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AI – Amnesty International

Myanmar: Deadly air strikes in Kachin State appear to fit pattern of unlawful attacks

Responding to the news that Myanmar military air strikes reportedly killed dozens of people including civilians at a concert in Kachin State on Sunday night, Amnesty International’s Deputy Regional Director Hana Young said:

“Singers, artists and other civilians are among those reported killed in last night’s air strikes. We fear this attack is part of a pattern of unlawful aerial attacks by the military which have killed and injured civilians in areas controlled by armed groups.

“The military has shown ruthless disregard for civilian lives in its escalating campaign against opponents. It is difficult to believe the military did not know of a significant civilian presence at the site of this attack. The military must immediately grant access to medics and humanitarian assistance to those affected by these air strikes and other civilians in need.

“Myanmar’s military has been committing widespread atrocities since the 2021 coup, including unlawfully killing, arbitrarily detaining, torturing and forcibly displacing civilians. It has been able to carry out these crimes in the face of an ineffective international response to a human rights crisis that is only worsening.

“As officials and leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations prepare to host high-level meetings in the coming weeks, this attack highlights the need to overhaul the approach to the crisis in Myanmar. ASEAN has to step up and formulate a more robust course of action so that military leaders end this escalating repression.”

Background:

On 23 October, the Myanmar military launched air strikes on a musical performance near A Nan Pa village in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, in the north of the country.

The attack reportedly killed dozens of people, but Amnesty could not independently confirm the figures. Among those injured and killed were civilians including prominent artists who were performing at the event. The performance was held as part of celebrations for the 62nd anniversary of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO).

The KIO is the political wing of the Kachin Independence Army, which controls the area and has clashed with the Myanmar military for decades.

The military has increasingly relied on air power as it struggles to retain control of the country since seizing power in a coup on 1 February 2021.

In a July report, [“Bullets rained from the sky”: War crimes and displacement in eastern Myanmar](#), Amnesty International found that Myanmar’s military has subjected Karen and Karenni civilians to collective punishment via widespread aerial and ground attacks, arbitrary detentions, often including torture or extrajudicial executions, and the systematic looting and burning of villages.

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ecoi.net summary:

Kachin state: Concert hit by air strike; several civilians killed

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