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Document #2110451

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Dozens dead following junta's mass arrests in Myanmar: ethnic army

Myanmar junta forces killed more than 50 civilians in a raid on a village last week in Rakhine State in the west, according to the ethnic minority insurgent force battling regime troops for control of the state.

Troops murdered 48 men and five women between the ages of 15 and 70 in the village of Byain Phyu, near Rakhine State's capital of Sittwe, the Arakan Army said in a statement on Sunday. The group, one of Myanmar's most powerful guerrilla forces, is fighting for self-determination against junta forces in Rakhine and neighboring Chin State.

The Arakan Army has made significant advances since a ceasefire with junta forces ended in November, seizing townships in Rakhine and two in northern Chin State.

Junta troops have been accused of unleashing brutal attacks on civilians, often men suspected of supporting the rebels.

About 100 soldiers [began their attack](#) on Byain Phyu on Wednesday, abducting villagers and allegedly beating three to death, according to residents. But violence escalated when more soldiers began arriving, said one Byain Phyu resident, who told Radio Free Asia that two of his family members were killed after being arrested.

"My relatives were among those arrested – a lot of people, including my uncle and friends. The trauma is unspeakable. There are five people in my uncle's family," he said, declining to be identified out of fear of reprisals. "Just three of the women have returned and two have died. My uncle and my cousin died, so their family, especially my aunt, is really traumatized."

RFA tried to telephone Rakhine State's junta spokesperson, Hla Thein, to ask about the incident but he did not answer his phone.

But the junta said in a press release last Wednesday that troops were conducting searches in Byain Phyu after finding bunkers built from sandbags in houses throughout the village. Three men from other villages snatched guns from junta forces and were later killed in a shootout, it said, adding that 25 suspects were being interrogated in connection with the incident.

RFA has not been able to independently confirm the death toll.

The Arakan Army said in its statement that junta troops abused women, torched and looted houses and still held thousands of villagers.

Increased junta retaliation

Another resident who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons told RFA that the troops have remained in the village.

"It is a very worrying situation. We haven't seen our family and the men. We've heard that the victims were tortured and shot dead," he said. "The killing field was set in front of Ko Ko Maung's tea shop and corpses were piled there."

Villagers said the attack was carried out by regional junta forces supported by members of a small militia force called the Arakan Liberation Party and some ethnic Rohingya troops, who rights groups say are [forcibly recruited](#) from refugee camps to fight for the junta.

The Arakan Liberation Party denied involvement in the attack.

Further Arrests

As the Arakan Army moves closer to Sittwe, junta soldiers have become increasingly suspicious of anyone suspected of sympathizing with their cause.

Junta troops arrested members of the Arakan National Party, which represents the political views of members of the ethnic Rakhine or Arakanese community in Rakhine State, in Yangon on Friday.

Soldiers arrested the group's former youth leader, Khin Win Maung, and three other young men at their homes at around 8 p.m., sources close to the family told RFA, who could not confirm where they were being held.

Arakan National Party spokesperson Thar Tun Hla told RFA that they were investigating the circumstances of Khin Win Maung's arrest.

"We are currently still studying why he was arrested and we can say that Khin Win Maung is a former youth leader," he said.

Khin Win Maung has been teaching political science, but had not participated in any political activity since Myanmar's 2021 coup, said a source close to the family. He volunteered to help those displaced by fighting and natural disasters in Rakhine State, they added.

The names and details of the other three arrested men have not been released.

RFA called Yangon region's junta spokesperson Htay Aung for information on the arrests but calls went unanswered.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Kiana Duncan and Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

Rakhine State: Junta forces killed more than 50 civilians in an attack on Byain Phyu village in late May 2024, the insurgent group Arakan Army (AA) says

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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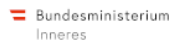
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Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

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 #2110427

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Junta bombs dropped on wedding party in Myanmar leave 28 people dead

Updated June 4, 2024, 1:40 p.m. ET

A military junta airplane dropped two 500-pound bombs on a wedding ceremony, killing 28 people and injuring about 40 others in Myanmar's Sagaing region on Monday, residents told Radio Free Asia.

After the bombing, junta troops fired several artillery shots into Ma Taw village in Mingin township, forcing more than 2,000 residents from six nearby villages to flee their homes, village resident U Htay said.

The bomb was dropped directly onto the wedding party at 8:15 a.m., he said. The bride and groom were on their way to the village monastery at the time and were uninjured.

"In rural areas, the place where food is cooked and served, and where wedding gifts are provided, are all in small central areas," he said. "The bomb struck this central area, causing all people there to be hit."

The death toll includes an 8-year-old and a 1-year-old, as well as up to seven people who succumbed to their injuries later on Monday and on Tuesday.

Families have tried to search for the remains of their missing relatives but the numerous dismembered body parts and continuous junta shelling have made that difficult.

"Junta troops are still firing heavy artillery, preventing anyone from daring to collect the dead bodies in the area," U Htay said. "They are continuously shooting with heavy weapons."

Civilians regularly targeted

Myanmar's central dry zone, made up of the Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay regions, has become a hotbed of opposition to military rule from the majority ethnic Burman community.

The junta has responded with heavy firepower in its battles against militias known as People's Defense Forces. At times, civilian populations have been targeted with artillery and bombs that have leveled villages.

Military-backed Telegram channels said the junta plane dropped the two bombs because a Mingin People's Defense Force's leader was one of the people getting married. RFA was unable to independently verify the claim.

Aung Myo Min, the human rights minister for the shadow National Unity Government, called the bombings a war crime.

"This is not a military campaign at all, but a deliberate bombing of a civilian wedding," he said. "It is a military strategy and an intentional attack on the civilian population."

Despite numerous attempts, RFA received no response from junta spokesman Major General Zaw Min Tun regarding the bombing.

RFA also attempted to contact Nyunt Win Aung, the junta's spokesman for Sagaing region, but he did not respond to several phone calls.

Translated by Kalyar Lwin. Edited by Matt Reed and Malcolm Foster. This story has been updated to include more recent death and injury numbers.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region, Mingin township: 28 people killed and around 40 others injured as military junta plane drops 2 bombs on a wedding ceremony; more than 2,000 local residents flee their homes due to junta artillery fire

Country:

Myanmar

Source:

[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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Austrian Centre for
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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 #2110450

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Myanmar beach town rocked by heavy clashes

Fighting has intensified over the weekend near one of Myanmar's premiere resort beaches in Rakhine state after ethnic rebels attacked three junta outposts and the military responded with multiple airstrikes, residents said.

The uptick in clashes came as the death toll of civilians killed in a military raid on a village near the state capital of Sittwe last week increased to 76, according to the ethnic Arakan Army, or AA, one of several rebel groups fighting the military junta that took control of the country in 2021.

Residents of Rakhine's Thandwe township said that the latest round of fighting began on Sunday after the AA launched an offensive against junta outposts in Gawt, Kha Yan Maw Junction and Zee Kone villages. The outposts are near to the popular tourist destination of Ngaplaw Beach – a 3-kilometer (2-mile) stretch of sand on the Indian Ocean.

"Armed clashes are intensifying near Mazin Airfield, Sapagyi and Gawt villages," said a resident of Thandwe township who, like others interviewed for this report, spoke to RFA Burmese on condition of anonymity due to security concerns.

"The AA conducted attacks on the heavy weapon units of the junta. The [military's] aerial attacks also took place the whole night and [Monday] morning."

Residents said junta troops had withdrawn from the three outposts and are being stationed near Mazin Airfield, where they have received reinforcements.

During the fighting, the military responded to AA attacks with its army, navy and air force, they said, and some civilians were injured by airstrikes

and shelling. Buildings at the Jasmine Ngapali Resort at the beach were also damaged in the exchange.

About 2,000 residents of Gawt, Sapagyi, Ma Zin and Kone Tan villages were forced to flee to the town of Thandwe and other safe areas, they said.

Tense in Thandwe

Since ending a ceasefire in November that had been in place during the military's February 2021 coup d'état, the AA now occupies nine townships in Rakhine state, as well as Paletwa township in neighboring Chin state.

The AA and military have been fighting in Thandwe township since April 22. Armed conflict began about 32 kilometers (20 miles) north of the township seat and is now within 8 kilometers (5 miles) of the urban center.

As the fighting comes closer to the township seat, thousands of civilians have fled to other areas, said another resident of Thandwe, who also declined to be named. Flights to the area have been suspended since Sunday, he added.

"Flights have been suspended, and it is not known when they will resume," he said. "Residents of urban areas have moved to Yangon and other safer areas, although some locals are still in the town."

Neither the junta or the AA have issued statements about the clashes and related casualties.

Attempts by RFA to telephone AA spokesman Khaing Thukha and the junta's spokesperson for Rakhine state, Hla Thein, went unanswered Tuesday.

The AA said in a statement on Sunday said that it is "seizing the cities in Rakhine state," and "plan to continue attacks on all the junta outposts" in Ann, Sittwe, Maungdaw, Kyaukphyu, Toungup, Thandwe, Gwa and Munaung townships.

Residents of Thandwe said that junta airstrikes and shelling have killed at least 23 civilians and injured five others between April 22 and the end of May.

Death toll rises

Also on Tuesday, the AA announced that the civilian death toll in what it labeled a "massacre" by junta troops last week in Sittwe township's Byain Phyu village had reached 76 people – up from [53 a day earlier](#).

About 100 soldiers [began their attack](#) on Byain Phyu on May 29, abducting villagers and allegedly beating three to death, according to residents. But violence escalated when more soldiers began arriving, according to one resident, who told RFA that two of his family members were killed after being arrested.

The AA also claimed that junta troops had committed war crimes including rape, arson and looting during the raid. The troops are still holding “thousands” of hostages, it added.

Junta spokesperson Major Gen. Zaw Min Tun told pro-junta media on Monday that the military had conducted a clearance operation in Byain Phyu on May 29 and was putting security measures into place after “drone bombs and artillery” from rebel forces in nearby Kanpyin village hit Sittwe township.

During a security check that day, three men from other villages snatched guns from junta forces and were later killed in a shootout, he added.

The anti-junta organizations Alliance of Student Unions Yangon and Student Armed Force (SAF) jointly announced on Sunday that they plan to cooperate with other rebel groups to find justice for victims.

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

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ecoi.net description:

Rakhine state, Thandwe township: Around 2,000 local residents displaced by heavy fighting between the rebel group Arakan Army (AA) and junta forces

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[RFA – Radio Free Asia](#) (Author)

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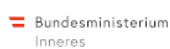
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Document #2110887

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Airstrike targets insurgent meeting in Myanmar, 16 killed

A Myanmar military airstrike on a meeting of anti-junta activists in a monastery in central Myanmar killed 16 people, including two monks, and wounded 22 people, witnesses told Radio Free Asia.

The bloody raid in Let Pan Tan village was the latest in the central region of Sagaing, which has been rocked by violence since the military overthrew an elected government in 2021 triggering an insurgency by members of the majority Burman community in Myanmar's heartland.

Activists taking up arms against military rule have formed militias called People's Defense Forces, linking up with ethnic minority insurgent groups that have been battling for self-determination for decades in remote borderlands.

One witness close to a People's Defense Force said the military must have received a tip-off that the meeting was taking place on Saturday.

"The bombardment was carried out while the people were in the meeting due to leaked information. How would they know from so far away?" said the source who declined to be identified for security reasons.

"So it's clear we should consider that there are spies and informers in the village or near the village, who are secretly collecting information about us."

RFA was not able to contact People's Defense Force groups in the region. Sagaing's junta spokesperson, Nyunt Win Aung, did not answer telephone calls seeking comment.

While junta troops have been pushed back in several parts of the country since allied anti-junta fighters went on the offensive late last year, the

military can unleash devastating force in seconds with its jets.

Anti-junta forces have no air power with the exception of drones, and little in the way of anti-aircraft weapon systems to face the threat.

On June 3, a junta airstrike on a [wedding in Sagaing's](#) Mingin township killed 33 people and wounded 64.

RFA has not been able to verify whether the civilians were among the casualties in Let Pan Tan, where numerous buildings, including a second monastery, were damaged, the witnesses said.

Military swoop for suspects

Nine people at the meeting were killed on the spot and seven died later of their wounds, residents said.

It was impossible to identify some of the victims, another witness, who also declined to be identified, told RFA.

"The bodies were badly damaged and disfigured," said the witness, adding that several victims were decapitated. "There are quite a lot of people who got severely hurt and had their arms or legs severed (in the blast). There isn't enough medicine for everyone."

Early on Sunday, a convoy of junta troops raided Let Pan Tan village and arrested about 10 people, including women, the witness said. RFA was not able to verify that information.

According to compiled data by the RFA, junta attacks have killed 662 civilians and injured 1,492 more nationwide from January to May 2024.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Kiana Duncan.

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ecoi.net description:

Sagaing region: 16 people killed and 22 others wounded in junta military airstrike on a monastery where anti-junta activists were meeting

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Myanmar

Source:

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

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Document #2110902

RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

Fighting flares near state capital in north Myanmar

Junta troops fired artillery into a village in northern Myanmar, killing a man and wounding seven relatives, residents told Radio Free Asia on Tuesday, as ethnic minority guerrillas in the area near the capital of resource-rich Kachin state said they made advances.

The shelling took place on Monday night in Waingmaw township, where fighting between Kachin Independence Army insurgents and the military [intensified in late May](#).

One shell hit a home in Hkat Shu village, killing Aung Kyaw Soe, 27, and wounding seven members of his family, a resident, who declined to be identified due to security fears, told RFA.

“His family was having dinner when the shell dropped right next to the kitchen,” he said. “Two shells fell on the village, one in that house and the other not far away.”

The wounded included four women and three men between the ages of 25 and 62. Four were taken to hospital in the nearby state capital Myitkyina, residents said.

Six people including children were killed in shelling of the same village on May 20 and 21. Nineteen people were wounded at that time, residents said.

The junta has not released any information on the latest shelling or on casualties. RFA telephoned Moe Min Thein, a military council spokesman for the state, but calls went unanswered.

Fighting between the military and fighters from the Kachin Independence Army, one of Myanmar’s most powerful insurgent forces which is seeking

self-determination for the Kachin people, has increased in recent weeks in the area about 20 km (12 miles) south of Myitkyina.

Setbacks

Forces of the junta, which seized power in an early 2021 coup, have faced setbacks in several parts of the country since late last year when allied forces battling to end military rule went on the offensive.

The Kachin force said in March it had [captured 40 junta bases](#) across Waingmaw and Momauk townships. By May, it [seized a camp](#) only 20 km (12 miles) from Myitkyina in addition to a large part of a major route for trade with China and areas on the border.

The KIA seized two more camps in Waingmaw and Tanai townships on Monday and Tuesday taking their tally to [100 junta-occupied bases](#) across the state, the group's information officer, Col. Naw Bu, told RFA.

The two newly captured camps are on a border road that controls access to amber and gold mines in Tanai township, he said.

"A camp on the side of an amber and gold mine in Tanai township was captured yesterday and another at Bum Taung, on the way to Sa Done town, was captured this morning," he said on Tuesday.

The KIA has not released any information on casualties for either side in the two-day battle.

According to data compiled by RFA, a total of 1,942 civilians were killed and 3,866 were injured by junta airstrikes and heavy weapons since the 2021 coup.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Kiana Duncan.

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ecoi.net description:

Kachin state, Waingmaw township: One man killed and 7 of his family members injured as junta troops fired artillery shells into a village

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Myanmar

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RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

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