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Military burns more than 55,000 houses in 2 years, Data for Myanmar says

Sagaing region was hardest hit with almost 80% of the national total.

By RFA Burmese
2023.02.13

Junta troops and affiliated militias have burned down 55,484 homes across Myanmar in the two years since the military overthrew the country's democratically elected government, according to independent research group [Data for Myanmar](#).

A report released on Feb. 10 showed that Sagaing region was hardest hit with 43,292 houses destroyed by fire between Feb. 1, 2021, and Jan. 31 this year.

One Sagaing resident, whose home in Salingyi township's Sar Htone village was torched last month, told RFA she was living in a shack made

ecoi.net description:

According to research group, military has burnt down 55,484 homes countrywide in 2 years

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from zinc sheets salvaged from the ashes.

"I am in trouble. I don't even have anything to eat," said the local, who didn't want to be named for safety reasons.

"Some people live in tents. Others were not able to build them. We have seven family members, including two children, so we made a roof with a flannel blanket, and the burnt zinc roofs were used for walls. Now we are all facing deep hardship."

Locals said 128 houses in Sar Htone were destroyed by troops in January, leaving only around 80 houses standing in the village.

Magway region had the second highest number of burnt houses at 8,863.

A resident from Pauk township's Kyun Taing village whose village was completely destroyed, told RFA that he was not able to return.

"I live in the forest. I built a tent and made the roof waterproof. We have to live like that," said the Magway resident, who also declined to be named.

"Now we live near the Chin [state] border close to the Chin hills, and close to Pon Taung and Pon Nya where the weather is still cold. It is cold in the night but still hot in the day."

He said the village's supplies of rice, cooking oil and salt had been burned by troops, who destroyed Kyun Taing's 210 houses on Jan. 30.

Calls to the junta spokesmen for Sagaing and Magway regions went unanswered Monday.

'A crime against humanity'

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Kyaw Win, executive director of the London-based Burma Human Rights Network called the junta's actions a crime against humanity.

"Burning down villages, arresting people, and killing people are no longer war crimes. War crimes are crimes committed against the enemy while fighting in battle," he said.

Far from controlling the population and ending the fight for democracy, the junta has failed to take control of many townships across Myanmar, forcing it to extend emergency rule by another six months.

The junta has also declared martial law in 37 townships in the four regions of Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Tanintharyi and the four states of Mon, Kayin, Kayah and Chin but has failed to wrest control of many of them from local pro-democracy militias and People's Defense Forces local to the deposed National Unity Government.

Around 2 million people have been made homeless by fighting and fire since the coup, according to [Institute for Strategy and Policy](#) figures up to Dec. 14, 2022.

The [United Nations High Commission for Refugees](#) puts the figure at around 1.3 million internally displaced persons and a further 51,000 who have fled to neighboring countries, according to data released on Feb. 7.

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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