security reasons. Six-year-old Htet Pyae Sone Chit and 31-year-old Aye Min Thu are being treated for their injuries.

"The injured six-year-old boy is the son of the dead woman, Ma Nwe. And all the people who were hit by the heavy artillery are relatives," he told RFA Burmese on Dec. 14. "The military junta deliberately shot into the village, rather than indiscriminately shooting. Lately, Madaya township has been experiencing daily attacks with heavy weaponry."

Ten soldiers entered Madaya township from neighboring Patheingyi township on a truck and fired 120 millimeter shells at Tha Hpan Kaing village, he added. Troops shot from roughly 10 kilometers (six miles) away in Kyauk Ta Dar village around 8 p.m. on Wednesday.

Calls by RFA to Mandalay's junta spokesperson Thein Htay to learn more about the attack went unanswered on Thursday.

Tha Hpan Kaing village is a large village in the region, with 500 houses, residents said, adding that it's 16 kilometers (10 miles) from Mandalay's Madaya city.

Troops also fired weaponry from Kyauk Ta Dar village at other villages in the area before Wednesday's attack, locals said. On Tuesday, a two-hour battle erupted between junta troops and joint defense forces near Kyauk Ta Dar village. Following the battle, junta soldiers fired heavy weapons toward the War Lone Pyun village, but there were no reported injuries, residents told RFA Burmese.

The fighting between the junta and local People's Defense Forces has intensified since November in Madaya township, residents and People's Defense Force members said.

As fighting escalates, so have junta raids on nearby villages. Soldiers are using helicopters to fire shells at villages where they believe resistance groups may be sheltering, according to locals.

Data compiled by RFA show attacks on villages in Madaya township have killed 17 locals and injured three in November alone. From Jan. 2022 to Sept. 2023, RFA found that 816 civilians have died and 1,628 were injured by heavy weapons and airstrikes across the country.

Edited by Taejun Kang.

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ecoi.net description:

Region Mandalay, Tha Hpan Kaing village: 2 women and a child killed in shelling by junta troops; another 2 people injured

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

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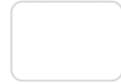
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Document #2102664

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta attack claims lives of 3 people in Myanmar's Rakhine State

The junta army's heavy artillery shelling in Myanmar's ancient capital of Mrauk-U in Rakhine State between Sunday and Monday resulted in the deaths of three civilians and the arrest of nine others, local residents told Radio Free Asia on Monday.

The shelling also caused damage to an archaeological museum that is renowned for its ancient Buddhist pagodas and temples, they added.

Locals said that the junta army has been continuously firing heavy weapons all over the Mrauk-U city after the battle between the junta army and the anti-junta force Arakan Army (AA) on Sunday.

The roof and antiques inside of the Cultural Museum which displayed the ancient cultural heritages in the city's Nyaung Pin Zay neighborhood were damaged by a junta heavy weapon at around 5 a.m. on Sunday, according to locals.

Three monasteries, Setdamma Sukarama, Gandamar, Mingalar Man Aung, and some houses in the city were also damaged during the attack, a monk in the city who wished to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals told RFA Burmese on Monday.

"They [junta troops] are shooting with heavy artillery continuously. We could not enter the city and there was no one in the city. The fighting broke out on Sunday [Dec. 24] morning. They are shooting with heavy weapons all day and night," said the monk.

The AA launched attacks on the police station and junta camp on the hill near Ngwe Taung Pauk bridge on the way out of Mrauk-U city early Sunday morning, and the junta responded with heavy weapons, killing

three residents and injuring at least five others in the city, the locals explained.

Another anti-junta force Three Northern Alliances also confirmed in a Sunday statement that the junta army had targeted the city's residential areas of civilians and villages with heavy weapons.

After the battle, about 70 soldiers from Mrauk-U-based junta Infantry Battalion (377) entered the city's Aung Mingalar and Bandula neighborhoods and arrested nine civilians, said local residents.

The arrested include a 25-year-old man, Wai Lin Che, a 35-year-old man, Maung Hla Bu and a 50-year-old, Aung Tin Shwe. The names of the rest are still unknown.

A Mrauk-U resident, who declined to be named for security reasons, told RFA Burmese that the junta troops arrested the civilians to use them as a human shield.

"They were arrested on Sunday afternoon. The junta troop assumed that the AA troops were also in the city. The [junta] troops were afraid of being attacked when they patrol into the city, so they took the civilians as human shields. All the residents are fleeing and some of the names [of those arrested] still unknown," he told RFA Burmese.

Anti-junta forces the Three Brotherhood Alliances also confirmed the arrest on Sunday night and said the nine civilians were arrested by the military council.

Locals said that almost the entire city residents had to flee amid arrests, battles and casualties. As of 2014, the population of Mrauk-U stood at around 40,000.

Junta's military council has not released any statement about the incidents.

Both Hla Thein, the council's spokesman for Rakhine state and Attorney General, and Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, a military council spokesman, did not answer RFA's inquiries.

Meanwhile, the AA released a statement on Monday that it will "respond effectively" to the military council army that deliberately attacked and destroyed the ancient cultural heritage of the Rakhine people.

Separately, the shadow National Unity Government (NUG) blamed the junta in a Monday statement calling its attack on the museum "inhumane" and "act of war crime," adding that it is bringing these cases to domestic and international courts.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Taejun Kang and Elaine Chan.

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ecoi.net description:

Rakhine State, Mrauk-U: 3 civilians killed and at least 5 others injured in shelling by junta army; 9 civilians were subsequently arrested by junta troops

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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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 #2102667

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta attack kills 8 civilians, injures 25 in Myanmar's Laukkaing city

Junta's recent deployment of heavy weaponry in Laukkaing, a city within the Kokang Self-Administered Zone in Myanmar's Shan State, has resulted in the death of eight civilians and left 25 others injured, according to the anti-junta Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) on Tuesday.

The MNDAA said in a statement that the military junta's two heavy weapons landed near the Crown hotel in Dong Cheng neighborhood in Kokang, bringing civilian casualties. It added that the injured individuals were transported to the hospital, while those who passed away were cremated.

A local resident, who wished to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals, told RFA Burmese that he eye-witnessed the death of several civilians when a shell hit and detonated on a car parked near the Crown Hotel.

"The heavy weapon dropped straight on that car and one of the people in the car and the two others near the car died. Children and women were among the dead," said the resident.

He further explained that the incident occurred when troops from the MNDAA positioned near the Sel Ton gate, just outside Laukkaing city, launched an attack on the 77th Division of the military junta as they entered the city. A heavy weapon used in this exchange landed near the Crown Hotel and exploded, resulting in casualties.

The military junta continues to bombard Laukkaing city, and frequent disruptions in internet and telecommunication services have made it difficult to ascertain the full extent of the casualties.

RFA Burmese called Li Kyarwen, a MNDAA spokesman on Wednesday regarding the local's claim, but he did not respond.

The military junta has yet to issue a statement on this incident as of Wednesday noon. RFA Burmese also contacted Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, the State Administration Council spokesman, but the call went unanswered.

Separately, the MNDAA said three civilians were killed and ten were injured on Dec. 24 in an junta's airstrike in Laukkaing and Hseni (Hsenwi) township.

Between Oct. 27 to Dec. 23, a total of 55 civilians were killed and more than 40 people were injured due to the junta airstrikes in Kokang Region, according to data compiled by RFA based on the MNDAA's statements.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Taejun Kang and Elaine Chan.

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Shan State, Laukkaing: Junta attack leaves 8 civilians dead and 25 others injured

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Austrian Red Cross	Wiedner Hauptstraße	Contact
Austrian Centre for	32, 1041 Wien	Imprint & Disclaimer
Country of Origin and	T +43 1 589 00 583	F.A.Q.
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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Women and children suffer amid Myanmar's civil war

As Myanmar's civil war approaches its third year, intensified fighting across the country this year between ruling junta forces and resistance fighters has destroyed villages and parts of towns, displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians, most of whom are women and children.

The number of internally displaced persons, or IDPs, reached more than 1 million this year, nearly 11,000 of whom fled to neighboring India and Thailand, according to a United Nations report.

"The lives and properties of our people were destroyed," said Zin Mar Aung, foreign affairs minister under the parallel National Unity Government, noting the junta's burning of villages, air strikes targeting civilians and mass killings.

At least 330 women died this year as a result of attacks by junta forces amid the escalation of armed conflict, said Tin Tin Nyo, general secretary of the Women's League of Burma.

"The number of civilian casualties increased due to artillery attacks and air strikes," she told Radio Free Asia. "Most of the victims were women, children and the elderly."

ecoi.net description:

Article on the civilian impact of intensified fighting across the country in 2023 between ruling junta forces and resistance groups (civilian deaths from junta attacks; destruction of villages and towns; displacement)

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-war->

Since the end of October, the number of internally displaced persons also increased, with most being women and children, Tin Tin Nyo said.

“After a country falls under the rule of dictators, it loses the rule of law and justice,” she said, adding that her organization has seen an uptick in gender-based violence, abuse by husbands amid economic decline, and a growing number sex workers.

“These are both visible and invisible challenges,” said the women's rights advocate. “2023 was full of severe hardship for women.”

‘Lost hope’

Yu Yu, a woman who fled amid armed clashes in eastern Myanmar’s Kayah state, said she has suffered trauma as an IDP.

“We are surviving on the food of donors as we have no jobs,” she said. “We have lost hope.”

Women who left their jobs to join the Civil Disobedience Movement, or CDM, to resist the military rule following the February 2021 coup say they’ve had difficulties making ends meet while caring for children or aging parents.

“My father is 80 years old, my mother is also elderly, [and] they are not in good health,” said Khin May, who used to teach at a private high school in Bago region but quit to join the CDM.

“It is very difficult for us while I have no job,” she said, adding that she believes the resistance forces will triumph over the junta in 2024.

Children have suffered amid the civil war as well, and more than 560 have died since the military seized control from the civilian-led government in the February 2021 coup, according to Aung Myo Min, the NUG’s human rights minister.

Since Dec. 21, four children between the ages of 8 and 11 were killed in Rakhine state’s Mrauk-U township, a 9-year-old child was killed in Namtu in northern Shan state, and a seven-year-old girl

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died in an attack by junta troops in Sagaing region's Paungbyin township, according to figures compiled by RFA.

"This is a war crime," said Aung Myo Min. "It's everyone's responsibility to protect children at all times, but we have seen almost every day that killings are taking place where there are children as they sleep alongside their families, as well as the deaths of pregnant mothers."

Utter despair

The death of children are often directly linked to women dying mid the fighting, said Thandar, head of gender equality and women's development under the NUG's Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs.

"For example, in Sagaing and Magway regions, grown men are performing revolutionary duties, while the women, the elderly and vulnerable groups like children are fleeing together," she said. "So, if women are hit, children are hit, too."

According to Shan Human Rights Foundation based in Thailand, 28 children were killed due to the junta's attacks from Oct. 27 to Dec. 27 during the the Three Brotherhood Alliance rebel offensive that has put junta forces back on their heels.

Air- and land-based artillery strikes are the most common cause of death, and children are among the mass casualties when such attacks occur, death counts indicate.

On Apr. 19, nearly 20 children under the age of 18 were killed in an air strike during a gathering in Pa Zi Gyi village in Sagaing region's Kanbalu township. Eleven others died during an attack on Mon Laik IDP camp near the headquarters of an ethnic army in the town of Laiza in Kachin state on Oct. 9.

And eight more children were killed during an aerial bombardment of Vuilu village in Matupi township in western Myanmar's Chin state on Nov. 15.

Roi Ji, 40, told RFA that she was in utter despair because all five of her children died in the attack on the Mon Laik IDP camp.

"I can't think about anything anymore," she said. "I'm in a state of derangement."

Precarious futures

Children who live in war-torn areas no longer have access to schools or adequate nutrition, and face bleak futures.

Nwe Nwe Moe, a former teacher at Shwebo Technical College who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and has since become a member of Yinmarbin-Salingyi multi-village strike committee in Sagaing region, said she dare not think about the future of the children living among the chaos of war.

"I'm concerned about whether the children will be able to develop into capable young people because there is no safety, no access to study, health care, or nutritious food for them," she said. "I have a sinking feeling about those who are in life-threatening and emotionally insecure situations."

As the bloodshed continues, Aung Myo Min said the NUG is making efforts to protect civilian survivors of attacks and to seek justice for them.

"Since there are air and artillery strikes against the civilians, the NUG's Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management is working with administrative organizations on creating bomb shelters for emergencies and providing guidance about not harming children," he said.

Translated by Aung Naing and Htin Aung Kyaw for RFA Burmese. Edited by Roseanne Gerin and Malcolm Foster.

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F +43 1 589 00 589
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